

CHICAGO *Wedding*

ENTERTAINMENT

In order to select the best in musical entertainment, it is helpful to know what to expect

88A *The Rhythm Of Your Party*

rhythm

OF
YOUR

Party

BANDLEADERS PLAY

A MAJOR ROLE IN

KEEPING YOUR

RECEPTION MOVING

Timing the events at a wedding, and keeping things flowing smoothly and naturally, is so important that most disc jockeys and band leaders consider it absolutely crucial to the success of an event. Nothing can replace a well-rehearsed, talented group of musicians or a skillful, well-prepared disc jockey. But an experienced band or an exciting DJ who also possesses a thorough knowledge of wedding routine and a knack for reading a crowd can turn a run-of-the-mill gathering into an exhilarating event.

As you might expect, entertainers have different points of view on this subject. Don Cagen, of Don Cagen Music, has a system that works well for his clientele. "Together with the maitre d', banquet manager, or coordinator," he said, "we will come up with the flow of events for the evening. There are so many things that you need to know. For example, how many courses will be served? More brides want their courses

separated by dancing these days, and orchestrating this pattern takes a lot of skill on the part of the band leader." Although Cagen usually leaves the general scheduling of events to the coordinator or maitre d', there are times when he senses the need to take control of the scripting. Cagen also stresses that a good band leader needs to be flexible, even if he composed the entire schedule of events himself. "Things don't always take exactly the amount of time that you think they will," he points out. "You can't let that throw off the rest of the party."

And Cagen says that a good bandleader will quickly understand the crowd. "You always figure out who the group leaders are, and then you get them onto the dance floor -- everyone else will follow. Flexibility is the key. We don't choose our next song until we are halfway through with the one we are playing."

"The best way to get people to respond to a band," said Don Cagen, "is to give them a superb performance. I don't use my mouth to get people onto the dance floor -- I use my music."