

MUSIC FOR WEDDINGS
Some guidelines

DRAFT

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MUSIC FOR WEDDINGS

Some Guidelines

Please consult the diocesan music guidelines for the celebration of the Sunday liturgy as well.

1. The wedding liturgy is an act of worship of the gathered community: it is a celebration of the parish community and is not only the couple's day, or certainly not the "bride's day." All the music used then should be an expression of the worship of the parish community and the gathered Christian assembly. (**Marriage Ritual # 26**)
2. Well chosen music can draw people into the celebration with heart, mind and spirit, in a way that nothing else can. The couple will want those who come to the wedding liturgy to enter into the celebration by participating fully in the liturgy. Music which can be sung by everyone should be chosen and not music just for listening.
3. The celebration of the community's Sunday liturgy is the norm for all celebrations in a parish, including weddings. For this reason the couple should approach the music ministers of the parish to plan the music for their wedding, and the music for the most part should be music which is used for Sunday liturgies.
4. Singers and musicians must be aware that they are not on stage nor are they there to entertain; their role is to serve the worship of the community. An individual singer is not a "soloist" as such but functions as a cantor whose role is to sing the psalm and be the "animator" of the community's song.
5. When making choices, there are several points to keep in mind. The selection should fit its particular function in the liturgy.

Introductory Rites and Liturgy of the Word

- **The ENTRANCE SONG** should be a joyful song of praise and thanksgiving to God. This song may be sung during the procession or after the procession has been completed. MR# 26; 38; 46)
- **The Responsorial Psalm** which follows the first reading is an important sung part of the liturgy. There are various settings of Psalm 128, (a recommended one for weddings) see Catholic Book of Worship III. There are also suggestions for other psalms in the lectionary. The cantor sings the verses and invites the assembly's sung response as at a Sunday liturgy.
- **The Gospel Acclamation** is sung before the proclamation of the gospel. Led by the cantor or choir the setting chosen should be a familiar one and appropriate for the liturgical season.

Liturgy of the Eucharist

- The acclamations of the Eucharistic Prayer : Holy, Holy; Memorial Acclamation; Great Amen are meant to be sung . Singing the setting of these used at the parish Sunday liturgy or another well-known one , will make it easier for the assembly to sing . The same applies to the Lamb of God.
- The Lord's Prayer** is everyone's prayer and should never be sung by only one person. If it is to be sung by the whole assembly, use a setting everyone knows. Otherwise use the spoken prayer.

The COMMUNION SONG should be about what the community is doing: receiving Communion. Any other songs, especially a soloist singing "Ave Maria" or any other Marian song should **NOT** be used during the communion rite.

- If a couple wishes to use a Marian song, or another religious song that does not function within the liturgy, it may be used either before the liturgy begins or during the signing of the register.
- Songs which are not liturgical should be examined carefully to ascertain the appropriateness of the text. MR # 26(Be sure to read the words all the way through.) You may wish to apply the following questions to check out the suitability of a text:

Will this song help all present to open themselves to God: will it enhance the worship or be a distraction?

Do the words express a Christian view of love, or a shallow, soap-opera view? Are they theologically sound, and are they fitting for the celebration of a sacrament of the Church?

Does the song fit the part of the liturgy for which it is intended?

Does the music draw people into real participation or does it invite them to become mere spectators?

Is the song within the capabilities of those singing and playing it?

In general:

