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## **Choosing The Right Music For Your Wedding**

**By Eugene Portman**

### **Choosing The Right Music For Your Wedding**

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#### Overview

I suppose a typical Christian wedding in the UK can be divided into 4 main sections and these are:  
The ceremony Pre-meal drinks Wedding breakfast Evening reception

I suppose about half of the weddings I come across have the ceremony in a church so this means that if they do require me to provide live music; it will be during the drinks before the meal and the wedding breakfast. Everyone's requirements are different so don't be afraid to discuss any special requirements with whoever your hiring.

As far as the choice of specific pieces of music is concerned – the only part of the wedding that you really have to think about is the wedding ceremony.

#### A) The ceremony

The church ceremony. I'm not going to go into any detail with the choice of music for a church ceremony - there are so many religious denominations which all have their differences. A church wedding is easier from the music point of view in that you very seldom have to provide someone to perform your choice of music – unlike the civil ceremony. However, you won't have a problem with a church service – you'll be able to discuss everything to the finest detail with the relevant cleric and the resident organist if there is one.

The civil ceremony. One thing that has become popular over recent years is the civil wedding ceremony and I think that this is the reason that more and more musicians are booked for weddings each year. At one time you had to go to a registry office to have a civil ceremony. Things have changed as so many hotels and other venues have been able to apply for a licence to hold marriage ceremonies on their own premises. The main advantage to a civil wedding in a hotel is that everything

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to do with the marriage can be carried out at the same place. That means less travelling and less hassle for everyone. Although you will have to sort out the music for a civil ceremony yourself there is a bonus in that if you choose live music for the service, the musicians can provide music for the pre-meal drinks and for the wedding breakfast itself - thus killing three birds with one stone. Your specific choice of music should be discussed with the musicians well before the event and they should be able to provide you with some ideas. If you don't want to pick each individual piece of music for the proceedings then just give whoever is involved, an idea of the style of music you would like or maybe a composer. For a civil ceremony you can have any music you want as long as neither the title or the lyric have any reference to religion. Most couples prefer to have music of a classical vein for the ceremony and the have something lighter for the rest of the day.

The civil ceremony has four main part's as far as a musician is concerned and they are: The gathering of the congregation (sometimes called 'the prelude'. The Procession The signing of the register(sometimes called 'the interlude. The recession

### 1) The gathering of the congregation.

This section doesn't really have a time span – so when a couple does select music for this part of the ceremony, they must accept that either you won't be able to have all of your chosen pieces, or more frequently the performer will have to play extra music of his choice.

2) The Procession. The next section is the entrance of the bride and traditionally this is carried out to Verdi's Bridal March. Although most people stick to the Verdi; you can have any music you like. The one thing you must consider when looking an alternative is that it doesn't take long for the bride to walk down the aisle. I think that it is wiser to stick to the Bridal March.

3) The signing of the register. There never seems to be a problem with this part. A piece of up to five minutes is usually fine and anything goes really. I suppose that if you did choose something that was too long there would come a point where the musician would have to stop playing - however, the piece would have to be excessively long for this to occur.

4) The recession. This is where everyone leaves the place of the wedding ceremony and traditionally this was always carried out to Mendelssohn's Wedding March. In this day and age wedding couples seem to request everything but the Wedding March. Anything seems to be appropriate for the recession and there isn't a problem with the length of the music. As soon as the last person has gone; the musician or musicians finish.

That's it! The ceremony is over and everyone can start the celebration.

### B) Pre Meal Drinks

After the ceremony everyone usually starts making a lot of noise. They have so much to say because they've had to keep so quiet throughout all the serious bit. I said earlier that you needn't concern yourself about the music after the ceremony but it is a good idea to discuss the style of music you are looking for and maybe give them a couple of requests.

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### C) The Wedding Breakfast

At one time I used to consider it a novelty if a wedding had live music for the wedding breakfast – now you often get jazz pianists, string quartet, harpists or even flamenco guitarists. It's always nice to have music while everyone is eating and chatting as long as the music isn't intrusive. Most of the time musicians just go with with the crowd: playing more mellow music if everyone's quiet and the more lively stuff if everyone starts making more noise. One of the most important thing to be aware of is whether the music is interfering with the conversation of the wedding guests. If it is; then there's something wrong. For most weddings you need the music to carry on right up to the speeches and that's where it finishes until the evening reception.

