

Planning Your Wedding Music

St. Vincent's music ministry shares in your joy over your upcoming wedding. We are honored to help you plan the music for your happy event.

What to do first: The first step in planning music for your wedding is to contact our parish music director, Daryel Nance. Typically couples make an appointment to meet with Daryel within a month (or two) before the wedding. Please contact Daryel at any of the following: **e-mail** dnance@svdp-edu.org, **cell (713) 628-1841**, **office (713) 663-3539**. Wedding appointments are scheduled on weekdays, often at the end of one's work day for the convenience of Brides and Grooms, subject to the availability of the church. Other times are also possible, again subject to church availability.

Your music planning meeting: When you meet with Daryel, he will explain what happens during a Catholic wedding and where music fits into the celebration. If Daryel will be the musician providing your music, he will play short sections from various pieces of music used in Catholic weddings. You can then select the music that appeals to you from these pieces. The selections you choose will make up a "working list" of music that can be used for your wedding - unless you later contact Daryel to modify your music list. These meetings are about 45 minutes in length.

Music for Catholic weddings: The Catholic Church requires that all music used in Catholic worship must reverently reflect the sacred prayer that is being celebrated. Music perceived as "secular" (non-sacred) by our culture may not be used in Catholic worship. Music for a Catholic wedding also includes music for the sung texts of the wedding liturgy - the peoples' texts - that are often sung by your guests as part of your wedding celebration. If you plan to use musicians from elsewhere, your musicians will also be required to observe the Catholic Church's music requirements. Therefore, you will need to provide us with a list of their music selections that we can review before the wedding. A more complete explanation of what is appropriate music, where music can be placed in a Catholic wedding, and lists of typical music selections can all be found in the **FAQ** section that follows.

Before your meeting: You do not need to spend time extensively researching music before we meet. Yet, if there are specific selections which you know you want, bring your list with you when we meet. Wedding couples do not normally listen to "wedding music" for their musical entertainment; so, it is perfectly normal for Brides and Grooms to not recognize the names of music selections popularly used in today's church weddings. However, upon hearing these music selections when they meet with Daryel, Brides and Grooms will often recognize many of these music selections from other weddings they have attended.

We are here to help you select appropriate music for your wedding that will delight you, while helping to make the selection process very easy. The first step is to contact Daryel at the numbers listed above.

St. Vincent's Wedding Music "FAQ" (A List of Frequently Asked Questions)

This information is provided for your convenience – it is not required reading. There is more information here than any one couple has ever asked; yet, all of these questions are asked frequently. If however, you glance through the following **FAQ's**, you may find answers to many of your questions.

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1. Where is music placed in a Catholic wedding and what would be an example of a typical Catholic wedding music program? Most weddings at St. Vincent de Paul involve an Organist (or Pianist). Optionally a Vocalist (Cantor and/or Soloist) might also be requested to sing for the wedding.

a.) The Prelude: The Keyboardist (most often an Organist - occasionally a Pianist) plays a 15 minute program of light classical prelude music while guests arrive - almost all of one's guests typically arrive in the last 10 minutes before the published start time of the wedding. Well known selections might often include: Arioso (Bach), Sheep May Safely Graze (Bach), Air from the Suite in D (Bach), Prelude in C (Bach), Air (Water Music - Handel), Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring (Bach), and many other selections are also appropriate. If requested, a Vocal Soloist (who most often is also the Cantor) might perform one or two solos during the prelude.

b.) The Processionals: The Organist (or Pianist) often plays two different instrumental selections for both the entrance of the **(i.) Wedding Party:** Altar Servers, Priest, Bridesmaid-Groomsman Couples, Flower Girls and Ring Bearer, Best Man and Maid of Honor, and the entrance of the **(ii.) two Couples of Parents and the Bridal Couple.** The Wedding Party frequently enters to the Canon in D (Pachelbel) or one of the Trumpet Voluntaries. Next the two Couples of Parents and the Bridal Couple enter to one of the regal Trumpet Voluntaries or a music selection of a similar style. **There are two forms for the entrance for the Groom and the Bride:** *a.) The Catholic Church recommends that the ideal entrance is for both Groom and Bride to enter together as a Couple - as it is the Groom and Bride, who come before the church assembled as the ministers of the Sacrament, to confer Holy Matrimony upon each other;* *b.)* However, if they must enter separately, the Groom enters first escorted by his Parents, concluding with the Bride escorted by her Parents.

c.) The Liturgy of the Word: After the First Reading the Responsorial Psalm may be sung by a Cantor with the guests singing the refrain of the Psalm. The Gospel Acclamation before the Gospel Reading may also be sung by all.

