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Wedding Music and Entertainment guides

A Guide to Music for Your Wedding Ceremony

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Quality Music and Entertainment

Music for Your Wedding Ceremony

Music has always been a crucial part of the wedding ceremony. In Victorian times a church or chapel might retain an organist or musician on a full time basis and when the wedding procession would proceed joyfully down the village street to a reception on the green with a solo violinist or flautist leading the way. A genteel wedding of the middle or upper classes would be a grander affair of course with a large choir or even an orchestra playing at the church.

In modern times there are many more options - many still traditional in nature or of course music of the present time . Music sets the mood during your ceremony and often it this element which remembered by your friends and family for years to come as much as or even more than any other element of your ceremony. Deciding which music should be played at your wedding is of course a very personal matter and choosing between a string quartet, a harpist or some of the many other options reflects the taste of the bride and groom. In a church ceremony you should discuss your music choices with your vicar or minister who will often usually have a list of suitable pieces that can be played. A church organ is suitable and very traditional although your choice of music may be restricted by the kind of organ installed in the church and the repertoire of the church organist which, on occasion, can be small. Often, we are asked to provide other music either to play in conjunction with the church organist or as an additional dimension to the service. As we have said, popular choices are a string quartet or trio, a harpist or a flute and harp duo but there have been many other options which we have been asked for or suggested in the years we have provided music for wedding ceremonies. The have included solo instruments such as trumpet, violin or flute, solo singers usually a soprano or tenor, , classical duets, trios and quartets either of stringed instruments, woodwind or brass and vocal groups including traditional choirs, gospel groups and even a close harmony barber shop quartet.

In a traditional church ceremony, there are four parts of the service which more often than not will include music. The Prelude, The Processional, The Signing of the Register and The Recessional.

The Prelude

This is music that is played while guests congregate in the church and wait for the bride to arrive. The music sets the mood for the ceremony to come and is a joyful welcome to the congregation, your friends and family. Often your church organist will play a selection while your guests assemble although you may decide that you would like a Jazz Band, A Scottish Piper or even a Caribbean Steel Band or the soloist or ensemble you have decided to include in the ceremony later on. This music can be played outside the church as guests arrive and can still be heard inside as they find their places. There is no fixed repertoire of course but some of the popular classical choices are : Canon in D by Pachabel, Nimrod from Enigma Variations by Elgar, Jesu Joy of Man's Desiring or Sheep May Safely Graze by Bach and Ave Maria either by Schubert or Gounod.

The Processional

The arrival of the Bride and the procession down the aisle. Normally this is one piece of music reflecting the grace and beauty of the bride. Some of the popular pieces played are Here Come The Bride (actually The Wedding March from Lohengrin (Wagner), Arrival of the Queen of Sheba (Handel), Trumpet Voluntary - Prince of Denmark's March (Clarke), Grand March from Aida (Verdi), Trumpet Voluntary (Stanley), Hornpipe from Handel's Water Music, The Rejoicing(Royal Fireworks Music) (Handel) Guitar Concerto in D Major, Largo, (Vivaldi) and Spring or Winter (From The Four Seasons) (Vivaldi).

The Signing of the Register

When you, with your witnesses and close family, are signing the register the church organist can play music of your choice. This may also be played by the classical ensemble or other musicians you have engaged. This is the part of the proceedings where you can make your ceremony unique by including your own choice of music which can be any tune(s) of your choice popular or classical which could be special to you and your new husband or wife or something which you feel will make the occasion truly special and unique, putting your own stamp on the service. If you would prefer to keep this part of the ceremony more traditional some popular classical pieces are : Air on the G String (Bach), Sheep May Safely Graze (Bach), Ave Verum Corpus (Mozart) Jesu Joy of Man's Desiring (Bach), Panis Angelicus (Franck), Air from the Handel's Water Music, The Lord Bless You And Keep You (Rutter) or Ave Verum Corpus (Mozart) but of course there are many other pieces that can be played.

The Recessional

As you leave the registry and walk arm-in-arm down the aisle as husband and wife, this piece is joyous declaration of your marriage. Classical favorites include Wedding March from A Midsummer Night's Dream (Mendelssohn), Toccata from Symphony No 5 (Widor) often referred to simply as Widor's Toccata, Pomp and Circumstance March No 4 (Elgar) The Rejoicing from The Royal Fireworks Music (Handel) Bridal March (Hollins) Grand March from Aida (Verdi) Ode to Joy (Beethoven) March from Scipio (Handel) Finale from Symphony No.1 (Widor) and Wagner's Bridal March from Lohengrin.

Whatever your own tastes and personal choices, choice of music is always part of the discussion between the Minister and the couple as part of the overall planning of the service.

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