

Live music groups backdrop weddings



Getting Around By ETHEL SIMMONS

Music to get married by is what Lawrence W. Balog offers through his company, Wedding Bells, which provides live background music for weddings and receptions.

Wedding Bells furnishes chamber music for small weddings and ones with upwards of 300-400 guests.

"We throw in classical and light jazz," Balog said, explaining the musical programs each group may play. He put a cassette on the tape recorder, and elegant strains of a string quartet were heard.

The recording includes samples of music for the reception on one side, and a dozen organ selections for the processional and recessional, as choices for the wedding itself.

CLASSICAL MUSIC may be played by a string quartet, but there are also guitars, flute and pianos among instruments available for the wedding day.

"It's a lot easier to let the music speak for itself," Balog said, while groups played samplings for the reception. "If you like what you hear, that's what you get."

According to Balog, musicians who play for Wedding Bells are all well-trained, with music degrees. "My flute player has filled in (with) the Detroit Symphony, and the string player is a graduate of Juilliard."

Balog said trios work out best at a wedding for 75-200 people and beyond. He recalled a wedding with 14 couples as guests, at the Boisford Inn, with Wedding Bells providing the intimate sound of a solo guitar.

A piano, violin and cello was a combination that played for 200 guests at a wedding at Kirk in the Hills.

"YOU CAN CONVERSE over it," he said, about the background music supplied by Wedding Bells groups. "You hate to say fine music just for background music," Balog said. He pointed out, "Haydn would write a symphony a day for his patrons."

Background music is stressed because you can't demand full attention of wedding guests — some of whom may be drinking too much, for example.

A guitar and two flutes is a trio that

provides a fuller sound that is closer to a band sound but still chamber music, he said.

In getting together with the client to discuss music, Balog said, "We prefer to go to the home." However, they will mail out a cassette, with brochures, and the client may keep the cassette. "We consider it good advertising."

The price for a trio for two hours is \$150, for three hours, \$220, and four hours, \$280.

"WE MUST guarantee satisfaction, because we're in it for the long run," Balog said. "Our musicians must have the right attitude."

Some musicians think playing for weddings is "like the pits," he said. "But our musicians are happy to play at weddings for the extra money and the contact with other musicians."

Only one of Wedding Bells' musicians is a fulltime musician, who plays at a church. The others have fulltime jobs, or are women whose husbands work.

"You can't make a living at music," Balog said. "One of our musicians quit the business and is working in the post office."

Most of Wedding Bells' dates are at weddings in the spring, summer, or December, throughout the tri-county area. Balog studied music at Oakland University before opening Wedding Bells in October 1976.

LAST YEAR, the company had 200 bookings. This year sales of \$80,000-\$70,000 are projected.

Balog is a Detroit resident, with offices for Wedding Bells at 1735 S. Main, Pleasant Ridge.

Air Condo concert slated for Groves

Air Condo, a contemporary jazz/rock group, will appear in concert at 8 p.m. Monday, Feb. 19, at Groves High School Auditorium in Beverly Hills.

Two of the seven musicians in the group are Groves alumni. Bugs Bedow, who plays trombone and flute, is a 1970 graduate; Paul Kingery, lead guitar and lead vocals, graduated in 1968.

Air Condo is playing Tuesday-Sunday through Feb. 17 at Napoleon's on Main Street in Plymouth.

The range of skills of Air Condo includes five-part vocals, horns (electric and acoustic), multi-keyboards, percus-

sion, two guitarists and a bassist.

The band's sound is operated by the group's own audio technician. Air Condo's style is a fusion of many styles, designed to appeal to all age groups.

Six members of the group are songwriters. After more than two years performing, the group has begun to screen record contract offers.

Tickets for the Air Condo concert at Groves are available at the door, or in advance, at Marty's Records, Birmingham; Pipers Alley, Troy; the Groves High Book Store; and Harmony House in Southfield and Livonia.

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School presents dinner theater

A Cabaret Dinner Theatre performance of Woody Allen's "Don't Drink the Water" will be held at 8 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 17, at Roeper School in Bloomfield Hills.

Faculty members of the fine arts department and upper school students will prepare the dinner, which will have an international flavor. Students

and faculty also will provide additional entertainment in a floor show.

Cost for the evening's event is \$7.50. The play only will be presented at 8 p.m. Friday, Feb. 16, at the school. Tickets are \$3 per adult and \$2 for students and senior citizens.

For ticket information call 642-1500.

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