- Even if a love song mentions God, it may not be appropriate for an act of worship; an expression of a love that focuses on the physical and emotional aspects is not what the love of God for God's people is about. Words which use the first person (for example, the bride and groom addressing each other) are not appropriate for public prayer. Songs from the entertainment world are almost never suitable for the wedding liturgy. MR # 26
- Melodies, too, should be considered carefully. People are actually more easily influenced by the music than the words, because the influence is often unconscious. Tunes which originate in stage or screen productions can insidiously subvert the Christian mystery of love. Simply changing the words of a song is not sufficient to make it suitable. MR # 26
- There may be songs, especially love songs, which are very significant for a couple. These need not be used in the liturgy but can be used at some other time during the wedding day, e.g. during the reception or at the banquet.
- **Instrumental music** also has a place in the wedding liturgy, e.g. the processional (which can be followed by an entrance or a gathering hymn) and the recessional. The "soap opera" wedding is not a good model for the Christian marriage liturgy. For example "Here Comes the Bride" and Mendelssohn's "Wedding March" even in their original context have nothing to do with Christian marriage,.
- Taped music and any other form of pre-recorded music is not acceptable for the liturgy. The liturgy is the action of the people there to worship, and music which is not "live" music contradicts this principle.

- A couple should both be involved in planning the music, together with the music ministers of the parish. It is best that the couple choose the readings for the liturgy first, and then let the selection of music flow from the readings.

Music Selections for a Wedding Liturgy

The following selections are by no means a comprehensive list of music that can be chosen. However the selections are a guide to appropriate choices as far as texts and style are concerned.

ENTRANCE SONG

The ENTRANCE SONG should be a joyful song of praise and thanksgiving to God. This song may be sung during the procession or after the procession has been completed. (MR# 26; 38; 46)

From Catholic Book of Worship III

God who blessed new beginnings	626	God is alive	591
*As we gather at your table	583	O bless the Lord	562
Joyful, joyful we adore you	511	O praise the Lord, sing unto God	593
Canticle of the Sun	542	God is love! The heavens are telling	560
Love divine, all loves excelling	625	Let all the earth cry out	589
*Christians, lift up your hearts	585	Wondrous is your name	632
*Church of God	581	God, the Spirit, guide and guardian	510
Come, rejoice before your maker	577	How great the signs of God's love	615
*Gather us in	587	To Abraham and Sarah	519
God Created Earth and Heaven	512	For the Beauty of the Earth	531
*This selection is appropriate only if the eucharist is being celebrated.			

From Catholic Book of Worship II

All creatures of our God	620	May the grace of Christ	596
God created earth and heaven	625	Glorious God	628
All people that on earth do dwell	621	Glory be to God the Father	528
Alleluia, give thanks	496	I was full of joy	718
Alleluia, sing to Jesus	536	God, who gives to life its goodness	643
Bless the Lord	626	Strong is God's love for us	42

Other songs from the common repertoire:

All my days	Anthem	City of God
If God is for us	For you are my God	Glory and praise to our God
Sing to the mountains	Sing a new song	

RESPONSORIAL PSALM:

**“ This is sung by a cantor with the people singing the refrain.
It should not be replaced by a hymn.” MR # 26**

From Catholic Book of Worship III (Numbers in parentheses are from CBW II.)

Psalm 128: 33, 191, 208, 628 (129, 308, 325, 431)

Psalm 33: 47, 77, 100, 109, 168 (35, 140, 182, 213, 224, 285, 314)

Psalm 34: 55, 167, 170, 173, 201, 221, 610 (148, 230, 284, 287, 290, 318, 333, 413, 414, 415, 668)

Psalm 103: 52, 130, 181, 217, 225A, 565 (36, 145, 247, 298, 627)

Psalm 145: 102, 151, 161, 163, 184, 204, 574 (215, 268, 278, 280, 301)

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Selected verses can be found in CBW III, no. 696 (CBW II, no. 37). For the acclamation itself see CBW III, no. 247 - 265, 549 (351 - 364) or in the G.P., 162 - 165.

If the acclamation is not sung it is better to omit it . MR # 26, 39

Note: If the eucharist is not celebrated, an acclamation of praise may be sung right after the exchange of rings. See CBW III 4C or G.P. 219.

PREPARATION OF GIFTS (when the eucharist is celebrated) See diocesan music guidelines # C 1

From Catholic Book of Worship III

**Come, Lord Jesus	627	God, whose love in Jesus found us	501
**Where there is love	691	When love is found	629
Lord, you search me	474	**Blest are they	522
The song of the beatitudes	523	Lord, make us servants	630
Lord, whose love in humble service	507	To Abraham and Sarah	519
Sing of One who walks beside us	405	Break not the circle	524
For the beauty of the earth	531		

.**This selection is also appropriate for singing during the signing of the register at the end of the liturgy.

