

# Here are some helpful tips to consider when planning your wedding



We all want your day to be perfect. This is your event to plan as you see fit. These are just some suggestions that we have compiled from many years of wedding performance in a variety of venues and conditions. Please don't hesitate to ask questions. We are always here to help!

Written by Michael D Peifer, Owner and Founder of Wedding Music Charleston, Event Music Charleston and Acoustic Music Charleston and Chairman of the Charleston DJ Alliance.

## Choosing your vendors

- Be sure to **choose event professionals *with references*** to help with your important event. Inexperience, substandard equipment and a poor attitude can ruin an otherwise perfect day. Arrange meetings with your vendors and ask plenty of questions. NOTE: Look at our info sheet called "Why choose Wedding Music Charleston" for insight into what makes us rise above others in the industry. It will give you excellent talking points with other vendors as well.
- ASK if your entertainment has extensive experience with weddings and how many years he/she has been providing professional services specifically like the ones you are interested in. Ask to see photos of equipment set up and videos if possible. A vendor with experience should have MANY photos and videos to share.
- Understand that there is a substantial difference between a professional club DJ or band, and a **wedding** DJ or band. Experience with weddings is important. Weddings are far more detailed and require extensive planning and preparation. We do all kinds of events. Nothing is more complex than a wedding.

- Ask specifically for Master of Ceremonies services if you need them. A Master of Ceremonies will make introductions, direct the flow of the reception, make important announcements and handle details with ease. A club/party DJ will often have no experience with this. **Live bands often do not offer this service** unless they are specifically experienced with weddings.
- **Contracts and retainers are important.** They are an excellent tool that can protect all involved. A vendor that does not use a contract is often a vendor that is unreliable. Contracts and deposits give you security that your vendor will be available and prepared on the day of your event.

## Your Timeline

- A timeline that details the flow of events is recommended. It will help you to visualize how the event will proceed. I have an example of a timeline posted on the site under “Forms” if you need one.
- Toasts, first dances, bouquet and garter tosses, introductions, cake-cutting and other key parts of the reception should be scheduled thoughtfully. The flow of the reception should be easy for all guests to follow including the Bride and Groom. A Master of Ceremonies can help with this. We are happy to assist if you like! A good MC works closely with your planner, catering and the photographer to make the event run smoothly.

## Ceremony Tips

- Wedding ceremonies often move quickly. Be aware when choosing music that there may only be enough time to hear a brief section of the song before you are ready to move on. Choose *the specific section of the music that you want to hear* as well.
- Once the ceremony itself is over the Bride and Groom may be hungry, thirsty, tired or simply overwhelmed. They may need time to relax a bit and get something to drink or eat before moving on to other parts of the event.
- Consider your waiting guests when releasing wedding party members as they walk to the front. There is no need to separate them more than 10-15 steps for photos to be taken. **Extended walk time can subject elderly guests as well as children to much longer ceremony time.** This may not be practical for a number of reasons. There is no need for them to walk all the way to the front before the next person begins. This can be very time consuming, especially at outdoor events.

## Outdoor Events

- Outdoor and beach weddings can be lovely if planned correctly, however **temperature**, wind, mosquitos and gnats can be a real concern for you and your guests.
- **Beach weddings** require special consideration. Strong wind can be bothersome, and gnats become more active around dusk. Amplification is

often needed if more than 30 guests will be in attendance, especially when the wind and surf are adding to the background noise. Take the time to be thoughtful about these possibilities and your guests will be more likely to enjoy themselves.

- **Consider the special needs of elderly guests** as well. They are more likely to struggle with difficult conditions. Temperatures in Charleston can vary substantially. High temperatures and humidity or chilly breezes will drive elderly guests inside or worse, send them packing prematurely. They may also struggle with walking over sand or even grass.
- **Temperature** can vary wildly in Charleston, especially in the Spring and Fall. One day it may be 85 degrees and the next it may be only 45. Temperatures above 85 can feel like 95 with high humidity and likewise 50 degrees can feel like 40 with a little wind. If you want to enjoy your day you must be aware of this and have alternate plans. Dancing in hot or cold weather generally does not last long. Better to have your dance floor inside or at least protected from wind, rain and heat. Misting fans can help but they will make things wet. Heaters only help if they are in confined spaces without wind effects.
- **Musicians are affected by temperature.** If the temp drops below 55 degrees or rises above 90 degrees your musicians truly may not be able to perform. Hands cannot be protected because they are used to make music, therefore a musician's hands will begin to cramp up from cold and not move well on the instrument. A musician's core temp is already higher due to added activity so high temps can be difficult as well. Humidity and wind also affect the way your musicians perform. If your musician has trouble playing you and your guests will not like the temp either.
- **Equipment is affected by temperature and weather conditions.** Direct sun will overheat equipment and may shut the unit down. Very high temps and very low temps cause equipment to malfunction and/or fail. Rain, snow and condensation is very bad for equipment. Gear must be protected from any precipitation. Therefore, a roof and sidewalls are critical near your music set up. It is never fun to have equipment fail during your event.

