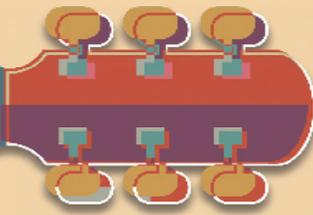


No Strings Attached

Rick Iacoboni, Acoustic Guitarist



How To Choose Live Music For Your Wedding Ceremony

So you finally set the date for the big event – your wedding. You have decided to have live music for your ceremony and dinner & cocktail music. You want to show your guests that you have made a conscious decision to make your wedding day unforgettable.

Choosing The Right Music

You want musicians whose volume is below the level of conversation. You don't want rock stars, you want ambiance! Decide if you want strictly instrumental music, or music with some light vocals. Also, do you want secular/non secular music performed? Do you want popular, jazz, country, standards, ethnic or classical music played – or a combination of all the above?

The most common options are soloists, duos, trios and quartets. Soloists are most commonly acoustic/electric guitarists; piano, organ + keyboardists; harpists, violinists and steel drums. Duos, trios and quartets include these instruments along with drums, base guitar, strings and brass. Decide if you want strictly instrumental music or if you want light vocals thrown in for variety.

Finding Musicians

Names of performers can be obtained through referrals, musician websites, event planners/consultants, other wedding vendors and booking agents. Contact each performer to check compatibility, availability and pricing. Most reputable musicians should have a website, social media account, songlist, testimonials and audio + video samples. Find out if you can hear them live.

Booking fees vary and are based on a number of factors including number of musicians, number of hours they perform, load-in/out time, holidays, travel and the day/time of the event. Other factors are having musicians move from outside to inside should the ceremony be held at a gazebo, grassy field, garden or sandy beach and the cocktail hour and/or reception is held inside a different location like a party center, home or country club.

Performance Agreements

Once you have selected your performer(s) and have agreed to terms, it's time to put it into writing in the form of a contract, AKA "performance agreement." This will be supplied by the musician(s) and include all the key information such as date, times, venue, compensation, breaks, set-up/departure time, number of musicians, method of payment, overtime, etc. Deposits range from one third to 50% down, with the balance due on the night of the engagement.

Decide if you want the musicians in formal attire (tuxedos), business casual (sports jacket with or without a tie) or casual. Female musicians should dress accordingly. Performers should arrive at least 30-60 minutes prior to the start time. As your event draws closer, establish contact with the performer to review details and re-confirm all pertinent information.

Conclusion

Live music makes up only a fraction of what a wedding costs. However, it's the one variable that ties everything together to make an event truly memorable. Five years after your wedding, your guests won't remember the ice sculptures, video presentation or favors. What they will remember is the ambiance, spontaneity and memories that live music creates. That they had a great time! Nothing has the impact of live music!



Staying In Tune

by Rick Iacoboni



Technology is good when it augments -- not replaces -- live music. For example:

Digital sequencing allows musicians to create a full sound that closely replicates original recordings.

On the contrary, a good example of technology gone bad is when, for a live performance, a musician uses a laptop computer programmed with pre-recorded tracks of guitars, drums, keys and brass. A one-man band of sorts. Good on the client's budget, but bad on the ears.

Rock bottom for me came when a client replaced me with an iPod after using me on two other occasions in which their guests raved at the ambiance I had created. I wonder how their clients felt about that!

Bottom line: if you want your event memorable and talked about for years to come -- use the real deal: live musicians. Remember -- you're only going to get married once (hopefully!).