



WEDDING MUSIC

A GUIDE TO PLANNING & CHOOSING YOUR WEDDING MUSIC

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Your wedding day is one of the most important days of your life and we know you want it to be special and meaningful in every possible way. Music can be used to great effect to make your day truly memorable.

There are many decisions to be made when planning a wedding, and it can all become rather overwhelming, so we hope this wedding music guide will make life a bit easier for you! It contains plenty of musical ideas for use in the wedding ceremony and at the reception, to help you make informed choices when planning the music for your wedding.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like to discuss any ideas or questions you may have. We are here to help make your day perfect and we will do all we can to incorporate any suggestions you have for the music - we can even (with enough notice) arrange your favourite song to be sung during the ceremony or at the reception.

We are looking forward to being part of your big day!

Leah Perona-Wright
Director of Vox Angelica

A CHURCH WEDDING

If you are having a church wedding then you will need to have a meeting with your Vicar to discuss the order of service he or she will follow, and agree your music choices. However, as a basic guide you will usually need a minimum of the following musical items during a church wedding:

- Music for the entrance of the bride (often organ music)
- 3 hymns or songs (for everyone to sing)
- 1 or more pieces during the signing of the register
- Music for the exit of the bride and groom (often organ music)

There are other places during a church ceremony where music can be used to great effect:

- Before the service begins to create the right atmosphere
- An anthem or song between your two readings
- After the prayers a sung blessing can be very moving

A CIVIL CEREMONY

The actual marriage ceremony at a civil wedding is very short indeed. Choosing some special music and readings will help create a meaningful ceremony. You will need to meet with your Registrar to discuss exactly what will be included in the ceremony but they are normally very happy to incorporate a couple's requests. Here are some suggestions as to where you might include music:

- Music for the entrance of the bride
- A song to be sung between readings
- 1 or more pieces during the signing of the register
- Music for the exit of the bride and groom

Note: you need to be aware when choosing your music that you may not include any sacred music in a civil ceremony – not even an instrumental version of a piece that is usually sung to a sacred text.

THE RECEPTION

The majority of weddings involve some photographs being taken, usually during the drinks reception, and this often takes longer than you might expect. It is great to have some music as your guests arrive for the drinks reception to create the right atmosphere, help them relax, and keep them entertained while they stand around waiting for the bride and groom to finish their photo-shoot! Depending on the atmosphere you want to create, you could consider the following:

- Jazz guitarist
- Cocktail pianist (playing jazz and other light music)
- Vox Angelica (singing jazz and other light music)
- Medieval/tudor instrumental and vocal group
- Harpist
- String quartet

If you are having a formal sit-down meal or wedding breakfast then it is very effective to have some gentle background music as you and your guests sit and eat. Again, this helps create a relaxed atmosphere and prevents any awkwardness should there be a lull in conversation. Be careful not to choose anything too loud for the sit-down meal though - it is really important that people can talk to each other while they eat without being deafened by a band. Any of the suggestions (listed above) for the drinks reception would be worth considering for your sit-down meal. Do bear in mind that it is usually more cost effective if you use the same musicians for both the drinks reception and the sit-down meal rather than booking two different groups, although they will need to take a break at some point.

If you are having a less formal gathering, perhaps later on in the day/in the evening then you may want to create more of a party atmosphere in which case a disco and/or a band would be an excellent choice. Decide what kind of music you would like to have played and choose your band accordingly. (Be aware that a band will not play all night - they will play a certain number of sets and take a break or breaks in between, whereas the disco will keep playing throughout the evening.)

MUSIC SUGGESTIONS

There are many possible pieces of music you could include in your wedding ceremony. Do not be afraid to make your own suggestions to include pieces which are important or have an emotional significance for you and your partner. The following pieces are ideas you might like to consider. You can find recordings of most of these items online from www.apple.com/itunes or www.youtube.com.

SACRED MUSIC

Ave Maria - various composers: Bach Gounod, Caccini, Schubert

A very popular piece usually sung by a soloist. The text is a prayer to Mary. This text has been set to music by more than one composer, so make sure you check which one you would like! The Latin translates as:

'Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed is the fruit of thy womb Jesus.

Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now, and at the hour of our death. Amen.'

Amazing grace - traditional American

You could use a version of this well known song sung during the signing of the register, or you could include it as one of your hymns.

Gaelic blessing - John Rutter

A beautiful setting of a Gaelic prayer which works really well either as a sung blessing at the end of the prayers, or during the signing of the register.

The text is as follows:

'Deep peace of the running wave to you, deep peace of the flowing air to you, deep peace of the quiet earth to you, deep peace of the shining stars to you, Moon and stars pour their healing light on you. Deep peace of Christ, the light of the world to you.'

God be in my head - John Rutter or Walford Davies

Ideal as a short sung blessing to finish your service:

'God be in my head and in my understanding; God be in mine eyes and in my looking,

God be in my mouth and in my speaking; God be in my heart and in my thinking;

God be at mine end and at my departing.'

Irish blessing - Bob Chilcott

Another blessing ideal for the end of the prayers or during the signing of the register. This time the text is a Celtic prayer:

'May the road rise to meet you, may the wind be ever at your back, may the sun shine warm upon your face, the rain fall soft upon your fields, and until we meet again, may God hold you in the palm of his hand.'

Laudate Dominum - Mozart

A well known setting of Psalm 116 ('O Praise the Lord all ye nations'). It

can be sung by a soloist, a small group or a larger choir.

Love Divine - Howard Goodall

This well loved text by Charles Wesley is ideal for use during a wedding service. You could either have it sung as a hymn (with 2 options for the tune - either Blaenwern, or a version by Stainer), or as an anthem, written by Howard Goodall. Goodall's version is emotive with a memorable tune:

'Love Divine, all loves excelling, Joy of heaven to earth come down. Fix in us thy humble dwelling, all thy faithful mercies crown...'

