

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.

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. It is requested that you think about the information given in this guide, and then contact the Director of Music to make a consultation appointment. Weddings include many details, and this is one you can arrange right away!

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. Music, and all other details, must be tailored specifically for our parish church building to be coherent and successful. 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.

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. My recommendation is that titles of prelude music not be included in any printed 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 20 seconds to walk the length of the aisle. Instead of being more grand, such a short rendering sounds uncomfortable and silly. Choosing one piece for the entire procession makes more sense in this setting. 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. 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, at the organ console if desired. 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 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: The pieces listed above as Processional suggestions also work well for the Recessional music (i.e. the music played as the bridal party and congregation exit the church). 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 a singer can be a nice touch; inclusion of larger groups creates logistic concerns which will require considerable thought on your part, as well as consultation with the Celebrant and the Director of Music. Please call the Music Office if you would like help locating extra musicians.

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.

Please keep in mind that recorded music is governed by federal copyright laws, and licensing requirements do not allow its use at Christ Church.

The Organist does not typically attend the wedding rehearsal. That rehearsal is for logistical purposes, and 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).

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 call if you have any questions or concerns. We wish to make this the enjoyable occasion it should be.

Congratulations!

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WEDDING MUSIC — CHRIST CHURCH, CAMBRIDGE

Date of Wedding: _____ Time: _____

Date of Rehearsal: _____ Time: _____

Bride/Groom's name: _____

Telephone numbers – Home: _____

– Work: _____

Bride/Groom's name: _____

Telephone numbers – Home: _____

– Work: _____

Celebrant's name: _____

Celebrant's telephone number (Church): _____

Approximate number of people attending: _____

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

Entrance music: _____

Recessional music: _____

Hymns: _____

Other:

Please leave this sheet in the Parish Office, or fax it to (617) 876-0201, for the Director of Music.