

The Essential Wedding Music Handbook



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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to our Wedding Music Handbook, your go-to guide for creating the wedding soundtrack of your dreams!

We're thrilled to take you on this musical journey as you prepare for one of the most memorable days of your life. In this handbook, we'll dive into everything you need to know about finding and booking the perfect wedding band to elevate your celebration and make it truly memorable for years to come.



"Where words fail, music speaks."

Hans Christian Andersen

Before You Get Started

- Draw up a rough itinerary for the day - this way you can help prospective musicians propose arrival times, performance times, and consider important logistic requirements which may impact other components of the day.
- Think about whether you'd like live music for your ceremony, afternoon reception, wedding breakfast, and/or the evening entertainment only. You may find a single supplier who can provide all of the above giving you peace of mind and one easy transaction (and maybe a discounted rate, too!)
- Have a budget in mind, but consider being flexible if you can. As the adage goes, you get what you pay for, and it will almost always be worth paying a bit more for a higher quality musician or additional service.
- It's handy to be aware that some bands will have several sizes of line-up, offering you an array of performance options, and with your choice of a smaller, or larger outfit to suit your budget and vision for the music. Be sure to ask about this if you're looking to come in budget, or have some spare to allocate to the dance floor!

This information is useful to help prospective musicians quote and understand your vision for your day. Be sure to specify as much as you can when you contact groups so they can understand your dream wedding and help you achieve it.



*"Music is the divine way to tell
beautiful, poetic things to the heart."*

Pablo Casals

Finding Your Perfect Wedding Band

The search for your band typically starts once you have selected and booked your venue, and there are a number of really useful ways to find your musician or band. Word of mouth still plays a large role in recommendations, however there are lots of practical online platforms that will promote and present quality bands for you.

We recommend sites like [Encore Musicians](#) and [FixTheMusic](#), who host a wide range of musicians and work on a commission basis, incorporating their rates into the fee that the musicians quote.

If you wanted to go direct, you can try wedding planning websites like [Hitched](#) and [Bridebook](#) where you can even plan the rest of your day with the suppliers found there. This will give you **direct access to the bands**, although they will often have the additional costs of advertising to incorporate into their fees.

To go even more direct, write down some keywords to describe the theme of your wedding, the music you like and the type of venue you have selected, plus the county your wedding is taking place in. Input these into Google and you will get recommendations for **top-rated wedding bands**, however it's likely that agencies will have a host of ads and links promoting their own acts (which will be more expensive).

Your wedding band sets the tone for your entire celebration, so it's essential to find the perfect match. When it comes to confirming a band, there's definitely a number of things to look out for:

Does the band match your venue, and theme or aesthetic you have in mind for your big day? ☐

Do they have pictures and videos to show you what they look and sound like in action? ☐

Do they respond to messages quickly giving you confidence in their professionalism? ☐

Can they tailor their music to your tastes to make the day truly yours? ☐

Do they offer additional services (like a DJ or photobooth) to make your life simple? ☐

Can they perform your ceremony or first dance songs for you, to make your intimate moments even more special? ☐

Do they have any accreditations or awards validating their credentials? Do they have any corporate clients? ☐

Do they have recent testimonials and reviews? ☐

Are they members of performance associations/unions? ☐

Do they have Public Liability Insurance and PAT certification? ☐

Personalising Your Soundtrack

Everyone has songs that mean something to them – and music plays a big part in creating memories on a wedding day. Choosing your soundtrack for your processional (entry music), your recessional (exit music), your first dance, and the types of songs you'd choose to get your friends on the dance floor will all become priceless memories to look back on. There can be as many musical moments as you choose, but here is a list of key parts of your day to consider:

- Prelude (as guests are being seated for the ceremony)
- Processional (as the bridesmaids and bride walk down the aisle)
- Signing of the register
- Recessional (as the couple leaves the ceremony)
- Drinks reception
- Entrance of couple to the party
- First dance
- Father / daughter & mother / son dance
- Cake cutting
- Last dance of the night!



