

Wedding Band Basics

Never hired music for an event before? You're not alone! Lots of folks go through this new experience everyday. Below are five basic tips to help you in the musical decision process.

1. **Define the style and mood of your wedding.**
2. **Understand the difference in sound quality and style between live music and a DJ for special occasions.**
3. **Use the media available to make your decision.**
4. **Hire a professional events band.**
5. **Make the most of the band you're hiring.**

1. Define the style and mood of your wedding.

Deciding a theme or style for your wedding can be driven by any number of aspects to the event. Some brides start with the dress selection, then build the theme around its design. Some couples start with the choice of venue and time of day – a morning outdoors event, an afternoon affair at a private home, an evening ceremony and reception at a country club or hotel – each has a different look and feel. Some folks start with their love of music!

How ever you choose your theme, consider the level of formality that feels like a reflection of you and/or your families. Finally, keep in mind the number of guests and the variety of their ages and tastes. The musical program will bring the theme and mood to life throughout the day's events for everyone to enjoy.

2. Understand the difference in sound quality and style between live music and a DJ for special occasions.

Your wedding day is not only a momentous occasion for you, but it's one of the most wonderful gifts you can extend to family and friends you invite. For many of us, our wedding is the biggest, most memorable party we can give in our lifetime – creating memories for everyone who participates in the day.

It's important to remember how meaningful music is in our everyday lives – the bride and groom's special songs, favorite big band numbers from a grandparent's day, a contemporary ballad that sways the whole room. Flawlessly re-creating each song in performance style and sound is what a professional live band can do, under the guidance of a bandleader who expertly observes and responds to the pulse of the crowd. Additionally, live music can be easier to modulate in volume while not losing the music's listen-ability.

3. Use the media available to make your decision.

Recognize that it will be next to impossible to hear a professional events band performing live – unless you are invited to the event. Even then, each event is so different it would be difficult to make an evaluation. And, unless you're a confirmed dance club maven, few of us have the time to hunt down bands playing in public venues and go and pay a cover charge to hear them. Even then you would probably come away not knowing if they could perform the responsibilities an events band is experienced in handling.

But this is what you can do:

- Use the soundclips on band websites to get a quick, rough idea of what the band is like.
- Always ask for the band's demo or sampler CD to be sent to you.
- Review the band biographies and other information about the musicians' experience, especially the bandleader.
- Check out what other CDs band members have made, usually with other bands or artists. Events bands rarely cut their own records, but if they have one, listen to it.

4. Hire a professional events band.

It can be very tempting to hire that jammin' band you heard last Saturday night, but try to remember the other responsibilities a band carries, especially during a wedding reception. All professional event orchestras and bands include a professional master of ceremonies who makes announcements, interacts with your guests and makes sure key moments are not missed. Special occasions have special requirements, working with the best band you can afford will insure a memorable time for everyone.

5. Make the most of the band you're hiring.

Music is a key ingredient for your wedding day. Do a little musical thinking and planning up front and it will benefit you in the long run. Discuss all your musical needs for the day with a professional orchestra leader (use our *Anatomy of a Wedding* to help you plan). You'll be able to co-create the perfect musical program for the mood and style you want, from your march down the aisle to the reception's last dance! There are three distinct benefits for thinking holistically about the day's events and their music requirements:

- ***Reduces the hassle-factor***
By consolidating all your musical services with one professional "supplier", everybody has "the big picture" for the day's events so there is seamless continuity from one venue to the next. Most importantly, you have one point of contact for the entire day, whether you're speaking to a band member or the orchestra leader, should any last minute changes come up.
- ***Reduces the overall expense***
Once an orchestra leader understands the entire day's musical requirements, he can work with you to give you the best value for your money. You get professional musicians at each step of this important day and you get a great price.
- ***Reduces stress!***
A professional orchestra leader, more than anything, wants you, your family and your

guests to enjoy this special day. It's their job to create a continuously delightful experience while you have a great time enjoying the day. Their goal is to provide a beautiful musical score to the movie of your life – as individual as you are!

We hope these basic guidelines for selecting a live band for your special day are helpful in the planning process, if you have any questions or comments, please contact us directly!

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