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## Wedding Ceremony Music Ideas

### PRELUDE: ESTABLISHING YOUR MOOD

*The Prelude is an interval of music starting 20 to 30 minutes prior to your ceremony and typically ends with the seating of the grandparents and mothers. During the Prelude, your music provider establishes the mood for your wedding. The choice of appropriate mood is entirely up to you, and you may use vocal or instrumental music to create it. A string ensemble playing violin concertos by Vivaldi will create an elegant mood. An organist playing liturgical selections will create a religious mood symbolizing the importance of this day. A vocalist singing contemporary love ballads will create a romantic mood. Or perhaps, you may desire ethnic selections, creating a variety of different moods.*

*One general rule applies to your Prelude selections: the music should not be dance oriented, and should be played at a volume that creates suitable background for prayer, reflection, and light conversation. Each selection should be approved by your musical director or officiant.*

*The following works are very effective in creating various moods for the Prelude:*

#### **ELEGANT**

Violin Concerto #8 (Vivaldi)  
Rondo (Mozart)  
Air (from The Water Music - Handel)  
Concerto #1 (from The Four Seasons, Spring -Vivaldi)

#### **RELIGIOUS**

Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring (Bach)  
Largo (from Xerxes - Handel)  
God is my Shepherd (Antoni Dvorak)

#### **FESTIVE/JOYOUS**

Brandenburg Concerto #2 (Bach)  
Hornpipe in D (from The Water Music - Handel)  
Rondo for Flute and Orchestra (Mozart)

#### **ROMANTIC**

One Hand, One Heart (from West Side Story - Sondheim/Bernstein)  
All I Ask of You (from Phantom of the Opera - Webber)  
Pavane (Faure)  
Greensleeves (Traditional)

*While the Prelude music plays, the ushers escort your guests to their seats. The groom's mother, father, and finally the bride's mother are the last people escorted to their seats. I have found that playing a majestic classical work with a quick tempo can dramatically capture the guests' attention and announce the beginning of the wedding ceremony. Trumpet Voluntary (Clarke) or Trumpet Tune and Air (Purcell) are ideal choices, due to their strong march rhythms. The music should continue until the aisle carpet has been unrolled. The Processional may now begin.*

## PROCESSIONAL: SETTING THE PACE

*Your ceremony begins with the entrance of the wedding party. Normally, the ushers lead the procession, followed by the bridesmaids, maid of honor, the ring bearer, and the flower girl. The music should have a clearly audible cadence so that it is easy for you and your attendants to keep time while walking. The music begins softly, and gradually increases in volume until the bride's entrance. If the same selection is also used for the bride's entrance, there must be a noticeable increase in volume when she is ready to enter.*

*The haunting melody and driving rhythm (cello combined with violin playing pizzicato) of Pachelbel's Canon have made it a very popular Processional piece.*

### **Recommendations:**

Canon in D Major (Pachelbel)  
Air on a G String (Bach)

## BRIDE'S ENTRANCE: THE BIG MOMENT

*The bride's entrance is the most important moment of the wedding day. The music that is played greatly contributes to this lifelong memory. Its role is to announce the bride and focus all attention on her. The volume must be significantly louder than the music played for the attendants. With each step, the bride is assisted by the driving rhythm of the music.*

*Synonymous with the wedding ceremony, the Bridal Chorus will instantly proclaim your entrance. Or if you prefer, the breathtaking violin arpeggios of the Arrival of the Queen of Sheba are sure to create a lasting impression.*

### **Recommendations:**

Bridal Chorus (from Lohengrin - Wagner)  
Arrival of the Queen of Sheba (Handel)  
Trumpet Voluntary (Clarke)

## THE BODY OF YOUR CEREMONY

*If desired, a selection or two may be played during your ceremony. Music can provide a short interlude before a reading, or ambience during the lighting of the unity candle. The selection should have a slow tempo and be played softly. Liturgical works and vocal selections are very suitable.*

### **Recommendations:**

Panis Angelicus (Franck)  
Ave Maria (Bach/Gounod)

## THE RECESSIONAL: CONGRATULATIONS!

*The end of the ceremony is usually marked by the bridal kiss or the announcement of the newly married couple. The bride and groom exit arm in arm, followed by the flower girl and ring bearer, the maid of honor and best man, and bridesmaid/usher pairs.*

*Music should be majestic and played with a quick tempo. The regal melody and powerful orchestration of Ode to Joy will proclaim your union to your guests.*

### **Recommendations:**

Ode to Joy (from 9th Symphony - Beethoven)  
Wedding March (from A Midsummer Night's Dream - Mendelssohn)

## THE POSTLUDE

*The Postlude begins after the Recessional. Since the music expresses your joy, it should be fast and triumphant. If you form a receiving line after your ceremony, music should be played until all guests have been greeted.*

### **Recommendations:**

Overture (from Music for the Royal Fireworks - Handel)  
Rondeau (Mouret)  
Le Rejouissance (from Music for the Royal Fireworks - Handel)  
Trumpet Tune and Air (Purcell)  
Suite in F Major (Handel)