d.) The Liturgy of the Eucharist (for Weddings within Mass): During the Offertory a hymn may be sung by all, a vocal solo sung by the Soloist, or an instrumental selection might be played. During the Eucharistic Prayer all may sing the Holy, Holy, the Memorial Acclamation, the Amen, sometimes the Lord's Prayer is chanted by all, and the Lamb of God may be sung.

e.) The Reception of Communion (for Weddings within Mass): A hymn sung by all is most preferred, a vocal solo might be sung by the Soloist, or an instrumental selection might be played.

f.) Before the end of the wedding (following Communion if within Mass) some Brides place a bouquet of flowers beneath the statue of Mary - often the Ave Maria may be played, or sung by the vocalist.

g.) The Recessional: After the final blessing and presentation of the Couple, the Wedding Party exits frequently to the Trumpet Tune (Purcell) or the Allegro Maestoso (the "Hornpipe" from the Water Music - Handel).

h.) Other Music Options: Sometimes a String Quartet, a Trio, or a Mixed Ensemble (flute, viola, cello, harp, etc.) might be hired to perform instrumental music during some of the moments listed above. As a side note, when both an Instrumental Ensemble has been hired, and a Cantor is leading congregational singing during the wedding liturgy, most Instrumental Ensembles prefer that the congregationally sung music be accompanied by the Church Organist (or Pianist) for music items unique to the Catholic liturgy (see also nos. 13 and 14).

i.) Recorded Music is not allowed because being recorded music it is not "live" and thus is "artificial" music, which is not consistent with "authentic" worship. This is also true for electric LED candles and artificial flower arrangements, because they too are not authentic.

j.) The Unity Candle ceremony is actually not a part of the Catholic wedding liturgy and may be better used as a symbol of unity during a special moment at the wedding reception.

2. What makes either instrumental music or vocal music "appropriate" or "not appropriate" for a Catholic Wedding?

a.) The Catholic Church considers **instrumental music**, that mirrors the sacred prayer of the Catholic Sacrament you are celebrating, that is of good musical quality, from any time period, yet which has not popularly come to be identified as secular, to usually be appropriate.

b.) Likewise, **vocal music (songs)** must have words that explicitly speak of Christian love or the Sacramental union occurring within your wedding, or be from Sacred Scripture or other Christian texts, or be an accessible approved musical setting for the words of the Liturgy that will be sung by your guests.

c.) Secular "pop" music selections that may have a special meaning for you, though not allowed during the wedding, can be very effective at special moments during the wedding reception. (*Note: The U.S. Catholic Bishops' "Music in Catholic Worship" states that music used in liturgical celebrations must be evaluated from three viewpoints: musical, liturgical and pastoral. Our explanations in a., b., and c. above express the content of the U. S. Bishops' statement when applied to the music categories listed.*)

Making a list of music selections with these criteria may sound complicated, but it really isn't. Remember, we are here to help you select appropriate music for your wedding that will delight you, while helping to make the selection process very easy.

3. Music selections that have become the "traditional" wedding marches that are popularly requested for Catholic weddings: Please remember, as mentioned earlier, Brides and Grooms often may not recognize a piece of music by its title; but, will often recognize the selection upon hearing the music. These liturgically appropriate selections in reality have become today's "traditional" wedding marches. Wedding processional (and recessional) can be either triumphantly loud or gently quieter - both styles are popular. The collection of music listed below contains many of the same musical selections that one would hear played by the String Ensembles hired for weddings. Much of this music will work on either organ or piano. Many of the selections listed below can be found as MP3's on the Internet; however, orchestral recordings will sound quite different from an organ or piano, even though one is hearing the same piece of music. ***Many other instrumental music selections that fit the criteria found above in number 2 would also be appropriate.***

a.) Some of the popular louder - more triumphant - processional selections might include:

- * Allegro Maestoso "Hornpipe" – George Frederick Handel (from the Water Music Suite)
- Allegro "La Réjouissance" – George Frederick Handel (from the Royal Fireworks Suite)
- Allegro (Autumn) – Antonio Vivaldi (1st movement of Autumn from the Four Seasons)
- Allegro (Spring) – Antonio Vivaldi (1st movement of Spring from the Four Seasons)
- Hosanna – Paul Wachs
- Minuet – George Frederick Handel (from the Water Music Suite)
- Overture – George Frederick Handel (from the Royal Fireworks Suite)
- Te Deum (Prelude) – Marc Antoine Charpentier
- Presto – George Frederick Handel (from the Water Music Suite)
- Processional - David N. Johnson
- Rigaudon – André Campra
- * Rondeau – Jean Joseph Mouret
- Triumphal March – Paul Wachs (Entrée Triomphale)
- Trumpet Fanfare – Henry Purcell
- * Trumpet Tune – Henry Purcell
- * Trumpet Voluntary – Jeremiah Clarke ("the Prince of Denmark's March")
- Trumpet Voluntary – Stanley
- "*" selections that seem to be favorite choices

b.) Some of the popular quieter - more gentle - processional selections might include:

