

MODERN BRIDE

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SUMMER APR./MAY 75c

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FOR SUMMER
WEDDINGS**
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WEDDING MUSIC

**RESPONSIBLE
MORALITY**
by Dr. Deane W. Ferm

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FROM THE
FLOOR UP**

**HONEYMOON
TIME IN
MONTREAL,
THE BAHAMAS,
FLORIDA**





Music for your Wedding

by William E. Nierintz, Choir Master

How important will the music in *your* wedding be? No one will notice one less floral bouquet, one less yard of lace on the gown, one less layer on the cake, or one less kind of sandwich at the reception. Yet, just try to plan a wedding without music! Music is perhaps one of the most lasting mementos of this all-important ceremony. You will remember it longer than the kind of flowers, the menu, and perhaps even longer than the names of many of the guests. You will recognize it whenever and wherever you hear it. But just where will this association occur? Will you be able to identify the music from your wedding in the context of serious, classical, sacred music? Or will you associate it with light, frivolous operas, jukeboxes or nightclubs?

Wedding music is customarily divided into two classifications, traditional and non-traditional. Both of these labels are misnomers, and I prefer to discuss wedding music as being traditionally inappropriate and traditionally appropriate for the wedding ceremony.

Traditional wedding music (that is, traditionally inappropriate wedding music) includes the familiar processional march, "Here Comes the Bride" from Wagner's *Lohengrin*, and the widely used recessional from Mendelssohn's *Incidental Music to Shakespeare's Midsummer-Night's Dream*.

in tune with summer weddings

a fragile gown of white imported organza. There's a square-necked empire bodice of Swiss leaf appliqués, more leaves scattered on the swirl of skirt with its built-in train. By Miss Antoinette for Embassy, about \$310. At Saks Fifth Avenue, New York; Davison-Paxon, Atlanta. The tiny matching hat and pouf of shoulder-length veil, T & G. Photographed in a courtyard of the seventeenth-century church and convent at Tepotzotlan, near Mexico City.

Both of these marches bring tears to the listener's eyes, and perhaps rightly so. Few people know that the Wagner selection (Here Comes the Bride) was written for the operatic marriage of Elsa and Lohengrin, and their marriage did not last long. Secondly, the "trivial character (of the Lohengrin) makes it unfit" for the sacred wedding service which is to be performed in any house of worship. "Its faults more than outweigh any value it may have acquired through popular associations with weddings."¹ The Mendelssohn march, though much better from a musical standpoint, was written for the Shakespearean marriage of a young maiden to a satyr, half man, half horse—a man given to lechery and lasciviousness. Certainly, these are incidents and situations which I would not care to have associated with my wedding.

But we are not finished yet. Encompassed in this category of "traditional wedding music" is also that battery of solos which have been traditionally sung at weddings. I refer here to such ditties as "I Love You Truly," "Because," "Through the Years," "At Dawning," "O Promise Me," ad nauseum. Most of these pieces were written for musical comedies or movies, and they do not have anything sacred about them whatsoever, musically or textually. I need only admonish the reader to secure a copy of any one of these selections and attempt to swim through a reading of the drippy, soggy text.

Then there are the countless requests which many in my profession have had to include a particular song in the wedding service: "our song"—which might possibly include anything from "September Song" from the movie *September Affair*, a saga of illicit love out of wedlock, or "Love is a Many Splendored Thing" from the movie of the same title (and a smash hit and Academy award winner), or "He" and "I Believe," those timeless jukebox favorites. And I might add that these have been requested in all sincerity and seriousness by young, innocent, but ignorant couples.

Finally we come to vocal setting of the "Lords Prayer." One would tend to think

that this would be unquestionably appropriate from its Scriptural text. Yet is it? The prayer itself occurs in most marriage services as the one single act in which the guests may corporately join in spoken prayers for the young couple. To duplicate this act is superfluous, and to replace it with a vocal setting is to deny the wedding guests their one opportunity to verbally express their heartfelt prayers for those being joined in holy matrimony. This prayer should be reserved for clergy and people, and it should occur appropriately within the context of the service.

This whole category of music, popularly called traditional, but which I prefer to classify as traditionally inappropriate, should be seriously examined and questioned by prospective brides and grooms before they select their own wedding music. The connotations and secular associations of these selections do nothing more than detract from a sacred wedding ceremony, contradicting the mood and meaning of the service. Certainly music of greater worth, suitability, and seriousness of purpose can and should be considered.

So called non-traditional wedding music, that which I prefer to call traditionally appropriate music for the marriage ceremony, has at its central core a seriousness of purpose which sets it apart from other music and distinguishes it from music which is appropriate only for a social gathering. Such music was written and intended for use in houses of worship. It is both serious and dignified, reflecting the strength and depth of feeling of the persons being married, and yet it is marked with the grace, tenderness, and joy which should be characteristic of the wedding ceremony. In a recent issue of *Time Magazine*, an article entitled "On Tradition, or What is Left of It," has this to say about the selection of wedding music:

"Weddings still have the traditional trimmings, including white lace and tears, but many couples now insist on writing their own wedding service or at least varying the hallowed music; the customary wedding marches have (continued on page 222)

Wedding Music

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begun to give way to Handel's *Water Music*, Hayden's *St. Anthony Chorale* . . ."