## **Tents and Rain**

- Rain does not fall straight down, and it will splash once it hits the ground. If rain is threatening in any way you should have sidewalls on your tent. Dirt floors can become very muddy and messy with rain splashing in. Your DJ or band equipment can easily get wet and this can be expensive. Reserve sidewalls in case there is rain. [CLICK HERE FOR VIDEO OF THIS](#)
- Even a short drizzle of rain can get Ceremony chairs and equipment wet. Prepare with several towels, possible umbrellas and reserve a small tent

for the Ceremony equipment if rain is even the smallest percentage possible.

- Ask your Officiant to make the Ceremony shorter if rain is threatening. Better to get through the Ceremony before rain begins than to be drenched for your reception. Do not be afraid to speak up if he or she is dragging things out, especially if it is very cold or very hot or raining. This is your event and he or she is there for you.

### **High Heels-Footwear**

- Ladies shoes with high heels can be dangerous in wet conditions and difficult to manage in grass, sand, gravel and dirt. Have them bring a change of shoes for dancing and walking on uneven surfaces. Hot sand or rocks and shells can also be tough on bare feet. Flip flops can be a fun alternative and they will also protect their feet if someone drops a glass (Party-foul glass breakage happens often at weddings) Wet dance floors due to spilled drinks or tracked-in rain can be trouble unless you have good shoes. Injuries are not what we want at weddings.
- On the previous note- **If you have glass at your wedding there will most likely be broken glass on the floor.** Consider glass alternatives. It will save everyone a lot of trouble and embarrassment. Cut, bleeding feet are no fun. I have seen it many, many times. Dancing with drinks is inevitable and slippery. There will be a party foul or even several. Also consider how to clean up wet floors due to dropped drinks. A mop or towels can be a lifesaver. Your venue may not assist with this cleanup.

### **Insurance for your event**

- Accidents can happen, and as the host of the event you are likely responsible. **This is your event** so injured parties or even the event venue may look to you for compensation. Event Liability Insurance can cover you if you need it. Your vendors may have insurance, but it will only cover issues directly related to their negligence, not alcohol related issues or injuries due to a fall or other mishap. Don't expect the venue or others to cover you. Cover yourself and your guests.

### **Moving between activities can take time**

- Once your guests are ready to dance we find it easier if they are encouraged to *continue* doing so. Moving guests back and forth between dancing and other events can be difficult and frustrating for them. Grouping your special events together can be helpful. It seems beneficial to schedule most of the dancing during the last 2-3 hours of the reception in general, this will allow your guests to settle into the music and relax a bit. However, this is simply a recommendation based on our experience. You may have a unique vision for your event and we are always happy to accommodate!

### **Parking and loading**

- Pay attention to where you and your vendors will have to park and load/unload equipment. This will affect not only your family and guests, but it will **likely affect your pricing as well**. Experienced vendors know the venues that are difficult for loading and parking. Some refuse to work at those venues, others charge more because they will need help, or the event prep will take more time. Many vendors use carts to move heavy items, so stairs or uneven surfaces can cause undue difficulty. We have over 20 years of experience with local venues and we also have insider's info including photos and video of logistics pertaining to most local venues. Contact Michael Peifer at 843-442-2525 or [michaeldpeifer@gmail.com](mailto:michaeldpeifer@gmail.com) for access to this valuable information.

We hope these tips will help you have the amazing event you are dreaming of! Let us know if you have any questions. We are happy to assist even if you don't hire us!

[www.weddingmusiccharleston.com](http://www.weddingmusiccharleston.com)

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