### D) The Evening Reception

Most people will opt for a disco at this point but there are other alternatives. In a sense a marriage is the merging of two families and for most of the guests there will be a large number of people at the wedding who are complete strangers. I think that the wedding day should be geared to making things easy for everyone to get to know each other - unfortunately a disco doesn't always achieve this and as discos are getting more expensive; live music is rapidly becoming a viable option. Very often a couple

fail to realise that quite a large percentage of the guests are going to be elderly and probably won't be into the latest music trends so your choice of music should cater for these people. Also, the term disco seems to be synonymous with high volume levels so this is something else that you ought to take into consideration when you make your final choice.

Whichever way you go; you won't please everyone. If it is a big wedding you'll probably have to hire the services of a disco or a function band, but make sure that whichever choice you make; that they can provide music to cover most tastes. If the wedding is a small affair you will be able to be a bit more adventurous as there won't be the same pressure to have the dance floor packed with their people in their suits and party frocks. You will be able to try something a bit more subtle - maybe something a little bit more specialised. A soul band is a great idea but don't expect them to be able to play anything - let them stick to what they do best If it is a small wedding there is a better chance of knowing you guests more intimately and maybe you could find something more to their taste. There is a lot of scope in what you choose; here are a few ideas: soul band, jazz quartet, steel band, salsa, ceilidh, reggae etc. One of the best weddings I've ever been to had a ceilidh band and they filled the floor for the entire evening. The bizarre thing about having a ceilidh is that hardly anybody likes the music but it's main advantage is that you don't need to be able to dance in order to get up and join in. There is usually someone to show you each dance and there's no need to feel embarrassed. Another plus is that you usually swap partners which helps get people together and helps with the merging of the two families.

I suppose to sum up this last section I would say that that the obvious choice of a disco isn't necessarily the best. Think about the numerous alternatives and maybe you'll make your wedding a little bit different from the norm and more memorable in the process.

Eugene Portman is a Surrey based jazz pianist who works throughout the UK both as a soloist and as an ensemble player. His blend of cocktail piano and jazz seems to provide a type of music that is

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intricate, exciting, and yet easy to listen to. He has provided music and entertainment for thousands of weddings, trade shows and other events.

### **String Quartet vs. Jazz for Your Las Vegas Wedding Music**

**By Renae Judkins**

Las Vegas weddings have been known for their tackiness as long as Las Vegas drive thru weddings have existed, but Las Vegas weddings are quickly becoming more elegant with brides spending more on their Las Vegas nuptials. With this includes their choice of Las Vegas wedding music and Las Vegas wedding musicians.

We spoke with Chandler Judkins, president of Las Vegas Wedding Music, the number one live musician contracting company in Las Vegas and he had a lot to say about a new trend among Las Vegas couples.

"Las Vegas couples aren't choosing string quartets as much as they used to," Judkins said. "Jazz is more of the choice for their Las Vegas wedding music."

The reason for choosing jazz more than strings for Las Vegas weddings is simple according to Judkins. "They want something different. That's usually why they're getting married in Las Vegas in the first place."

Strings are still a popular Las Vegas wedding music choice and oftentimes Las Vegas couple will pair up the two, having strings for the ceremony and jazz for the cocktail hour and reception afterward.

A Las Vegas jazz quartet can be the perfect solution to create elegance, class, dancing and swinging, and all at a reasonable price. Las Vegas Wedding Music's jazz groups start as low as \$500 for a few hours, and no minimum time is required. Las Vegas Wedding Music's musicians often show up to play for a 15 minute wedding ceremony and then go home.

Las Vegas Wedding Music is so flexible with price, timing, groups, song requests list and more because according to Judkins, music is his passion and he wants to share that passion through his company Las Vegas Wedding Music.

"Couples getting married in Las Vegas often don't realize that live musicians can be contracted for as little as a Las Vegas dj can be hired," Judkins said. "Our goal here at Las Vegas Wedding Music is to promote live music. We want our brides to walk down the aisle to the real thing, not a distorted version of 'Canon in D.' "

Judkins is a professional musician himself and oftentimes plays with the Las Vegas jazz groups. Live sound demos of the Las Vegas string quartet and the Las Vegas jazz groups can be found at Las Vegas Wedding Music's site: [LVWeddingMusic \(dot\) com](http://LVWeddingMusic.com).

Las Vegas Wedding Music also offers other Las Vegas wedding music packages for couples getting

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married in Las Vegas who want something different for their Las Vegas wedding. Singers, harpists, top 40 bands, mariachi groups, impersonators and more are available.

Las Vegas Wedding Music can work with nearly any budget and their packages start as low as \$250.

Renaee earned her journalism degree from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

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