

Wedding Reception Tips

Your wedding reception is where your style and personality can really shine. Just as important as the décor, food and location is the music. It sets the tone and mood for the night. You want to pick music that your guest will enjoy and that represents your personal taste. Here are a few things to think about when planning your reception.

Flow

I believe a very important factor in planning a reception, is the “flow” of the evening. You don’t want to take too long between your events/activities (i.e. toast, cake cutting, etc.) so that your guests start to get bored. But, you don’t want to rush things either. As the DJ/MC, I am constantly trying to feel the pulse of the crowd. There are many subtle cues, and some not so subtle, that tell me a crowd is getting restless. When this happens I will work with you to make sure the event stays on track and is a success.

I typically do not schedule specific times for each event because this is usually based on feel. It's best to have an order of your events and an estimated time for them, but if the crowd isn't ready then we need to be flexible and go with the flow. If you expect the toast to happen at 7:00 but the crowd is not ready then you should wait until they are ready. On the other hand, if they are ready at 6:30 then you should think about having the toast earlier so that you keep their attention.

Most of these timing concerns take place BEFORE dancing starts. Once dancing begins so does the fun! It's great to have a majority of the “formal” events before the dance floor is open. That way you won't have to stop people from dancing to have the toast, then stop again to cut the cake, etc. **The more you sit people down the harder it is to get them back up.**

Music to Select Before Dancing

Music is played throughout your reception. From the time your guests arrive until the last dance. Keep in mind that not all the music you need to pick is for dancing. Below are some of my suggestions, but the evening is about you and the more we can customize it the more personal it will be.

Guest Arrival & Cocktail Hour – Music played during this time is typically instrumental jazz style music. I like to keep the tempo "snappy." Not too fast and not too slow. I also have some instrumental country and bluegrass that works nice during this time. Vocal jazz artist, such as Frank Sinatra and Ella Fitzgerald, work well for cocktail hour and during dinner. Music during this time should be classy but not stuffy.

Wedding Party Introductions – This is the music played as the wedding party is being introduced. If you want a classier intro, then a beautiful instrumental jazz or classical song will work well. Or you can enter with a bang and choose a song to "get the party started!" It's completely up to you. Movie themes such as Star Wars or Rocky are always fun and puts a smile on everyone's face. Or you can go with a high energy song like “Get Ready for This” by 2 Unlimited or “Enter Sandman” by Metallica. A high energy intro can really set the tone for a fun night. But whatever you pick, pick a style that suits you. It's your day!

Dinner Music – Once again, vocal jazz, like Harry Connick Jr., is great during dinner. If you are going for a more formal event, then classical music might work for you. As dinner progresses I like to mix it up a little based on the bride and grooms taste. This is a great time to play some of your favorite songs that are not really dance songs, slow or fast. Toe-tapping music from Motown, new and older country, pop, and oldies all work well during this time.

Keep in mind that the dinner music should be mid-tempo and fun but not too fast nor too slow. Too many love ballads can relax the crowd and they will not be ready to dance after the meal. The music played during the meal sends a message of what's to come later in the night. I love to see guests singing along or bobbing to the music as they chat with others at their table. This will get them in the mood to dance!

Last Song

A good way to end the night is by getting everyone to join the new couple on the dance floor. Getting lost in the middle of a packed dance floor during a special love song is a wonderful moment. Song selection here, as with the rest of the evening, is completely up to you. If you are having a hard time choosing between two songs for your first dance, then here is a good opportunity to use them both. Pick one for the first dance and one for the last song.

Another idea, and one of my favorite things to do, is to play the first song again as the last song. You end the night the way you started and you will be singing the song in your head as you drive away. But you can also end the night on a high-note and choose a fun upbeat song.

In Closing

Don't let all this scare you! You don't have to pick out every single song for the day. Besides, that's why you hired a DJ. But take some time to think about the style and feel you want for the day and make sure to let your DJ know. This will go a long way to making your special day perfect.