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The Perfect String Quartet Repertoire for your Wedding

By Warren Zielinski

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Here follows suggestions and tips that will help you determine the ideal programme for your Wedding day. A String Quartet can provide music for every stage of your Wedding.

First of all, we have the Brides breakfast. If you are hiring the services of a String quartet for the whole day, you may be able to arrange for one or two of the players to come along for this early stage of the wedding at reasonable extra cost. A single string instrument, such as the cello, can provide gentle background music with Schubert's Ave Maria or the solo suites by Bach. It is considered good form to invite the musicians to have a meal with your guests, especially if there is a long interval between wedding stages.

Next follows the Prelude. This is the stage when your guests arrive at the actual venue where the ceremony will take place. This is often a different venue from where the Brides breakfast and / or Reception takes place. You should allow enough time for the musicians to arrive at the wedding venue before your guests! By this stage, the full quartet (all 4 players) will need to be on site for the main part of the ceremony, so it makes sense to take advantage of their presence and ask them to play for the Prelude as well. The Pachelbel Canon is an ideal piece of music for this purpose. As this stage is probably the longest (with exception of the reception), the quartet will need to have a substantial repertoire of peaceful arrival music in order to avoid repetition. Selections such as the Flower Duet from Delibe's Lakme and The Swan by Camille Saint-Saens are perennial favourites. A good string quartet will be aware of these requirements, and should be able to assure you that their repertoire is varied, extensive and appropriate. Allow up to 30 minutes for this stage.

Now comes the big moment of your Wedding day, the Processional (walking down the aisle!) This is when you'll be very pleased that you hired a String Quartet. The actual music for the infamous 'Here comes the bride' is the Bridal Chorus by Richard Wagner. If your prospective ensemble doesn't know this piece (and it's proper title), walk away! They most likely will of course. If you have your heart set on something else, you must make sure that the quartet either already has it in their repertoire, or has the

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resources to acquire it. More obscure musical requests may need to be written specially for quartet. Arrangements of most show tunes etc. should be within the grasp of the quartet musicians themselves. You should however, expect to pay an additional fee for this service. A good arrangement takes time.

The Signing of the register is the next stage of the Wedding which requires music. The Andante Cantabile by Tchaikovsky or Alexander Borodin's Quartet no.2 are both very appropriate for this stage of the wedding, as they are relaxing and soothing pieces of music. Bach's Air on the G string is also wonderfully effective. This allows everyone in the room to have a bit of a breather and will help to release any tension in the room! You should ensure that the quartet you have hired has the entire selection prepared, and not just excerpts, again to avoid endless repetition of 'the famous bits'.

That's it, you've done it, you're married! All that's left for you to do is to walk back down the aisle, the Processional. Unless you have very strong feelings about an alternative piece of music, it is advisable to stick with the Wedding March by Felix Mendelssohn. Everybody expects to hear it, it suits the

occasion perfectly and is a fantastic piece of music perfectly matched to the sound of the String Quartet.

It's party time! The reception follows the processional, and often takes place at a different location from the wedding ceremony. In order to ensure that the musicians arrive before the guests, it is advisable that you allow them to leave the ceremony immediately following the conclusion of the processional. There is a huge amount of very good Quartet repertoire which is suitable for a Wedding reception. It would be possible to satisfy the needs of your reception with the music of Mozart alone! Of course, an experienced quartet should have a balanced repertoire. Even so, It is worth checking that the musicians have certain pieces in their arsenal. Make sure that they have on hand all the well-known baroque and classical masterpieces by Mozart, Haydn and Handel, some light music classics, jazz standards, show tunes and arrangements of other popular songs. You should expect to hear Ein Kleine Nachtmusic (a little night-music) by Mozart, Boccherini's Minuet and The ragtime music of Scott Joplin to name but a few.

Warren Zielinski is a top Professional violinist and musician. As Chief co-creator of the comprehensive and useful

website, Warren has an enviable reputation amongst live classical

wedding music specialists in the UK and abroad. Musicians-anytime specialises in providing the best young professional string quartets and ensembles for all types of events, parties and ceremonies.

String Quartets Still Outrank DJs in Class, Cost

By Renae C Judkins

While many brides are fretting over their wedding colors or centerpieces, they all have the same opinion regarding their wedding music.

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String quartets are the number one choice of brides and grooms according to Chandler Judkins, owner of the most popular musician contractor company in Las Vegas called Las Vegas Wedding Music.

Las Vegas Wedding Music receives more requests for string quartets than any other music group, even though they offer dozens of options including jazz quartets, piano soloists, big bands, and more.

"Our string quartets alone have doubled, if not, tripled within the last two years," Judkins said. "Las Vegas is fast becoming an elegant city to be married in and that means, more string quartets."

DJs are known for their affordability and usually nothing more. So couples on a budget might hire a DJ to save a dime, but they are oftentimes disappointed in the service and atmosphere. Those same brides and grooms are quick to state that if they had the funds, a string quartet would be their number one choice of wedding music.

However, string quartets are also starting to outrank DJs in costs. In Las Vegas, DJ costs are skyrocketing and in many major wedding chapels, couples have to foot a \$2,000 to \$5,000 bill. Judkins thinks this is outrageous.

"Las Vegas Wedding Music will never gouge couples to make a buck just because this is Las Vegas," Judkins said. "We want to promote live music so we keep our prices as low as possible. Any string quartet hired for a wedding should cost less than \$1,000 for a few hours of performing, and if the quartet is only for the ceremony, it should cost less than \$800."

Judkins said that couples should check prices before making a commitment on their wedding music. Couples should also be careful because sometimes wedding coordinators aren't always honest about live musician prices.

"It's easier for wedding coordinators to use the same DJ for every wedding, so they don't have to bother finding a band," Judkins said. "So many times they state that a string quartet will cost a lot more because of the time they will end up putting in to find that string quartet. They often take a cut off the musician's price because they have to work to find the perfect band."

Judkins advises brides to find their own string quartet through a wedding musician contractor. That way they know the musicians will show up, they can hear sound demos of the band, and brides won't have to pay a coordinator hidden costs to do the work for them.

To see an example of a musician contractor's site, go to

"Those who come to me are the brides and grooms who truly know that nothing compares to live music for their wedding," Judkins said. "No matter what DJs offer, they can never offer the same benefits that

a live string quartet offers."

Rena earned her journalism degree from the University of Nevada Las Vegas. She is currently a wedding consultant for

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