

Five Reasons You Can't Afford NOT to Have Live Wedding Music

By SCOTT McCULLOUGH, Rum River Brass

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Not long ago, my wife and I attended the wedding of a friend of the family, and it was a day to remember for everyone. Unfortunately, not every memory was a happy one. The ceremony was held outside in a public park in the middle of a major city on a Saturday afternoon. Things began pleasantly enough. After some recorded prelude music was played through some large speakers on stands in the front, a gentleman at the “altar” changed the disc in a portable CD player, and the familiar strains of Pachelbel's "Canon in D" began. The bridal party (six bridesmaids and six groomsmen) processed, and the groom seated his mother and joined the pastor at the front. Then the trouble began....

The “audio technician” (we'll call him “Uncle Harry”) had to switch the CD at the right moment in order to play the Wedding March for the bride. He didn't seem to know how to fade the music out, so he just hit “Stop,” and the music ended abruptly mid-phrase. Then he fumbled to switch the CDs – something he seemed not to have practiced. After inserting the CD, the wrong track began to play and he stopped it after a few notes. Time stood still while poor Uncle Harry fumbled in front of us all to find the right cut. When he finally got it, the music was so quiet only the first few rows could hear it. The bride – at the back of the park – certainly couldn't. Harry adjusted the volume, and things finally proceeded.

I probably don't have to tell you how the music ended – or how the recession went. It is painful to remember. Other aspects of the wedding were lovely: beautiful dresses and flowers, a very nice venue and food for the reception. Unfortunately, the reception entertainment before the band arrived was also provided by Uncle Harry. I guess it was too late to pull the plug on him!

Don't make the same mistake for your wedding! As a musician, I have always felt that live music was the best choice for a wedding, but I thought I was just biased. This poor couple's wedding helped me to realize that there are very practical reasons to have live music at your ceremony. Here are five:

1. Live musicians are flexible and responsive, performing on cue, moving smoothly from one selection to another, dropping the volume when appropriate and so on. A brass quintet (such as the one I play in) can play quietly or loudly depending on the setting; it is perfect for an outdoor wedding.
2. Don't let Uncle Harry do it. You get what you pay for. And even if you pay him something, it will be awkward to withhold payment later or complain about his performance if he messes up.
3. Live music adds to the sense of occasion in a way that recorded music never can. Performers are also a lot more fun to watch than an iPod or a set of speakers!
4. Many musicians can compose a special selection or a new arrangement of a favorite song for your wedding. No recording can do that!
5. You may have recordings of the best performers in the world playing your favorite wedding selections, but you will have nothing but bad memories if something goes wrong with the electronics or someone hits the wrong button.

Don't take chances with your special day. Music is one of the most memorable aspects of a wedding, and it can make the difference between a nice wedding and a fantastic one. Quality, experienced musicians for weddings are plentiful, and a pianist, organist or small instrumental ensemble can be easily found for a reasonable rate.



SCOTT McCULLOUGH, Rum River Brass

Scott McCullough has been playing the trumpet since elementary school. He attained third chair in the University of Michigan Marching Band. He is a member of the Rum River Brass quintet, a group that performs at weddings, corporate functions and concerts-in-the-park in the Twin Cities.

Special music for special occasions

www.rumriverbrass.com
rumriverbrass@comcast.net
612-483-3317