



**CHRIST CHURCH CAMBRIDGE**  
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## A GUIDE TO WEDDING MUSIC AT CHRIST CHURCH

This guide is intended to supplement other information which you may have received with regard to your marriage ceremony.

The Director of Music is responsible for organizing all of the music within services at Christ Church.

**Music consultation:** Once both persons to be married have read these guidelines, we should up an appointment for the three of us to meet. We will talk through the whole service, and various liturgical details. This discussion is a continuation of the liturgical discussion you will be having with your Celebrant, and an important part of your connection with the parish. So please consider it a pastoral meeting for just the couple and the Director of Music. If others are to be part of decision-making, they can be included later. The goal of this meeting will be to equip the couple with information for the decision-making process. Bring along any questions you've already come up with, but try not to make any decisions until we meet; you'll be able to make better decisions after the meeting!

**Submission date:** In order to provide a professional level of service, thereby ensuring that the music is of the quality needed to make your wedding a dignified, joyous occasion, it is essential that you discuss the choice of music with the Director of Music well in advance. Preparation time is needed to achieve this quality. This time will also allow plenty of time for you to prepare any printed materials in which you may wish to list musical choices. The simplest choices should be made with a minimum notice of one month. More complicated choices will require more time to organize the various details. These choices, once finalized, should be submitted on the attached sheet.

**Beginning:** The first step in choosing appropriate music for a wedding is to wipe your mind of the images seen in the movies, television and in large cathedrals. To ensure that the service is coherent and successful, the music, and all other details, need to be tailored specifically for our parish church building. We are well accustomed to designing services for this building, so you are in good hands. Moreover, it is essential to distinguish between the needs of a church service of worship and the reception or party which follows. (Secular love songs are no more appropriate in church than plainsong hymns at a reception!) Canon Law states that texts used in the service (including the music) must be from Holy Scripture, The Book of Common Prayer, various books authorized for use

in the Episcopal Church (e.g. the 3 hymnals in our pews), or “from texts that are congruent with” these sources.

**Prelude music** (i.e. the music played as the congregation enters the church before the ceremony begins) usually lasts for up to 20 minutes. If there are particular requests appropriate to the occasion, they may be incorporated; alternatively, many couples leave selections to the Organist. The variable here is that congregations sometimes arrive very early, and sometimes wait outside until the last minute. It does not make sense to have someone play music to an empty building; and silence quickly makes people uncomfortable if they are not accustomed to sitting quietly in church. Our recommendation is that titles of prelude music not be included in any printed service leaflet. This allows the organist to begin at a time when people are entering the building, and avoids the confusion created by listing too many, or too few, pieces for people to follow.

**Processional music** (i.e. the music played as the bridal party enters) requires much thought. In a building the size of Christ Church, one piece is suitable. In larger buildings, it is becoming customary for bridesmaids to process to one piece and the bride/couple to another. The practicality of this technique becomes lost if the latter takes only 20 seconds to walk the length of the aisle. Instead of being grander, such a short rendering sounds uncomfortable and silly. Choosing one piece for the entire procession makes more sense in this setting; the piece can be shaped to emphasize the bride’s/couple’s entrance at the end. Especially useful are the trumpet tunes listed below — they are composed in short sections so that the musician(s) can end the piece easily when the procession concludes. They also create a joyous, festive atmosphere to mark the beginning of the service. Pieces which are not composed in short sections can lead to excessive amounts of waiting when you are ready to begin the ceremony. Such trumpet tunes might include:

Trumpet Voluntary — Jeremiah Clarke (1673–1707)

Trumpet Tune — Henry Purcell (1659–1695)

Prelude to *Te Deum* — Marc Antoine Charpentier (1645–1704)

Rondeau from *Premier Suite* — Jean Joseph Mouret (1682–1738)

Trumpet Voluntary — John Stanley (1712–1786)