Ask the band how much flexibility they have in customising their set list to your favourite songs, artists and music styles. Remember your band is the expert at filling the dance floor, so it's worth having flexibility from both parties to make sure the dance floor is filled with the music you love.

General Things to Be Aware Of

Here is a shortlist of some general information to be aware of and questions to ask when booking a band...

- Most bands will likely require a deposit (typically 25% of the total fee) with the balance due shortly before the big day.
- Be sure to check the size of the area the band requires to perform in as it's often larger than you might think.
- A band should be able to supply a competent DJ service, saving you money and providing music for the duration of the evening.
- They should also be able to provide a microphone for speeches if required.
- Ask what provision the band has in the event of a band member becoming ill or unable to perform at a booking – professional bands will have a large contact book of backup musicians to make sure your party happens regardless.
- Give your band as much notice as possible regarding song choices for first dance/ceremony songs. Ideally more than two weeks, since good bands will have lots of performances going on, especially during the high season.
- Check your band has Public Liability Insurance and PAT certification for their equipment. Your venue will most likely require to see this as well.
- Make sure the venue has sufficient access to mains electricity sockets for the band. If the reception is taking place in a marquee or tipi, check how much power the band requires for a generator (and make sure any other suppliers give you details so the generator is sufficient for them all).
- Live music sets for the evening party are often best received later into the evening once guests have eaten and had a visit to the bar! Get value for money by having the band start a bit later (unless you have an early finish or guests likely to leave before 10pm).

Venue Questions

There has been an increasing tendency to **reduce volume at venues**, primarily to appease neighbours who will often be hearing events happening, most days of the week in some cases.

With that in mind it's worth checking any limitations your venue has for indoor and outdoor music. This is particularly important for your musicians to know so they can adapt accordingly with specialist equipment, and also manage your expectations of what's practical at your chosen venue.



Venues will often have **sound limiters** indoors, which will cut the electricity to the band's equipment if their volume is over a set level for a given duration. Make sure your band is familiar and comfortable with working with these as they can be disruptive to parties with inexperienced bands.

Some venues will also stipulate **unamplified music outside** or don't have adequate power where you're having your ceremony. Be sure your musicians are confident they will be heard, or have suitable battery amplification to make sure your ceremony is absolutely perfect!

Roaming bands are becoming increasingly popular - where the performers move amongst your guests as they play. This can be particularly effective during drinks receptions and wedding breakfasts, giving your day a special something that your guests will absolutely love! Ask your evening band if they can accommodate this as well as the evening performance for a cost-effective and pain-free way of elevating your afternoon.

Final Thoughts

With all the technology at your disposal, the number of potential acts you can choose from for your wedding has exploded, however there are lots of ways to make sure you get the perfect group that will help make your day as perfect as possible.

Be sure to ask lots of questions of any potential group, and get to know them a little bit if you can - at the end of the day they are playing a critical role in one of the biggest celebrations of your life. A musician or group who cares about their responsibility to serving your needs and vision is a valuable asset to your day, so be sure to take note of these considerations too.



Most of all, have fun in the process. Take time to visualise how you want your guests to feel as well, the opportunities you want to have throughout the day - whether you want to spend time talking or dancing - and how you can have as much confidence as possible that your music partnership is the right one. With these things in mind, you can be sure you will have the best 'happy ever after' possible!

About the Author

Gary Mullins is a professional musician of twenty years, having studied a degree in Popular Music Performance at the prestigious Guitar Institute in London. Since graduating in 2005, Gary has performed both solo and in many bands, in countless theatres and venues all over the United Kingdom and the wider world.

With an entrepreneurial vision to keep himself in work, he successfully set up several bands to perform in, as well as an entertainment agency to represent them, and a marketing agency to promote them.

Alongside many hundreds of happy couples, he has provided bands for corporate clients including Disney, Google, Gumtree, Flogas, National Grid, Nestle and many more.

To find out more about Gary and his businesses visit...

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