- * Air - J. S. Bach (from the Suite in D)
- Air - George Frederick Handel (from the Water Music Suite)
- Allegro Moderato - Gordon Young ("Prelude in Classic Style")
- * Arioso - J. S. Bach (Sinfonia Cantata 156; 2nd mvmt. Harpsichord Concerto BWV 1056)
- * Ave Maria - Franz Schubert (instrumental)
- * Canon in D - Johann Pachelbel
- * Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring - J. S. Bach (from Cantata no. 147)
- Largo (Winter) - Antonio Vivaldi (2nd movement of Winter from the Four Seasons)
- * Prelude no.1 in C - J. S. Bach
- * Sheep May Safely Graze - J. S. Bach (from Cantata no. 208)
- Sinfonia - David N. Johnson
- Wake, A Voice is Calling - J. S. Bach (from Cantata no. 140)
- "*" selections that seem to be favorite choices

Note: All of the above selections in "b." are also ideal for prelude or incidental music.

Note: The two wedding marches, by Wagner and Mendelssohn, are viewed by the Church as not appropriate for Catholic weddings In light of the Bishops' statements ("Music in Catholic Worship" and "Sing to the Lord") these marches are not appropriate because of their origins and the popular public perception that they are secular music. These are the wedding marches from Wagner's opera Lohengrin and Mendelssohn's incidental music to A Mid-Summer Night's Dream. The Bridal Chorus from Wagner's opera Lohengrin was actually composed as a prelude to the bedroom scene following the wedding - next a murder happens, the groom is forced to return to another realm and thus the bride drops dead from consummate grief. Mendelssohn's wedding march is among the incidental music composed for Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream" - a pagan comedy involving an adulterous affair in an enchanted forest amidst fairies and nymphs, between the Fairy Queen Titania, already the wife of Oberon, and Nick Bottom - a weaver and amateur actor who was unfortunate enough to become entangled in the adulterous mischief of the gods and goddesses. Thus, both marches fail as music able to reflect the sacred prayer being celebrated in the Sacrament of Marriage and were "blacklisted" by the Catholic Church in U.S. in the early 1900's following the publishing of the Moto Proprio of Pope Pius X.

4. Some of the sacred vocal solos that are popularly requested for Catholic Weddings: *Many other vocal solos that fit the criteria found above in number 2 would also be appropriate.*

- * Ave Maria - Franz Schubert
- Ave Maria - J.S. Bach/Charles Gounod
- * Bridal Prayer - Roger Copeland
- * By My Side - Thomas Porter
- How Beautiful - Twyla Paris
- In This Very Room - Ron Harris
- Jesu Joy of Man's Desiring - J. S. Bach
- * The Gift of Love - Hal Hopson
- The Prayer - Carole Bayer Sager/David Foster
- When Love Is Found - Brian Wren
- Wherever You Go (Come set me like a seal upon your heart..) - David Haas (GC 867)
- ** selections that seem to be favorite choices

5. Wedding Responsorial Psalms contained in St. Vincent's "Gather Comprehensive" hymnal:
The "C" numbers are the Psalm numbers in your "Together for Life" wedding booklet, and the "GC" numbers are music numbers in the "Gather Comprehensive" hymnal.

- C-1: Psalm 33 "The Earth Is Full of the Goodness of the Lord" GC 45; ref. 2 - Marty Haugen
- C-2: Psalm 34 "I Will Bless the Lord" GC 46 - Normand Gouin
- * C-2: Psalm 34 "Taste and See" GC 47 - Marty Haugen
- * C-3: Psalm 103 "The Lord Is Kind and Merciful" GC 100 - Marty Haugen
- (C-4: Psalm 112 "Happy are those who do ..." - not in GC Hymnal)
- * C-5: Psalm 128 "Blest Are Those Who Love You" GC 125 - Marty Haugen
- C-6: Psalm 145 "Our God Is Compassion" GC 138 - Jeanne Cotter
- (C-7: Psalm 148 "Let all praise the name ..." - not in GC Hymnal)
- ** selections that seem to be favorite choices

6. How can I find an Organist (Keyboardist, Pianist)? Daryl (the Parish Music Director) is also the Parish Organist (and a Pianist, hence the generic term Keyboardist). He plays for many weddings at St. Vincent. If you request him, he is typically available to play your wedding here at St. Vincent.