O happy day - traditional Spiritual

A well known gospel song which was featured in the film *Sister Act 2* and has been performed by many top Gospel Choirs.

Song of Ruth - David Ogden

A song of loyalty and love telling the story of how Ruth, once widowed refused to leave her mother-in-law despite very difficult circumstances. The sentiment of the song is ideal for a wedding:

'Wherever you go, I will go. Wherever you stay, I will stay with you. Your people will be my people, your God will be my God...'

The Father's Love - Prudentius, arr. Leah and Kit Perona-Wright

Vox Angelica's own arrangement of the well known hymn 'Of the Father's love begotten' is a good anthem choice for a church wedding. It reminds us of the love of God in creating the world.

The Lord bless you and keep you - John Rutter

A beautiful setting which would be ideal as a sung blessing at the end of the prayers, or during the signing of the register:

'The Lord bless you and keep you, the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you. The Lord lift up the light of his countenance upon you and give you peace. Amen.'

The Lord is my shepherd - various composers: Schubert, Crimond, Gordon Jacobs, Howard Goodall

Psalm 23. You could have this text as one of your hymns (the Crimond version is ideal for this), or you could have one of the other versions sung during the signing of the register. The Schubert and Gordon Jacobs versions are particularly well known traditional arrangements for choir, and the Howard Goodall was used as the theme music for *The Vicar of Dibley*.

What wondrous love - trad American folk hymn, arr. Leah Perona-Wright

Vox Angelica's own arrangement. This speaks of singing for all eternity as a response to the ultimate love of God who 'laid aside His crown for my soul'. An uplifting and beautiful piece of music.

OTHER MUSIC

Can't help lovin' that man - Kern

Written for the musical *Showboat*, this song is well known and well loved in its own right now: 'Fish got to swim and birds got to fly, I got to love one man till I die, Can't help lovin' that man of mine....'

Chapel of love

A popular song covered by many bands, and featured in the hit film *Four weddings and a funeral*. Can work really well at the beginning of a church wedding for a lighter touch to the music, helping to settle the congregation before the bride enters the church.

Close to you - Bacharach

The hit song performed by The Carpenters and featured in the film *There's something about Mary*. This is guaranteed to bring a smile to any face at your wedding!

Dome epais (Flower duet) - Delibes

The duet from the opera *Lakme*. Also used as the theme for British Airways advertising. Ideal for those who want a more classical choice of music.

The French text translates as:

'Under a dome of white jasmine with the roses entwined together,
On a river bank covered with flowers laughing in the morning,
Gently floating on it's charming risings
On the river's current, on the shining waves one hand reaches
Reaches for the bank where the spring sleeps and the birds, the birds sing.
Under a dome of white jasmine Ah! calling us together!'

Fly me to the moon - Bart Howard

A fast, jazzy version of the love song made famous by Frank Sinatra, and performed by many other jazz legends since.

It was a lover and his lass - various

There are various settings of this well known text from Shakespeare's *As you like it*, including a duet by John Rutter, and solo versions ranging from early composers such as Morley through to contemporary settings by female composer Madeleine Dring.

I've got you under my skin - Cole Porter, arr. Katherine Walker

Originally written for the musical *Born to Dance* this well known song has been covered by many singers and became a signature tune for Frank Sinatra.

'I've got you under my skin. I've got you deep in the heart of me. So deep in my heart, you're really a part of me...'

May it be - Enya

The haunting celtic song performed by Enya on the *Lord of the Rings* soundtrack. The text speaks of having hope, finding your way, and a promise living within you now.

Misty - Erroll Garner, arr. Gwyn Arch

A beautiful jazz classic with romantic words suitable for a wedding wherever it takes place: 'Look at me, I'm as helpless as a kitten up a tree, and I feel like I'm clinging to a cloud. I can't understand, I get misty, just holding your hand...'

One hand, one heart - Bernstein

From the wedding scene in the musical *West Side Story*. Absolutely perfect for any wedding and guaranteed to bring a tear to the eye!:

'Make of our hands one hand, make of our hearts one heart, make of our vows one last vow, only death will part us now. Make of our lives one life, day after day one life. Now it begins, now we start: one hand, one heart, even death won't part us now.'

Songbird - Christine McVie, arr. Leah Perona-Wright

Made famous by the guitarist and singer Eva Cassidy, the words of this song are moving, and ideal for a wedding:

'For you, there'll be no crying. For you the sun will be shining.
Cos I feel that when I'm with you, it's alright, I know it's right.'
And the songbirds keep singing like they know the score,
And I love you, I love you, I love you like never before...'

Summertime - Gershwin, arr. Leah Perona-Wright

Depending on the time of year your wedding takes place, this smooth jazz classic could add some real class to the ceremony!

The rose - Amanda McBroom, arr. Gwyn Arch

This is a setting of a poem which asks what love is. The words and music are beautiful and ideal for both church and non-church weddings. A bit of a tear jerker!

'Some say love, it is a river, that drowns the tender reed.
Some say love, it is a razor, that leaves your soul to bleed.
Some say love, it is a hunger, an endless aching need.
I say love, it is a flower, and you its only seed.
It's the heart afraid of breaking that never learns to dance.
It's the dream afraid of waking that never takes the chance.
It's the one who won't be taken who cannot seem to give,
And the soul afraid of dying that never learns to live.
When the night has been too lonely and the road has been too long,
And you think that love is only for the lucky and the strong;
Just remember, in the winter, far beneath the bitter snows,
Lies the seed, that with the sun's love, in the spring becomes the rose.'

NOTES

This page is blank for your own notes as you plan the music for your special day.