

# *Diane Martinson's Wedding Music Planner*

Plan the perfect music for your wedding day

\*Many times a house of worship will have strict guidelines about the musicians and wedding song selections used during your ceremony. 4 months prior to the wedding, ask your church wedding coordinator or officiant for a ceremony outline to help you with your music decisions.

## **Music Consultation Meeting**

3-4 months prior to the wedding, schedule a music consultation with your musicians. Bring your ceremony outline to the meeting. Your musicians will present song options for you to choose from if you have not already made some selections. There may be additional music costs for any new special song requests or sheet music that requires arranging or extra rehearsal time.

## **Order of Music Placement for the Ceremony**

**The Prelude:** Music playing while guests are arriving at the ceremony site. Typically, music plays 20 minutes before the ceremony starts. This music is usually selected by the instrumentalists.

**Vocal Prelude (option):** A special song for the seating of the family and/or lighting of altar candles. This is also a place that a secular (not specifically religious) song may be sung that would otherwise not be permitted within the ceremony. In most houses of worship the ceremony technically starts with the Processional and ends with the Recessional.

**The Processional:** The bridal party and then the bride make their entrance. This may be one song with a pause before the bride's entrance, or 2 selections; one for the bridal party and then one for the bride. This is usually an instrumental selection.

**Ceremony Vocal Solo:** Near the beginning of the ceremony, this usually follows the welcome or the readings.

**Unity Candle Vocal Solo:** After the vows and ring exchange, during the lighting of the unity candle or sand ceremony. During this music, an exchange of greetings and hugs with your family, or a rose exchange may also take place.

**Vocal Blessing Song (option):** Before the pronouncement of the couple. Examples include The Irish Blessing, The Lord's Prayer, Apache Wedding Blessing Song, or A Gaelic Blessing.

**Communion Song (option):** Holy communion is standard in some church wedding ceremonies. It usually follows The Lord's Prayer, before the benediction and presentation of the couple. A vocal selection is followed by instrumental music if needed.

**The Recessional:** Right after the presentation of the couple; The bride and groom exit to this music, followed by the wedding party and family members. This is usually an instrumental selection.

**Postlude:** Music while guests are leaving. Usually this music is selected by the instrumentalists, but you are certainly welcome to make the selection. (continued)

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## **Ceremony Programs**

Music titles are listed in the program as part of the order of ceremony. Song titles for the Prelude and Postlude are not typically included. The musicians' names are also included in the program after the wedding party, readers, and officiant.

## **Wedding Ceremony Outline Example 1**

Wedding ceremony outlines vary by church and wedding officiant. Below is an example that would fit most non-Catholic ceremonies.

- **Prelude**
- **Vocal Prelude** (optional)
- **Processional**
- Welcome
- Opening Prayer
- Reading 1 / Reading 2 (optional)
- **Vocal Solo**
- Homily
- Declaration of Consent
- Exchange of Vows
- Exchange of Rings
- Declaration of Marriage
- Lighting of Unity Candle / **Vocal Solo**
- Prayer / **Vocal Blessing** (optional)
- Communion / **Vocal Solo** (optional)
- **Recessional**
- **Postlude**

## **Wedding Ceremony Outline Example 2**

**Catholic Ceremonies** will have more music sections and opportunities. Your church will provide the outline of the wedding ceremony mass to indicate the additional places for music selections. All music must be approved by your priest. Your church may provide an organist and a cantor. You must have permission to hire a soloist. Below is an example of a Catholic ceremony.

- **Prelude**
- **Vocal Prelude** (optional)
- **Processional**
- Welcome
- **Opening Hymn** (optional) / Prayer
- Reading 1
- **Responsorial Psalm - Hymn**
- Reading 2 (optional)
- **Gospel Acclamation Hymn**
- Gospel
- Homily
- Declaration of Consent
- Exchange of Vows
- Exchange of Rings
- Declaration of Marriage
- Lighting of Unity Candle / **Vocal Solo**
- Preparation of the Gifts
- **Liturgy of the Eucharist**  
(Holy Holy, Memorial Acclamation, Amen) spoken by the priest or sung by cantor or soloist
- The Lord's Prayer
- Communion / **Vocal Song**
- Benediction
- Presentation of the couple
- **Recessional**
- **Postlude**