

WEDDINGS *for*

Everything You Need to Know

G R O W N U P S

to Plan Your Wedding Your Way


CHRONICLE BOOKS
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CHAPTER EIGHT

Music: The Key to Timing, Emotional Tone, and Energy Level

Bandleader and jazz pianist Peter Duchin, one of the few musicians in the United States you can hire for your private party who has immediate name recognition, plays at wedding receptions and says there are two kinds. "The first is the wedding where the bride is either very young or still in awe of her mother's organizational skills," he says, "so the entire wedding, including the music, is dictated by the mother."

The other kind of wedding, Duchin says, is more fun. "It's either a second marriage or the professional woman marrying the guy she's been living with. The music is more contemporary, the wedding less formal, and yet it has an old-fashioned, romantic edge. These are the couples who really seem to be in love, not the young ones." And the music is better, too, he says with a laugh. "You're wiser at 30 than you were at 21, and you obviously have better taste and more to synthesize than you did when you were younger, which influences everything," Duchin explains.

Society bandleader Don Cagen and his vocalist wife, Becky, in Chicago, are the kind of couple who finish each other's sentences and who, at least in public, never disagree. They say that sophisticated couples are fun to work with. "They've traveled. They've been to the Caribbean and have brought back a taste for the music. It's vacation music to them. They like rock and its subtleties. If the hip bride makes one mistake it's thinking that she and her guests won't get out on the dance floor and really boogie. The thing is you have to talk to your bandleader and articulate your vision. But then he has to make it work within the larger frame of the party. If it's a dinner dance, the bandleader's job is to fill the dance floor. It's that simple."

A Bandleader's Advice

"There's one way I know that the party won't be a great one," says Chicago bandleader Don Cagen. "If the bride's not interested in and not thinking about her wedding music. The bride who can barely choose the music for her first dance? That party is in deep trouble and I always know I'm going to have to work extra hard to get people dancing and make things work."

"The other extreme is the client who wants to give you a line-by-line playlist. "That doesn't work either, because they don't know how to make parties work, what to do to get things going, how to calm them down when food has to be served, how to get things rolling again, etc. My advice is to hire someone you trust and then let them do their work."