

For me and my gal

The bells are ringing

Seeing a guitarist or an entire chamber music ensemble alongside a soon-to-be-united couple no longer comes as a great surprise.

Weddings have become personalized as more couples not only write their own vows but also choose the musical accompaniment for their ceremony.

"A very private thing done in a very public way," goes one song about marriage.

Specially selected music can keep intact the private, personal aspect of ceremonially publicizing this religious and social bond.

Before dashing off to sign up the Avid Artichoke Rock Band or the like to play at the joyful event, a couple ought to keep in mind the public nature of the ceremony and the fact that they'll have to live with each other as well as the memory of the wedding day for some time.

A few considerations can make the day less agonizing than most psychologists predict.

Hell hath no fury like a mother-in-law scorned. Political astuteness and future happiness suggest clearing the use of non-traditional music with both clans, as well as the cleric officiating.

If difficulties arise, remember that much folk and rock music now popularly used in weddings has been recast in more traditional orchestral forms; there's room for compromise.

On the other hand, some rock groups like Emerson, Lake and Palmer have taken on the classics, so everybody can be satisfied.

After agreeing to be different,



Bells ring and people sing at weddings

the couple should decide exactly how different. Maybe the traditional recessional is perfectly acceptable if some close friends participated in playing it.

And then, maybe Mendelssohn conjures images of pagans and fairies romping through the Athenian woods; but a classical cast to the music is still favored.

Beethoven's always a good bet for affirmative processional and recessional music; his Fifth Sym-

phony sports several dandy themes for this purpose.

Check with a competent church musician for leads in this area and follow through with recordings from the library.

If contemporary music with lyrics is agreed upon, don't fall for just a pretty melody; be certain all the lyrics say something to the occasion.

"There's Got To Be A Morning After" is a nice song, but on third thought, it could be judged inappropriate for the rite preceding the wedding night.

Decide for whom a specific song is to be directed. "You Are the Sunshine of My Life" centers on the bride and bridegroom; "If We Only Have Love" makes a more public declaration.

Playability is another factor. Procul Harum has composed some inspiring and downright awesome music, but both the group and the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra are not readily available for one-shot gigs.

Recordings can be used as long as they're satisfactorily reproduced; both newlyweds and other participants will long recall the sight and sound of the ceremony.

A sound system needs someone

to run it; be sure the person on duty is not a peanut butter-and-jelly fanatic. And the recordings themselves must be immaculate.

A good organist is worth his weight in records and tapes; at the hands and feet of the musician, a good organ suffices for a whole symphony.

Investigate the possibilities of hiring both the instrument and instrumentalist.

Of course, if a friend or the bride or the groom has composed something timely for the occasion, use it. Maybe the friend or bride or bridegroom could also perform it, making the ritual yet more direct and personal.

Finally, look at the marriage ceremony as a complete entity. Aside from the processional, the recessional and a good song in between, are all musical requirements covered? Does all the music make specific points throughout the ceremony about the special couple sweating it out up front?

Will the music help make the moment and the vows and the marriage last?

Hopefully, the answers to the final checklist are all "yes." Then, good luck.

—CRAIG REYNOLDS



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