



Lux Bay Complete Guide to Wedding Music

WWW.LUXBAYMUSIC.CO.UK
E-MAIL: LUXBAYDUO@GMAIL.COM
TELEPHONE: 07875285343



Introduction / about us

Thank-you for reading our complete guide to wedding music!

We are Lux Bay, an acoustic duo based in the north-west of England. We have over 15 years' experience of playing live music, primarily at weddings but also at private functions and many other events.

We've played for thousands of people over the years, from small intimate wedding ceremonies to corporate events attended by hundreds. We've learned a huge amount during this time and we'd love to share our knowledge and experience with you.

We're sure you'll find this guide to be extremely useful, though if you'd like any further advice on planning the music for your wedding or event, please don't hesitate to contact us via the details on the cover page. We genuinely love helping people plan what is one of the most important elements of any wedding or event - live music!

LUX BAY





The wedding day from start to finish - when will you require music?

We always advise beginning by mapping out your wedding day from start to finish and then considering when you will and won't require music (whether live or recorded). As a guide, let's take a look at what may be considered to be a reasonably common wedding day schedule:

The ceremony

Pre-ceremony (as guests arrive).

Background music can really add to the magic of the day, right from the very start. Consider if your guests would appreciate listening to a selection of beautiful songs, performed live, from the moment they arrive at the church / venue.

The procession / bridal entrance.

Popular classical examples as the Bride walks down the aisle include Pachelbel's *Canon in D* and Wagner's *Bridal Chorus* but why not consider something a little different? Perhaps a different classical piece or, for that truly wow moment, how about a soloist or duo playing a unique version of one of your favourite songs? Perhaps a song that really means something special to you and your partner?

The signing of the register.

An important point to note is that this usually takes longer than you'd imagine! If you are considering booking live music, this is an opportunity to listen to a further 3-4 special songs.

Leaving the church / venue.

You and your partner will likely only hear one song so why not make it a really special one? A relatively upbeat tune often works well here - think of the Keira Knightley scene in *Love Actually*, where the assembled band play *All You Need Is Love*, though it isn't always feasible to do something on such a grand scale. Real life rarely resembles a Richard Curtis movie, after all!





The daytime schedule at your venue

Guests arriving / welcome drinks / general 'mingling' as the photos are taken

This part of the day can often take an hour or longer. Whether it's live or recorded music, ensuring you have something playing in the background always adds to the atmosphere.

The wedding breakfast / meal

One of our favourite times to be playing live! We love our wedding breakfast set and it is one of our most popular packages. We may be biased but it really does make the day truly special if you and your guests are treated to a selection of love songs and live-lounge style covers as you dine. Live music should never be too loud or prominent at this time - treating it as background music is absolutely the way to go here. An important point to note is that the meal can often last up to 2hrs or more. If that is the case, consider having some recorded music to play as your live act finishes - singing for that length of time without a break can be difficult.

The room turnaround

If the evening party is in a separate room, there should be an almost instantaneous transition, with little waiting time. However, if the party will take place in the same room as your meal, turning the room around can often take an hour or more, with guests usually congregating in a bar or reception area. If you are having the same artist providing live music throughout the full day, they will likely need this time to set up for the evening. However, if your soloist / band will not be playing during the evening, consider asking them to play an early-evening set for your guests. This is another of our favourite sets to play. Quite often the drinks will have been flowing and everyone will be in good spirits. Rather than have your guests sit in relative silence, why not provide a live set featuring acoustic sing-along classics to get them in the mood for the party ahead?!





The evening schedule

The traditional wedding party

If you're having a traditional wedding 'party', we always advise starting the evening relatively easy and increasing the volume as the evening progresses. Quite often, especially if you invite additional guests during the evening, people will see this as an opportunity to catch up with friends and family they may not have seen for a while, rather than immediately hitting the dancefloor. However, if your wedding will see guests spending all day and night with you, with no new guests during the evening, you may well have people who want to party from the very first minute!

Live music or not?