7. Can I have an Organist (Pianist) from another church, or a family member, play for my wedding? Yes, you may have your instrumentalist play for your wedding. If he or she is an Organist, we suggest that he or she allow at least some time to acclimate themselves to the idiosyncrasies of our mechanical action, Austrian built, pipe organ. St. Vincent's does not collect "bench fees" when outside organists/pianists perform for a wedding. *Note: If your keyboardist is helping you select music, we will still need to verify that your music selections meet the criteria for appropriate music in a Catholic wedding.*

8. Where do I find a Vocalist (Cantor)? We have names of competent Vocalists who have had much professional experience singing for Catholic Weddings. These are trained Vocalists who know what they are doing. We can share their contact information with you.

9. Can I have a Vocalist (Cantor) from another church, or a family member, sing for my wedding? Yes, you can have your Vocalist sing for your wedding. *Note: If your Vocalist is helping you select music, we will still need to verify that your music selections meet the criteria for appropriate music in a Catholic wedding.*

10. Even though my Vocalist is not Catholic, can I have he or she Cantor, or sing solos, for my wedding? Yes, with some concerns however. If your vocalist is Cantoring, he or she should have some experience with where items are sung in a Catholic wedding, and be comfortable with leading a congregation in worship. If your Vocalist is singing vocal solos and has had experience performing, he or she should be fine - we can help cue them as to what and when they sing. *Note: If your Vocalist is helping you select music, we will still need to verify that your music selections meet the criteria for appropriate music in a Catholic wedding.*

11. Can I have a Choir from elsewhere (ethnic Choir or Vocal Ensemble) sing for my wedding? Yes, your Choir (or Vocal Ensemble) can sing for your wedding. Daryel will be present to set sound levels if our sound system is used, and assist you with the church's music and audio equipment. *Note: If your Choir or Vocal Ensemble is helping you select music, we will still need to verify that your music selections meet the criteria for appropriate music in a Catholic wedding.*

12. I want a Contemporary Praise Band or Vocalist/Guitarist sing for my wedding? Sure, no problem. We have an awesome Praise and Worship Band led by Mr. Bobby Gonzales (Vocalist/Guitarist). He may be able to help you with our local Lifeteen Praise Band. If you have an ensemble from elsewhere - that is fine too - however their leader will need to contact Daryel well in advance to let us know their needs and for us to let them know about our working space and equipment capabilities. *Note: We will still need to verify that your music selections meet the criteria for appropriate music in a Catholic wedding.*

13. I want to hire a String Trio, String Quartet, Harpist, Trumpet player, etc. ... do you allow these? Sure, we have a list of contacts for Ensembles that have played here and have done superb work. Ensembles do not have to be on our list in order to play here. *Note: We will still need to verify that your music selections meet the criteria for appropriate music in a Catholic wedding.*

14. What are typical fees for Musicians - both for Musicians obtained "in house" through St. Vincent, and professional Music Ensembles and Vocalists not obtained through St. Vincent? Also, to whom do I pay the fees? a.) Musicians contracted "in house" through St. Vincent: Keyboardist \$150 - typically this will be Daryel Nance as keyboardist. Many weddings will use only a Keyboardist (Organist and/or Pianist) to play the music for the wedding. **Vocalist \$150** - optionally a Vocalist (Cantor and/or Soloist) may also be hired to lead the sung parts of the Liturgy and perform vocal solos for the wedding. **b.) Stipends for Musicians obtained through St. Vincent** are collected by St. Vincent's Wedding Coordinator, when she has her final meeting with the couple. Note too that other professional Catholic musicians, not contracted through St. Vincent, who work in other parishes, will have their own fee schedules and payment arrangements that are negotiated directly with those musicians. Their stipends are not typically collected by St. Vincent's Wedding Coordinator. **c.) Commercial Instrumental Ensembles and Vocalists**, not obtained through St. Vincent, are often priced around \$150 per musician and up, with the contractor (a player who makes the arrangements) receiving an extra half fee. Thus a string quartet might receive $4 \times \$150 + \$75 = \$675$ for one to one and a half hour's time on site. Remember too that ensembles' fees vary widely with level of popularity. Professional vocalist's fees typically begin around \$150, yet some top dollar vocalists will expect \$250 or more. Harpists will often expect \$250-\$350 because of transporting the harp. Fee scales and payment arrangements vary widely among different ensembles and are negotiated directly with the ensemble's representative.

Notes (items to remember - questions to ask):