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# MUSIC FOR YOUR WEDDING

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*The purpose of this guide is to assist in giving an overview of wedding repertoire of a sacred nature, providing standard suggestions as well as other pieces of great quality.*

## When choosing music for your wedding, it is important to keep the following in mind:

The wedding is taking place in the context of Holy Mass: the music therefore must be sacred in both style and text (*Sacrosanctum Concilium* 121). Pieces of the Pop, Country, and Rock genres all fall under the secular category and are not appropriate for use in church. Even if the text refers to weddings, love, parents, unity, etc., the musical style must be appropriate for the Sacred Liturgy that it will be a part of. Christian music too, if it adapts secular style and form, is not appropriate for Holy Mass. Additionally, if music comes from opera, musicals, film scores, etc. (while all are legitimate art forms), because of their purpose of entertainment, it will likely be unsuited to use in the Sacred liturgy.

*A good rule of thumb: if it sounds as though the music may be played on a popular radio station, it is probably not suited for this solemn occasion.*

Following these guidelines not only allows one to adhere to the timeless desires of the Church, but additionally prevents the use of fad music that will be seen, in the future if not already, as being of lesser quality and in poor taste. Final judgment on whether or not a piece of music fits the criteria of Sacred Music lies ultimately in the hands of the priest and organist. It must be noted here as well that recorded music of any kind is prohibited (*Sing to the Lord* 93).

While online resources can be helpful, it is important to remember that they are often assembled by non-musicians or publishing groups who seek to hock their own music rather than promote the genuine treasury of sacred music that is appropriate for the Sacred Liturgy. Additionally, their notions of what is or is not appropriate music for church use often lie below the standards of the parishes and churches themselves.

## PRELUDE

Prior to the beginning of the Nuptial Mass, there is a prelude consisting of about 10 or 15 minutes of instrumental music as guests arrive and are seated. Music during this time is usually selected at the discretion of the organist and encompasses a combination of pieces that mirror the festive nature of the occasion as well as the quiet dignity of prayerful reflection that should precede Mass. Often the prelude is comprised entirely of solo organ repertoire, but the utilization of other instruments or a soloist is possible as well.

## PROCESSIONAL

The processional is usually played by the organ alone or with instruments. The processional (whether quiet or grand) should be of a stately nature and in a meter fit for walking. It may be appropriate to choose one piece of music for the entire processional, or to choose a separate piece for the bride's entrance. In the event that two are chosen, the latter should generally be of a grander nature than the former.

### *Quiet Processionals*

- Canon in D- *J. Pachabel* [link](#)
- Jesu Joy of Man's Desiring- *J. S. Bach* [link](#)
- Prelude on Rhosymedre - *R. Vaughan Williams* [link](#)
- St. Anthony Chorale- *F. J. Haydn* [link](#)

### *Grand Processionals*

- Hornpipe - *G. F. Handel* [link](#)
- Trumpet Tune - *H. Purcell* [link](#)
- Trumpet Voluntary - *J. Clarke* [link](#)
- Overture (from Royal Fireworks) - *G. F. Handel* [link](#)
- Prelude in the Classic Style - *G. Young* [link](#)
- Festive Trumpet Tune - *D. German* [link](#)
- Sonata No. 3 (opening) - *F. Mendelssohn* [link](#)
- Trumpet Tune - *J. Stanley* [link](#)

## ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

The Entrance Antiphon is chanted after the procession is completed.

### *Antiphon*

God is in his holy dwelling place; the God who causes us to dwell together, one at heart, in his house; he himself will give power and strength to his people.

## GLORIA

The Gloria is prescribed by the Roman Missal to be sung at wedding Masses. It is usually taken from the standard liturgical repertoire and will be of the same setting as the rest of the ordinary (see below).

## RESPONSORIAL PSALM

It is highly desirable that the Responsorial Psalm be sung. The psalm chosen must be a text prescribed for weddings by the lectionary and must be done in un-altered responsorial form. The music will be taken from the Noël Chabanel book of Psalms. Please choose one of the following texts:

- 1. Psalm 33:12 and 18, 20-21, 22  
*R. The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.*
- 2. Psalm 34:2-3, 4-5, 6-7, 8-9  
*R. I will bless the Lord at all times.*  
OR:  
*R. Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.*
- 3. Psalm 103:1-2, 8 and 13, 17-18a  
*R. The Lord is kind and merciful.*  
OR:  
*R. The Lord's kindness is everlasting to those who fear him.*
- 4. Psalm 112:1bc-2, 3-4, 5-7a, 7b-8, 9  
*R. Blessed the man who greatly delights in the Lord's commands.*
- 5. Psalm 128:1-2, 3, 4-5  
*R. Blessed are those who fear the Lord.*  
OR:  
*R. See how the Lord blesses those who fear him.*
- 6. Psalm 145:8-9, 10 and 15, 17-18  
*R. How good is the Lord to all.*
- 7. Psalm 148:1-2, 3-4, 9-10, 11-13a, 13c-14a  
*R. Let all praise the name of the Lord.*