If you would like live music, consider if you will require a longer, single set later on in the evening or two separate shorter sets. We tend to advise a single set, typically after food is served, as this is when guests are usually ready to really let their hair down and hit the dancefloor! Also, consider the timing of other key parts of the evening, such as the cutting of the cake, the first dance, and the evening meal. As an example, we've played many weddings where the following rough times have applied:

A single live set

19.30-20.30 DJ music

20.30-20.45 Cutting the cake / first dance

20.45-21.00 DJ music

21.00-21.45 Food served. DJ music continues (*though often at a slightly lower volume*)

21.45-23.00 Live music set

23.00 - 0.00 DJ music (*full on party tunes!*)

Two live sets

19.30-20.00 DJ music

20.00-20.15 Cutting the cake / first dance

20.15-21.00 First live set

21.00-21.45 Food served. DJ music continues (*though often at a slightly lower volume*)

21.45-22.30 Second live set

22.30 - 0.00 DJ music (*full on party tunes!*)





The evening schedule (*continued*)

Whilst the potential schedules on the previous page are purely examples, there are a few important points which we'd advise all clients to consider when making plans:

Guest arrival time

Consider the times your guests may arrive. For example, if you were to favour the two live sets scenario on the previous page, it won't be an issue if you are confident that most of your guests would arrive by 20.00. However, any guests arriving later than this would miss key moments such as the cutting of the cake, the first dance, and the start of the first live set. This may not be a problem for you but is certainly something to consider.

What will your guests consider to be important?

We have played many weddings where the dancefloor is full from the very first minute onward. However, we have also played some two-set weddings where it is often the second set which really gets people into the party spirit and onto the dancefloor. We don't mind this in the slightest, especially as we fully appreciate that the early part of any evening party is often an opportunity for friends and family to catch up and chat, though this is something to consider if you wish to have two live music sets and book a live act whose sole aim is to fill the dancefloor at all times.

Please don't be surprised if timings slip a little!

Best-laid plans and all that! Despite all the time spent on planning, the schedule rarely (if ever!) runs according to plan. Please try to remember this and don't let it spoil your day if things do drift a little. It is pretty much inevitable, yet rarely does it have an adverse effect on your or your guest's enjoyment. Everything will work out just fine!





What are your specific requirements?

The most important things to consider are the specific requirements of you and your partner. We'd strongly advise spending time thinking about this before looking to book live music and/or a DJ. Key areas to consider are:

Do you want live music?

We may be biased in thinking that live music adds a huge amount to a wedding, though we do appreciate that it isn't for everyone. However, if live music is a requirement, please consider the following:

When would you like to hear live music?

During the wedding ceremony? During a cocktail reception / the wedding breakfast? Music to bridge the gap between the day and evening celebrations?

What type of live music act would you like to hear?

Primarily relating to evening music (though not exclusively), consider if you'd prefer a full band or duo / soloist. The key difference here is that a full band will deliver a full sound - quite important if you are hosting a 'full-on' party. Duos or soloists will often (though not always...) use backing tracks. This doesn't necessarily detract from the quality of performance though, primarily as backing tracks these days tend to be excellent and easily create that full band sound. It ultimately depends on what you are looking for.

What type of live music would you like to hear during the day?

There are endless options available here, so please try to determine which will work best for you! Perhaps a solo singer using backing tracks? A solo musician who also sings? Contemporary music or traditional? Perhaps a pianist, saxophonist, harpist, instrumental guitarist or any other instrumental musician (i.e. no vocals)? How about a choir or ensemble, such as a string quartet or a jazz band? Or, *ahem*, have you considered a wonderful acoustic duo, offering the very best in classics from across the decades!

Influencing factors?

There are many influencing factors to consider in addition to personal preference, such as 'the vibe' of the wedding. Will it take place in a large room or a marquee? Is it a quirky, rustic wedding or a huge traditional event? Is it a small-scale wedding with limited space? If so, consider the equipment any live music act or DJ would need to squeeze into a small area.

If you don't want live music, your choice of DJ is vitally important!

But more on that later...!





Other things to consider

Your budget

Never the easiest subject to discuss / think about but perhaps the most important. If money is no object, congratulations - you should be able to do whatever you want to regarding live music on your wedding day! However, given that most couples we've met work to a defined budget, please strongly consider how much you are willing to set aside for live music and/or a DJ. Chances are you should still be able to pay for whatever music you desire, though please conduct some online research, or obtain quotes, so you have a sense of current costs. Most musicians and bands should be happy to provide a no-obligation quote for you. For example, if you have a relatively modest budget, it's unlikely you'll be in a position to book a 12-piece soul band. Please do remember though that when it comes to event music, cheap doesn't necessarily mean cheerful...