From Catholic Book of Worship, II

**O perfect love	598	**Love live with you	595
**God of love, O God of goodness	597	**Tell out, my soul	638

Other songs from the common repertoire:

All that we have
Be glad, O people
Come now, my love
**Like a seal on your heart
Man and woman

Shalom
At all times
**Beginning today
**For everything there is a time
**The love of God
**Only a shadow
**A time for building bridges

Eucharistic Acclamations:

The acclamations of the Eucharistic Prayer : Holy, Holy; Memorial Acclamation; Great Amen are meant to be sung . Singing the setting of these used at the parish Sunday liturgy or another well-known one , will make it easier for the assembly to sing . The same applies to the Lamb of God.

COMMUNION SONGS

See diocesan music guidelines for further information : C 4

From Catholic Book of Worship III (Numbers, and titles, in parentheses refer to CBW II)

Bless the Lord	684	Earthen Vessels	445
Bread of life	597	Christians, let us love	595 (572)
Eat this bread	602	Gather us together	601
Gentle shepherd	598	Gift of finest wheat	603 (570)
I am the living bread	605	No greater love	599
Now in this banquet	608	Our daily bread	600
Seed, scattered and sown	604	Take and eat	611
Taste and see	610 (668)	The song of beatitudes	523
Where there is love (Dwelling place 710)	631		

From the common repertoire:

Something which is known
Our blessing cup
**On eagles' wings

You are near
Peace prayer
One bread, one body

During the SIGNING OF THE REGISTER one of the selections marked with a double asterisk (see selections for the preparation of gifts) may be sung or one of the following from the common repertoire:

Rainbow
Wherever you go
My soul rejoices (or another setting of the Magnificat)

It is also appropriate to have instrumental music during the signing of the register and then to sing a final song while the couple and the attendants leave the church. Some suggestions are given; some of the songs of praise suggested for the entrance are also appropriate as a final song. Having instrumental music only at the end of the liturgy is also appropriate.

There is no mention in the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* of any song or music in the concluding rites of the Mass.

Missioning Song

From Catholic Book of Worship III

God, who gives to life its goodness	559(643)	O sing to God	544
Praise to the Lord	568 (653)	Sing to the Lord	569
You are the voice	576	Sent forth by God's blessing	533

Appropriate Music from Other Sources

From *Music for Wedding Services: An Ecumenical Collection* (Novalis)

This publication includes a musician's copy, a congregational booklet, a planner for engaged couples, and an audio cassette demonstrating the selections included in the collection

- Ave Maria, three settings (signing of the documents)
- Ave Verum or Panis Angelicus (after but not during communion)
- Blessed Are You Who Love the Lord (prep. of gifts or signing of documents)
- Bridal Prayer (prep. of gifts or signing of documents)
- No Greater Love Than This (communion or signing of documents)
- Where There Is Love (signing of documents)
- Your Goodness, O God (communion)
- A Nuptial Blessing (to be used only when the presider sings the part designated for the presider)
- God, We Praise You (entrance or opening song)
- God of Love and Joy and Laughter (entrance or opening song)

Selections for a Choir

- Blessing Prayer, David Haas (GIA Publications)
- The Love God Has for Us, SATB, Randolph Currie (GIA)
- Four Hymns for Weddings, unison or two-voice chairs, Carroll Thomas Andrews (GIA) Blest are They, David Haas (GIA)
- Where There is Love, canter or SATB choir, Howard Hughes (GIA)
- Great is the Lord, SATB, Paul Inwood (OCP Publications, Portland OR)
- Send Us as Your Blessing, Lord, SATB, Christopher Walker (OCP)
- O Blessed Are Those, SATB, Paul Inwood (OCP)

Songs unacceptable for the wedding liturgy

“ What is being brought to expression in a wedding liturgy is the mystery of human love as a covenant relationship. Songs which express the religious dimension of love explicitly, of course, have pride of choice. Songs which imply this religious dimension are also suitable. But a song which denies this dimension either explicitly or implicitly must be avoided at all costs, for it belies the mystery: it is falsehood in liturgy.”