## ACCLAMATION

The Acclamation is also desirably sung. As with the psalm, it must be a text prescribed by the Lectionary. Please choose from the following texts:

- 1. 1 John 4:7b  
*Everyone who loves is begotten of God and knows God.*
- 2. 1 John 4:8b and 11  
*God is love; Let us love one another, as God has loved us.*
- 3. 1 John 4:12  
*If we love one another, God remains in us and his love is brought to perfection in us.*
- 4. 1 John 4:16  
*Whoever remains in love, remains in God and God in him.*

## OFFERTORY

At the Offertory either the antiphon is chanted, a piece or hymn is sung, or both. The piece selected for the offertory is, as with all music selected, to be of a sacred nature. The text of the piece should reflect the sacred action of the bond of matrimony and/or the sacrifice of Holy Mass taking place. This piece may either be a congregational hymn or a piece done by the organist, cantor, and other musicians.

### *Antiphon*

The Angel of the Lord shall encamp round about those who fear him and shall deliver them; taste and see how good the Lord is.

Or:

In you have I put my trust, O Lord; I said: "You are my God, my destiny is in your hands."

### *Hymns*

- God in the Planning- SLANE
- Love Divine, All Loves Excelling- HYFRODOL
- Be Thou my Vision- SLANE
- Father, All Creating- AURELIA
- O God, Beyond All Praising- THAXTED
- Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven- LAUDA ANIMA

## ORDINARY

The Ordinary of the Mass (*Gloria, Sanctus, Mysterium Fidei, Amen, and Agnus Dei*) are the parts of Mass that do not change: it is highly desirable that they

are sung. These are selected from the standard liturgical repertoire. Mixing different parts from different settings is not permitted.

## COMMUNION

At the communion, the antiphon is chanted, a piece or hymn is sung, or both. The piece for Communion is, like the offertory, either a congregational hymn or a solo piece done by the cantor and organist. The text of this piece is usually of Eucharistic theme. Hymns that speak of 'bread, wine, and table' rather than 'body, blood, and altar' are to be avoided. If communion is expected to take a considerable time, it may be prudent to choose several things.

### *Antiphon*

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God; blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God; blessed are those who suffer persecution for the sake of justice, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Or:

Seek first the kingdom of God, and all the rest will be given to you in addition, says the Lord.

### *Hymns*

- Jesus My Lord, My God, My All- SWEET SACRAMENT
- Draw us in the Spirit's Tether- UNION SEMINARY
- Firmly, I Believe, and Truly- SHIPSTON
- Praise to the Holiest in the Height- NEWMAN
- Alleluia, Sing to Jesus- HYFRODOL
- At That First Eucharist- UNDE ET MEMORES
- Deck Thyself my Soul in Gladness- SCHMÜCKE DICH
- (Offertory options are also acceptable)

### *Solo Pieces*

- Panis Angelicus- C. Frank [link](#)
- Adoro Te Devote- Chant [link](#)
- Ave Verum- W. A. Mozart [link](#)
- Tantum Ergo - C. Franck [link](#)

## MARIAN DEVOTION

It is sometimes customary to take flowers to or light a candle in front of a statue of the Blessed Virgin. This action is usually accompanied by music of a Marian nature.

- Ave Maria- F. Schubert [link](#)
- Ave Maria- Caccini [link](#)
- Ave Maria- Bach/Gounod [link](#)
- Ave Maria- C. Saint-Saëns [link](#)

- Ave Maria- Chant [link](#)
- Sub Tuum Praesidium-C. Saint-Saëns [link](#)
- Salve Regina- Chant [link](#)
- Maiden, Yet a Mother- Traditional [link](#)

#### RECESSIONAL

The Recessional is typically the piece grandest in nature and is done by the organ alone or with instruments.

- Pasticcio – J. Langlais [link](#)
- Toccata – T. Dubois [link](#)
- Praise the Lord with Drums and Cymbols – S. Karg-Elert [link](#)
- (Anything from Processionals list)

#### POSTLUDE

After the Recessional it is desirable that lighter festive organ music is played as the guests exit. This music is usually left to the discretion of the organist.

# PLANNING GUIDE

Wedding \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## *Introductory Rites*

Prelude \_\_\_\_\_

Processional(s) \_\_\_\_\_

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## *Liturgy of the Word*

Psalm \_\_\_\_\_

Acclamation Verse \_\_\_\_\_

## *Liturgy of the Eucharist*

Offertory \_\_\_\_\_

Ordinary \_\_\_\_\_

Communion \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## *Concluding Rites*

Recessional \_\_\_\_\_

Postlude \_\_\_\_\_