**Hymns:** Most marriage ceremonies include 2 or 3 hymns: discuss with your Celebrant when these might fit in your service (e.g. between Lessons, after the Sermon/Homily, at the Offertory). There are three different hymnals in the pews at Christ Church, which together contain well over 1000 hymns plus hundreds of pieces of service music from which you may choose. For suggestions of appropriate hymns and other music, good references may be found in *The Episcopal Musician’s Handbook* and pages 87–90 of *A Guide to the Practice of Church Music* by Marion J. Hatchett. Copies of these manuals are located in the Music Office at Christ Church. The Director of Music would be happy to assist you in these selections. You are particularly encouraged to consider the suitability of the text for the occasion before settling for any old favorites. Additionally, keep in mind how comfortable the congregation will be with the tune: is this tune known in other denominations, or to people who do not attend church regularly?

If your service will include a Eucharist, you may wish to consider settings of the Service Music, e.g. Sanctus (*The Hymnal 1982* S-121 to S-131) and/or the Fraction Anthem (*The Hymnal 1982* S-151 to S-172), if you would like the congregation to sing these texts.

**Recessional music** (i.e. the music played as the bridal party and congregation exit the church): the pieces listed above as Processional suggestions also work well for the Recessional music. Needless to say, for a service of worship it is not appropriate to consider pieces from opera or other secular sources. In addition to the above list, you may like to consider the following pieces:

Hornpipe from *Water Music*— George Frideric Handel (1685–1759)  
Toccata from *Symphony No. 5* — Charles Marie Widor (1844–1937)  
Final from *Symphony No. 1*— Louis Vierne (1870–1937)  
Grand Chœur en ré majeur (alla Handel) — Alexandre Guilmant (1837–1911)  
Rigaudon — André Campra (1660–1744)

**Additional musicians:** If you wish to include musicians other than the Director of Music in the service, rehearsal time will need to be scheduled. Extra time will attract additional fees for the time of all involved. The addition of a trumpet or singer(s) can be a nice touch; inclusion of larger groups creates logistical concerns which will require considerable thought on your part, as well as consultation with the Celebrant and the Director of Music. The Director of Music would be pleased to locate appropriate singers and extra musicians, if you would like.

#### **Other details:**

Music which is not currently in the Organist's repertoire may be requested, but you will be responsible for delivering the music to the Parish Office soon enough to allow adequate preparation time. Photocopies of copyright materials are not permitted without appropriate licensing.

Please keep in mind that recording, videotaping or filming of any musical element of the service requires a "synchronization license" from all copyright owners. The Director of Music needs to see this license before the day of the service.

The Organist does not typically attend the wedding rehearsal. That rehearsal is for logistical purposes, and the playing of music only prevents communication between the Celebrant (who manages the rehearsal) and those getting used to the space and learning their way. Music on the day is timed to the moment, not to an earlier run-through (e.g. processional music ends when you arrive at the crossing, not at some pre-determined time). It's actually less stressful to allow the musician(s) to time the music than for a group of people to remember how fast to walk!

The staff at Christ Church is accustomed to managing the details of many weddings. We know the traps as well as we know the elation. Please feel free to contact us via telephone or e-mail (often faster) if you have any questions or concerns. We wish to make this the enjoyable occasion it should be.

Congratulations!



# WEDDING MUSIC SELECTION SHEET

Date of Wedding: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Rehearsal: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Bride/Groom's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Bride/Groom's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone numbers

Telephone numbers

Home: \_\_\_\_\_

Home: \_\_\_\_\_

Work: \_\_\_\_\_

Work: \_\_\_\_\_

Celebrant's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (at Church): \_\_\_\_\_

Approximate number of people attending: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of people in aisle procession (e.g. flower girls + bridesmaids + bride): \_\_\_\_\_

Entrance music: \_\_\_\_\_

Recessional music: \_\_\_\_\_

Hymns: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Will there be a Eucharist?      Yes/No

If yes, service music: \_\_\_\_\_

Other (e.g. singers, instrumentalists):

*Please send this sheet to the Director of Music, who has a mail slot in the Parish Office.*