MR # 26

The songs of the liturgy should express praise of God and speak of the love of the Lord for God's people; songs that focus only on the love of the couple for each other do not express the love of God in the same way.

There are always new songs that become popular, and keeping such a list up to date is not possible. These songs are better at some other part of the festivities i.e. the reception

This list is by no means complete but merely indicates what type of songs are not appropriate for the liturgy.

A Time for Us
Annie's Song (Denver)
And I love You So
Brian's Song (Hands of Time)
Cherish
Climb Ev'ry Mountain
Close to You
Colour My World
Day by Day
Evergreen
Follow Me
For All We Know
How Deep is Your Love
I Don't know How to Love Him
If
Impossible Dream
I Honestly Love You
If Ever I Would Leave You

In a Country Churchyard
Just the Way You Are
Let it Be
Let it Be Me
Let Me be the One
Love Story (Theme)
My Melody of Love
My Way
Only Love is Real
The Rose
The Song of Love
Sunrise, Sunset
Turn Around, Look at Me
Wedding Song (Stookey)
Without Your Love
We've Only Just Begun
What are You Doing for the Rest of Your Life
You Light up My Life
You are the Sunshine of my Life

Organ Music

Any instrument or group of instruments may be used in Catholic liturgy provided these instruments add dignity and a sense of celebration to the liturgy and do not distract from it. However, organ music is still the most popular instrument for weddings. It is recommended also that there be music before the liturgy starts, preferably instrumental music, either in total or intermingled with sung pieces. The music chosen can help to create a spirit of joy, anticipation and reverence for what is about to happen. An organist can be encouraged to continue playing also as the guests leave the church building.

This list is not comprehensive because there is so much music available; the list is a guide for the kind of music that can be used.

Some suggestions for music before the service

*This selection is included in *Music for Wedding Services: An Ecumenical Collection*. c 1993, Novalis. St. Paul's University, Ottawa ON L6T 5E8.

Composer	Title	Publisher
Bach, J.S.	Jesu, Joy	Oxford
Bach, J.S.	Preludes and Fugues	Various
Bach, J.S.	Sheep May Safely Graze (Cantata 208)	Various
Bales, G.	Petite Suite: Intermezzo	Berandol
Handel	Air (from <i>Water Music</i>)*	Novello
Held, Wilbur	Awake My Heart with Gladness	Novello
	Come Down, O Love Divine*	Novello
	Holy God, We Praise Thy Name	Novello
Mendelssohn, F.	Sonatas (Excerpts)	Novello
Pachelbel, J.	Canon in D	Various
Rowley, A.	Benedictus	Novello
Stanley, J.	Thirty Voluntaries (Various movements)*	Novello
Whitlock, P.	Fidelis (Four Extemporizations)	Oxford

Suggestions for processional music

Bach/Vivaldi	Concerto in A minor, first movement	Various
Beethoven/Hare	Hymn to Joy	Oxford
Campra, A	**Rigadon (For two manuals only)	Theodore Presser Flammer
Marcello	**Psalm 19: "The Heavens Declare..."	Various
Handel	Allegro (from <i>Water Music</i>) March (from <i>The Occasional Oratorio</i>)* Processional (from <i>Water Music</i>)*	Various Novalis Oxford
Hayden, F.J.	St. Anthony's Chorale*	Gordon V. Thompson
Near, G.	A Wedding Processional	H.W. Gray
Purcell (J.Clarke)	**The Prince of Denmark's March (Trumpet Voluntary) **Trumpet Tune*	Novalis Novalis

Pachelbell	**Toccata in E Minor	Boosey and Hawkes
Wetzler, R.	Processional on Westminster Abbey	Concordia

**This selection is also suitable as a recessional.

Note: The "Bridal Chorus" ("Here Comes the Bride") and Mendelssohn's "Wedding March" are not acceptable for a Christian wedding because the original context of both pieces is an opera featuring a pagan wedding celebration.

