

ABOUT CEREMONY LIVE MUSICIANS

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That amazing moment wherein you pledge your love and fidelity to the one who holds your heart will be special and beautiful whether you walk down the aisle to What a Wonderful World playing through a boom box, Pachelbel's Canon played by an organist, or serene silence. But there is something to be said for the atmosphere-enhancing properties of live music at a wedding ceremony, particularly in the time leading up to the processional. The prelude is a rare treat for your wedding guests when performed by a harpist, a string trio, an organist or pianist, a solo vocalist, or a classical guitarist.

Live ceremony musicians are seldom called upon to adapt to changing conditions – at most weddings, the musicians will play predetermined pieces during the prelude, the seating of the mothers, the bridal party processional, the bride's entrance, and the recessional. Some brides and grooms may also ask their ceremony musicians to accompany the unity candle or rose ceremonies, Holy Communion, a moment of quiet reflection, or some other part of the ceremony. And many couples will have their ceremony musicians play a joyful postlude while guests take their leave.

However, while there is most definitely a scripted order of events a live ceremony musician will follow, she or he must nonetheless be prepared to improvise. An experienced musician will know what to do if the groom is late or the bride is taking longer than anticipated to get ready, and can shorten or lengthen a piece if the size of the wedding party has unexpectedly changed. Your ceremony musician will work with you to create a playlist with both beauty and contingencies in mind – while brides always hope that nothing will go awry, having a live musician at the wedding ceremony can add a measure of peace of mind.

Choosing ceremony music that is emblematic of your and your intended's heritage is a wonderful way to celebrate your culture or cultures. A classic trio or elegant harpist may seem like the obvious choices, but consider less traditional options like a bagpiper, a steel drum player, or gospel group. A trumpeter can add majesty to your ceremony, while a smooth soprano saxophonist will relax your wedding guests. No matter what sort of musician you choose, you may be tempted to forgo a contract or use a simplified agreement because a ceremony musician's role is so straightforward. But the contract you and your ceremony musician sign is there to ensure that you and they are thinking in concert with one another so that your wedding ceremony will be every bit as magical and spectacular as you dreamed it would be.

Smart Hint: Don't include more than two vocal solos during the ceremony itself because too many musical numbers can turn your wedding into something of a show. Your vocalist can participate in other ways if you so choose, for example by leading a hymn in a religious ceremony or singing during the prelude and postlude.