



At minimum, there are three parts of the wedding ceremony where music is traditionally incorporated: A prelude as guests are being seated, the processional, and of course, the recessional. Optional music may include an interlude (i.e. candle lighting, etc.) and postlude as guests leave. The musical selections below are categorized by the portion of the ceremony in which they are most often heard, but keep in mind that many songs cross categories very effectively. Most titles listed under “preludes” are excellent choices for interludes as well. For instance, Schubert’s “Ave Maria” could be performed either during the prelude or for a candle-lighting. The “Trumpet Tune” by Jeremiah Clarke could serve as an effective processional or recessional. If you have questions about the appropriate placement of a particular song during the ceremony, give us a call.

PRELUDE

Your prelude not only entertains guests as they arrive, it sets the tone for your wedding. Think about choosing a few pieces that convey a mood that matches the style of your ceremony. If traditional classical music seems insincere, go with your instinct and program music close to your heart. Preludes usually begin 15 minutes before the planned start of the ceremony, but we usually will have thirty minutes prepared in case the wedding does not begin on time.

Recommendations: Handel's "Air, from Water Music"; Bach's "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring" or "Sheep May Safely Graze"; Beethoven's "Ode to Joy."

TRADITIONAL/CLASSIC

1. "Air" from Water Music (Handel)
2. "Air on the G String" (Johann S. Bach)
3. Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring (Johann S. Bach)
4. "Sheep May Safely Graze" (Johann S. Bach)
5. "Air" from Water Music (Handel)
6. "Chorale Prelude" (Bach)
7. "Ode To Joy" (Beethoven)

TRADITIONAL ALTERNATIVES

1. "Nimrod" (Elgar)
2. "Simple Gifts" (Copland)
3. "Andante Cantabile" (Tchaikovsky)
4. "Jupiter" from The Planets (Holst)
5. "Siciliana" from Water Music (Handel)

RELIGIOUS/SACRED

1. "Ave Verum Corpus" (Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart)
2. "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring" (from Cantata 147), (Johann S. Bach)
3. "Praise To The Lord" (Johann G. Walther)
4. "Voluntary" on the "Old 110th," (Henry Purcell)
5. "My Spirit Be Joyful" (Johann S. Bach)

PROCESSIONALS

Processional music plays as you and your wedding party make your grand entrance. As one of the most romantic moments in your life, the processional deserves a beautiful and uplifting accompaniment. Most couples opt for the grandeur of a march, but any music will do, so long as it suits the mood and strikes an emotionally charged chord. Don't worry if the traditional "Bridal Chorus" (a.k.a. "Here Comes the Bride") isn't quite your style-- there are many suitable alternatives. In addition to your processional, a separate piece should be selected for your attendants' walk down the aisle. This, or another piece, can be used to seat parents too.

Recommendations: Pachelbel's "Canon in D"; Purcell's "Trumpet Tune" or "Trumpet Voluntary"; "Overture to the Royal Fireworks" by Handel.

TRADITIONAL/CLASSIC

1. "Air" from G. F. Handel's Water Music Suite
2. "Bridal Chorus" from Lohengrin (Richard Wagner)
3. "Canon in D" (Johann Pachelbel)
4. "Trumpet Tune" (Henry Purcell)
5. "Trumpet Voluntary" (Henry Purcell)
6. "Trumpet Voluntary" (Jeremiah Clarke)
7. "Trumpet Voluntary" (John Stanley)
8. "Wedding March" from The Marriage of Figaro (Mozart)

TRADITIONAL ALTERNATIVES

1. "Coronation March for Czar Alexander III" (Peter I. Tchaikovsky)
2. "Overture" from Royal Fireworks Music (George Frederic Handel)
3. "Promenade" from Pictures at an Exhibition (Modest Mussorgsky)
4. "Winter" Largo, from The Four Seasons (Antonio Vivaldi)

RELIGIOUS/SACRED

1. "Voluntary" on "Old 100th" (Henry Purcell)
2. "Dona Nobis Pacem" (16th century hymn)
3. "Sleepers, Wake! A Voice is Calling" (Johann S. Bach)

INTERLUDES

A musical interlude by itself is used as a way to further imbue the ceremony with personal symbolic meaning. Most often it is incorporated within important moments such as the lighting of a unity candle. Interludes should be considered entirely optional. Almost any tune can be appropriate. Most prelude selections listed above work very well as interludes too. "Ave Maria" and Copland's "Simple Gifts" are always crowd pleasers.

TRADITIONAL/CLASSIC

1. "Simple Gifts" (traditional Shaker hymn)

RELIGIOUS/SACRED

1. "Amazing Grace" (traditional)
2. "Ave Maria" (Franz Schubert)

RECESSIONAL

Go out with a bang! You can make your exit as dramatic or flamboyant as you want, and after you're pronounced husband and wife, you'll want to follow up with something joyful and festive. Your recessional should inspire your guests to stand up and cheer you on as you hustle down the aisle, clapping their hands till you're out of sight.

Recommended: "Hornpipe" from G. F. Handel's "Water Music"; Mendelssohn's "Wedding March" from "A Midsummer Night's Dream;" Mouret's "Rondeau."

TRADITIONAL/CLASSIC

1. "Allegro Maestoso" from Water Music Suite (George F. Handel)
2. "Hallelujah Chorus" from The Messiah (George F. Handel)
3. "Hornpipe" from Water Music Suite, (George F. Handel)
4. "Ode to Joy" (Ludwig van Beethoven)
5. "Trumpet Tune" (Henry Purcell)
6. "Wedding March" from A Midsummer Night's Dream (Felix Mendelssohn)

TRADITIONAL ALTERNATIVES

1. "Rondeau" theme from Masterpiece Theater (Jean Joseph Mouret)
2. "Spring," Allegro, from The Four Seasons (Antonio Vivaldi)
3. "Triumphal March" from "Aida" (Giuseppe Verdi)

POSTLUDE

Planning a postlude is completely optional (you probably wouldn't list it in your program), but if you have a large guest list, you might want to plan about five to ten minutes worth of music following the recessional. The purpose is to make sure all your guests file out of there quickly and head for the reception with high spirits. We like the idea choosing something unique and completely unrelated to your other ceremony music.

RESOURCE

Wedding Music Expert and Consultant, Carol J. Elliott, Denver, CO

Ceremonial Music Worksheet

Your Name: _____ Telephone: _____

Prelude

You have the option of choosing songs for inclusion in the prelude (we will program additional music to fulfill the time requirements), however, you may wish to instead have us program the prelude entirely. To list additional pieces, use the back of this form. Check here if you want us to select music for your prelude, or list pieces below.

1. Title: _____ Composer: _____

2. Title: _____ Composer: _____

3. Title: _____ Composer: _____

Seating of Parents (optional)

You may select a piece specifically for the seating of parents if you wish. It is usually the last piece performed during the prelude; however, some prefer to seat parents with the same music used for the wedding party.

Title: _____ Composer: _____

Attendants' Processional

Select a piece for the entrance of bridesmaids, flower girl, etc.

Title: _____ Composer: _____

Bridal Processional

Title: _____ Composer: _____

Interlude (optional)

List any special music required (e.g. candle lighting, etc.)

Title: _____ Composer: _____

Recessional

Title: _____ Composer: _____

Postlude (Optional)

Check if you want us to select one or two pieces for a postlude, or list below. (Postludes are usually only necessary for large weddings, which take time for people to exit.)

Title: _____ Composer: _____