Recessionals

Bales, G.	Petite Suite: Finale	Berlandol
Clokey, C.	Recessional (Wedding Suite)	Fisher
Franck	Finale in B Flat	Schirmer
Handel	Hornpipe (from <i>Water Music</i>)*	Novello
Karg-Elert	Now Thank We All our God	Schirmer
Stanley	Trumpet Voluntary*	Novalis
Vierne, L.	Symphony I: Final	Belwin Mills
Widor, C.M.	Symphony V: Toccata	Alphonse Leduc
Willan, H.	Finale Jubilante (<i>Organ Music of Canada Vol. 1</i>)	Berlandol

Collections of Wedding Music

A Second Book of Wedding Pieces. Arr. C.H. Trevor and C. Morris. Oxford University Press.

Classical Wedding Music for the Organ. Compiled by G.M. Martin. Lorenz Publishing Co.

Everything for the Wedding Organist. Ed. Jack Schroder. Hope Publishing Company.

Contents include Purcell's Trumpet Tune; JS. Bach's Sheep May Safely Graze and Jesu Joy; Handel's Air and Hornpipe, From the Water Music; Clark's Trumpet Voluntary; Marcello's Psalm 19; arrangements of O Perfect Love, Ode to Joy, The Lord's My Shepherd (Crimond).

Wedding Music. Part I and II. Concordia.

Part I includes 23 wedding pieces by such composers as Buxtehude, Pachelbel, Bach, Handel, Marcello, Stanley, Wesley., with a classified index. Part II contains 16 hymn tune preludes by various composers

Wedding Music. In two volumes. Comp., ed., arr., David N. Johnson. Augsburg Publishing House.

Some compositions include optional parts for an instrument such as the flute, trumpet, or violin

World's Favorite Preludes, Offertories and Postludes for All Organs. No. 60, Arr. Lawrence Grant. Ashley Publications, Inc.

This collection contains 45 selections, rated "easy"

Easy Wedding Music for the Amateur Organist. No. 2. Comp. Dorothy Wells. Lorenz Publishing Company.

Wedding Album for Manuals. Ed. and arr. C.H. Trevor. Elkin and Company Ltd., Toronto: Gordon V. Thompson.

Other Collections of Music Suitable for a Wedding Ceremony

The Biggs Book of Organ Music. Arr., E. Power Biggs. Belwin-Mills Publishing Corp.

Henry Purcell. Ceremonial Music for Organ with Optional Trumpets. Ed., E. Power Biggs.

Baroque Music for Manual (In four volumes.) Ed., S. Drummond Wolff. Concordia Publishing House.

Old English Organ Music for Manuals. (In six volumes.) Ed., C.H. Trevor. Oxford University Press.

This collection is highly recommended for playing not only at weddings but for playing at other services.

For Manuals Only. Ed., John Christopher. McAfee Music Corporation, New York.

Contemporary Postludes. Jeffrey Honore. Oregon Catholic Press

Keyboard Praise: Improvisations on Favorite Contemporary and Traditional Hymn Tunes. Elaine Rendler. Oregon Catholic Press.

Collections of Wedding Music for Trumpet and Organ

The Classical Wedding for Solo Trumpet and Organ. Arr. Sue Mitchell Wallace and John Head. Hope Publishing Co.

Three Wedding Chorales. Bach/Biggs. Organ and two trumpets. Associated.

Baroque Music for Weddings. arr. Wolff. Organ and one or two trumpets. Concordia.

Eight Fanfares for Organ and Brass. Johnson. Augsburg-Fortress Publishing Co.

Six Processionals. Handel/Wolff. Organ and one or two trumpets. Concordia.

Three Celebrated Trumpet Tunes. Purcell. Organ and trumpet. GIA.

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