We have only to look to the music of the great English cathedrals and certain other denominations wherein the processional (be it of clergy, choristers or laymen) plays an integral part in the service of worship. Here is music intended for sacred use and written with a sacred purpose in mind. In this light, the music of Handel, Purcell, Stanley and Haydn immediately stands out as embodying principles congruent with the worship service. Most hymn tunes would fit these same qualifications. I would recommend to young couples a careful consideration of the following selections in deciding on wedding marches:

"Trumpet Tune and Air" by Purcell (many publishers)

"Trumpet Voluntary" by Jeremiah Clarke (many publishers)

"Trumpet Voluntary" by John Stanley (Suite for Organ), Oxford Press

"The Bishop's Promenade" by Coke-Jephcott, H. W. Gray

"Trumpet Tune in D major" and "Trumpet Tune in E major" by David Johnson, Augsburg Press

"St. Anthony Chorale" by Brahms (Variations on a Theme by Haydn), G. Schirmer

"Crown Imperial" by William Walton, Oxford Press

"Psalm XIX" by Marcello (Music for Weddings, Vol. I), Concordia

"Nun Danket Alle Gott" by Karg-Elert (Chorale Improvisationen Vol. 6), Simon or Marks

"Tocatta" Symphonie No. 5 by Widor, Edward B. Marks Music Corp.

Hymn Tunes: "Hyfrydol," "Cwm Rhondda," "Hymn to Joy" (Beethoven), "Marion," "Lobe Den Herren" and "Lasst Uns Erfreuen."

The use of a trumpet for processional and recessional adds a note of dignity and majesty without destroying the seriousness of the service. Many of the selections mentioned above have instrumental parts available.

The vocal solo in conjunction with the marriage ceremony has perhaps raised the most serious questions in the minds of clergy and musicians. I know of no marriage ceremony in any denomination which specifically calls for a vocal solo within the context of the service. Therefore, it must occur, if at all, while the guests are being seated prior to the service. Two principles should govern the selection of

vocal music for weddings. First of all, it must be good, serious music, and secondly, it must be appropriate to the subject of the ceremony. A vague reference to God, love, or marriage or authorship by a great composer is not enough. Many of the great composers wrote both sacred and secular works. If a vocalist is to be used, I urge that strong consideration be given to the following selections:

"Be Thou Faithful Unto Death" (St. Paul) by Mendelssohn, G. Schirmer

"Be Thou But Near" by Bach (many publishers)

"If with All Your Hearts" (Elijah) by Mendelssohn, G. Schirmer

"A Wedding Prayer" by D. H. Williams, H. W. Gray

"God is My Shepherd" and "I Will Sing New Songs of Gladness" by Dvorak (Biblical Songs), Associated Music Publishers

"I Follow Thee also with Joy-lightened Footsteps" (Passion According to St. John) by Bach, G. Schirmer

"Set Me as a Seal Upon Thy Heart" (A Wedding Suite) by Clokey, J. Fischer

"Entreat Me Not to Leave Thee" by Cassler, Augsburg Press

The use of choirs and other instruments is slowly beginning to come about in the marriage service. There are several suitable anthems of an easy to moderate degree of difficulty available for marriage services in which a choir can be utilized.

"It is a Precious Thing" by Peter (Early Moravian Series), H. W. Gray

"Lord, Lead Us Still" by Brahms, H. W. Gray

"The Greatest of These is Love" by Bitgood, H. W. Gray

"Rejoice in the Lord Always" by Purcell, H. W. Gray

"Brother James' Air (Psalm 23) by Jacob, Oxford Press

"O Lord Most Holy" by Franck (many publishers)

"Old Hundredth Psalm Tune" by Vaughn-Williams, Oxford Press

"With a Voice of Singing" by Shaw, Curwen and Sons

"Holy, Lord God Almighty" by Handel, H. W. Gray

"Go Not Far From Me" by Zingarelli, H. W. Gray

In some places of worship the inclusion of hymns to be sung by the assembled guests provides another opportunity in the marriage service for more corporate acts of worship by the

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congregation while also giving the service depth and overtones of a more customary service of worship. Suggested hymns might include:

“Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee”
(Hymn to Joy)

“Praise the Lord! Ye Heavens Adore Him” (Hyfrydol)

“The God of Abraham Praise” (Leoni)

“Praise to the Lord, the Almighty”
(Lob Den Herren)

“O Be Joyful in the Lord” (Rock of Ages)

“Now Thank We All Our God” (Nun Danket)

“Lord Dismiss Us With Thy Blessing” (Sicilian Mariners)

“God of Grace and God of Glory”
(Cwm Rhondda)

“Our Father, by Whose Name”
(Rhosymedre)

“O Perfect Love” (Barnby)

The controversy between secular and sacred music in the wedding ceremony is beyond the point of debate. Clergy and musicians recognize the clear line of demarcation between the two, yet the laymen remain to be educated on

this matter. In many places of worship, opportunities are readily available for the counseling of brides and grooms in the selection of wedding music. One of the highest compliments that can be paid to an organist or director of music is the faith of a young couple in his experience and judgment, and their eagerness to make their wedding musically appropriate to the religious service in which they will publicly confirm the contract they have made between themselves and God. Can we dare to defile this solemn, sacred purpose with music which detracts from it rather than enhances it?

¹ *Music for Church Weddings*, An official Publication of the Joint Commission on Church Music.

Editors Note: Mr. Nierintz, a graduate of Yale and Harvard Universities, is Minister of Music at the First Congregational Church in West Boylston, Massachusetts. He is a member of the American Guild of Organists (Boston and Worcester Chapters), wherein he holds the degree of Choir Master, and is on the teaching staff of the Newton, Massachusetts public schools.