

## take note

### CEREMONY-MUSIC TIPS

BY GAIL REITENBACH

A wedding without music is like a movie without a soundtrack: The drama may be there, but there's nothing in the background to enhance the mood. If you'll be marrying in a church or synagogue, there may be special considerations when choosing your music. Remember these inside tips for working with the site's musicians.

#### the players

When you pick a ceremony site, you're not just getting a building and an officiant; you're also getting a musician. Typically, the sanctuary's organist has the "right of first refusal" for weddings—if that person is available on your wedding day, he or she will be your organist. If that person is unavailable, it may be up to you to find a substitute; ask the regular organist for recommendations.

While many brides like to walk down the aisle to majestic organ music, you can vary the mood at different parts of the ceremony with vocalists, harpists, trumpeters, flutists, and violinists. The options are limited only by your budget and the musicians' availability.

Ask your musicians what pieces they recommend for a church or synagogue ceremony, and discuss your own requests. Make sure the selections work with the instruments. For example, Pachelbel's "Canon in D" and Bach's "Air on a 'G' String"—written for, and usually performed by, strings—will sound different when played on an organ or flute.

#### prelude to a wedding

Book your organist when you reserve the sanctuary, and schedule a meeting at least one month before the wedding. If you're using additional musicians, ask about rehearsal arrangements. As the resident musician, the organist will become the de facto music coordinator, so involve him or her early.

Organists typically consult with the couple about music for the processional, recessional, and the ceremony itself. If you have special requests for prelude music, let the organist know right away; you may be asked to pay extra, because most organists choose the prelude music themselves.

It's possible that your organist will provide 30 minutes of prelude music. However, some plan only 10 to 15 minutes of music, which is often sufficient. If you want a half hour, be prepared to pay for it, but consider that most wedding guests will arrive only a few minutes before the ceremony begins.

#### the sound of music

Your mother walked down the aisle to Mendelssohn's "Wedding March," and you want to continue that tradition. It's a lovely idea, but many churches won't allow cer-

tain secular music, including Mendelssohn and Wagner's "Bridal Chorus" ("Here Comes the Bride"), in sacred ceremonies.

Some churches have written music policies. At others, the clergy person, organist, or wedding planner tries to steer couples toward appropriate selections. If you have your heart set on a piece that your church won't allow, remember that in choosing a house of worship, you've also chosen its guidelines.

To help you select music, some organists provide a tape of processional and recessional pieces played on the church's organ. If the organist isn't available for a live demonstration, the tape will give you a good idea of how the music will actually sound on your wedding day.

If you want to walk down the aisle to something different than the music used for your bridesmaids, the two selections should be in the same or a related key so the segue will not be abrupt. Also, it's easier to end a bridesmaids' processional gracefully if it has several short sections rather than one long melody.

#### money matters

When you meet to choose music, ask when payment is due. Fees may vary with the size of the community and house of worship, as well as the organist's experience, but basic fees (without special requests or accompanying musicians) range from \$100 to about \$250.

Keep in mind that you're paying musicians for their time spent rehearsing as well as playing at the wedding. You may have to reimburse them for purchases of sheet music for special requests; many musicians prefer to shop themselves, so that they can choose particular arrangements.

#### classic selections

These and many other classical pieces are appropriate for ceremony music. Exultant hymns can also give church weddings a joyous feel. Many of the following can be either processionals or recessionals:

- "Pictures at an Exhibition," Mussorgsky
- "Trumpet Voluntary," Clarke
- "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring," J. S. Bach
- "Canon in D," Pachelbel
- "Air" from *Water Music*, Handel
- "Ave Maria," Gounod or Schubert
- "Prelude 1" from *The Well-Tempered Clavier*, J. S. Bach
- "Air on a 'G' String," J. S. Bach
- "The Heavens Declare the Glory of God," Marcello
- "Allegro" from "Spring," *The Four Seasons*, Vivaldi

For more inspiration and music suggestions, try "BRIDE'S Guide to Wedding Music" CD; call 800-550-6555.