

Wedding Music: What is Proper?

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Many preparations are necessary in trying to make the celebration of a wedding a memorable and meaningful occasion. One area which needs careful consideration is the music which is used during the wedding ceremony.

A wedding is both a personal and a public occasion. It is personal in that two people pledge their love and commitment to one another, but it is also communal in that it is witnessed in the presence of a community and effects that community. The couple pledges their love to one another in lasting love just as Christ has to his Church. This commitment cannot be carried out solely dependent on the strength of the couple, but also needs support of the family and friends who have gathered together as the Community of Faith, which is the Church. In a special way during the wedding ceremony those present pray for God's blessing on the union of the couple as husband and wife.

The music which is chosen to be used before and during the wedding ceremony should be reflective of this. It should reflect the importance a Christ-centered lifestyle and of human love which finds its foundation in God's love for all of humanity through Jesus Christ.

It is because of this that certain selections are entirely inappropriate for the wed-

ding ceremony. Songs such as "Evergreen," "We've Only Just Begun," "Endless Love," and "For Your Eyes Only" are not appropriate. They in no way reflect the communal dimension of the Christian wedding ceremony, but are instead reflective of a rather personalistic view or present ideas which are contrary to the Christian idea of marriage.

Ideas for wedding music may come from what a couple has heard at another wedding or what their parents may like. While some good ideas might come from here, one should not confine one's choice of wedding music to those sources. Couples should consult with musicians in their parish. They should be able to help in choosing music which is appropriate for the wedding ceremony.

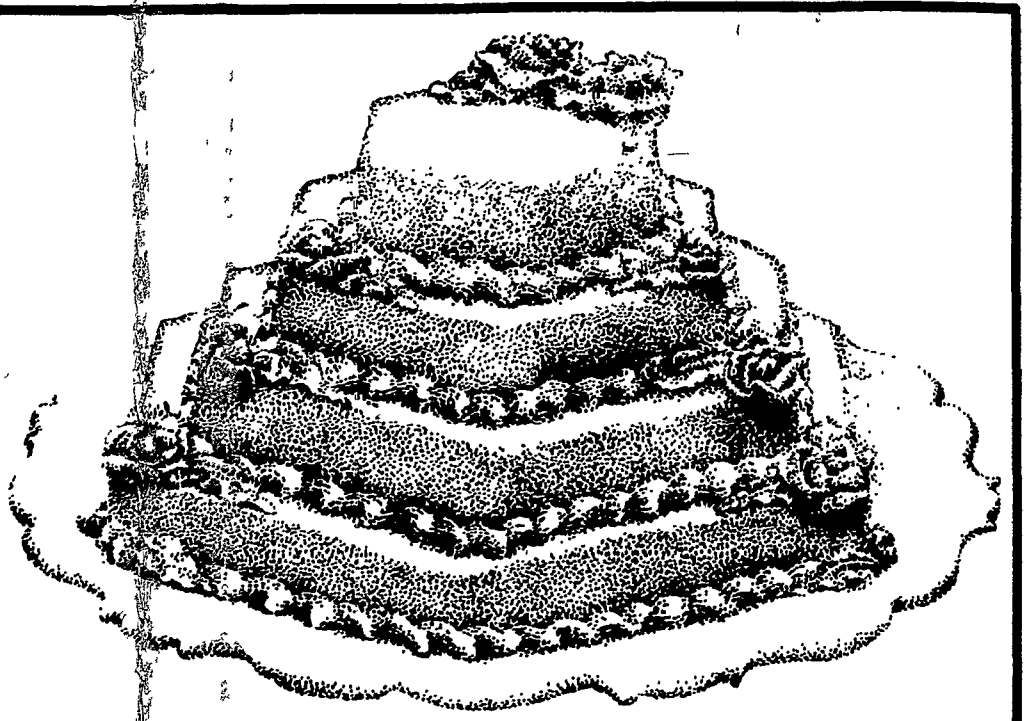
There are a number of songs which speak of the communal aspect of the wedding ceremony which are very appropriate. To find them, one should begin looking at some of the music which is used for the Sunday celebration of the Eucharist. There are also a number of other songs which have been specifically written for the wedding ceremony which can help in making it a memorable, meaningful and prayerful occasion.

Music is used within any liturgical celebration to serve the liturgy. This should be kept in mind when incorporating music into the wedding ceremony. Music

should not hold up the action which is taking place, but should aid in adding meaning to the texts and to help the action flow more smoothly.

It is customary for a soloist to be used for the ceremony. If this is the case he or she should not take away from those gathered, the role that is proper to them. All those present should be able to join in the Holy, Holy, Eucharistic Acclamation, Amen, and the alleluia before the Gospel. A soloist should never, under any circumstance, sing the Our Father alone! The entire assembly is to take part in the praying of the Our Father. The soloist could sing a few appropriate selections as the people are arriving. During the Liturgy the soloist could also sing a selection during the Preparation of the Gifts, and lead those gathered in the Responsorial Psalm and the various acclamations.

The key to having a memorable, meaningful and prayerful wedding is to begin planning early. A meeting two or three months prior to the wedding between the musicians of the parish and the couple would be beneficial. It would aid in clarifying what the parish policy might be in regard to wedding music, what the policy is regarding payment of the musicians, and what the policy might be in regard to bringing in musicians who are not on the parish staff. It would also give the couple ample time to decide on the music which will be used at the wedding ceremony.



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