The flexibility / adaptability of your chosen musician(s)

In advance of confirming any booking, we strongly advise you to consider the willingness of the musician/s to adapt their offer to meet your exact needs. As previously discussed, typical wedding itineraries need to have a degree of flexibility and you should therefore expect all your suppliers to also be adaptable.

Determine if you need your musician(s) to contact the venue in advance to discuss such important factors as PLI (Public Liability Insurance, which protects musicians if a claim is made against them), providing PAT (Portable Appliance Testing) certificates, determining available times to access the venue, potential set-up and pack-down times, and any other specific requirements which your act needs to know about (i.e. sound limiters, parking restrictions etc). In the case of PLI and PAT, many venues now insist on seeing confirmation that these measures are in place.

A key point here is not to worry too much about any of this. Once you've initially discussed this with your venue and chosen musician/s, the onus is usually on them to address this, though it is certainly worth clarifying this during your initial discussion.

Finally, determine if your musician(s) offer any bespoke extras. For instance, we now offer a personalised lyrics service and have received fantastic feedback when we have been able to take a client's favourite song and rewrite bespoke lyrics which are truly personal to them. It is a wonderful addition to our 'regular' packages and provides a truly unique moment within your wedding day.





The importance of the first dance

The first dance is one of the focal points of the wedding day and for very good reason! Whilst you and your partner will obviously (and quite rightly!) be the centre of attention for the full day, this really is when the spotlight shines firmly on you for 3 or 4 minutes!

Deciding the first dance hopefully won't be that difficult for you and your partner, though that isn't necessarily a given! However, deciding how you want to hear that first dance is something we do advise you carefully consider.

The key decision is whether or not you want to hear the recorded version by the original artist or a live version. This all depends on your personal preference. Some people prefer the recorded version, which will undoubtedly mean so much to them, whilst others prefer creating a truly bespoke and special moment by having a musician(s) play it live. We would suggest that the key consideration here is that a live version will undoubtedly differ to the original, whether that be very slightly or significantly. However, that uniqueness is hugely appealing to many couples as it tends to create a truly memorable and stand-out moment during the wedding day.

If you're unsure, though you know you definitely want live music, talk this through with your act. Let them know your first dance choice, or shortlisted choices, and ask if they would be able and willing to perform it for you. If so, determine how it would sound. Would it be significantly different to the original song or only slightly so?

Performing a first dance live does add a slight bit of additional pressure for your musician/s though we doubt that would be an issue. If this is something your act would be willing to do, ask them to send you a brief sample (perhaps a verse and a chorus) once they've had an opportunity to rehearse the song. Any musician(s) worth their salt will be happy to share this with you and this will provide you with a perfect indicator of how the song will sound on the day.





Popular first dance choices

Chances are you'll already have a good idea of the song you'd like to play for your first dance, or a shortlist of songs. However, if you're undecided, please let us help you! We've played most of the songs listed on the next two pages and all are excellent choices, though this all comes down to personal preference.

In 2020, the website jewellerybox.co.uk looked into user-created Spotify playlists to determine which songs have been recently used the most as first dances:

1. Christina Perri - A Thousand Years
2. Lonestar - Amazed
3. John Legend - All Of Me
4. Train - Marry Me
5. Adele - Make You Feel My Love
6. Etta James - At Last
7. Ed Sheeran - Perfect
8. Elvis Presley - Can't Help Falling In Love
9. Ed Sheeran - Thinking Out Loud
10. Ray LaMontagne - You Are The Best Thing
11. Bright Eyes - First Day Of My Life
12. Jason Mraz - I Won't Give Up
13. Jack Johnson - Better Together
14. Michael Buble - Everything



Additional first dance suggestions

We've listed some other potential first dance choices here. We've seen all of the suggestions on this and the previous list work really well (we've actually played the majority of them!) and whilst there are clearly a huge amount of songs available, we hope these will give you some food for thought:

Elton John - Your Song
Ellie Goulding - How Long Will I Love You
Al Green - Let's Stay Together
Charlene Soraia - Wherever You Will Go
Goo Goo Dolls - Iris
Savage Garden - Truly Madly Deeply
Shania Twain - You're Still The One
Bruno Mars - Just The Way You Are
Paul Weller - You Do Something To Me
The Beatles - All You Need Is Love
Bruno Mars - Marry You
Seal - Kiss From A Rose
Ronan Keating - When You Say Nothing At All
Louis Armstrong - We Have All The Time In The World
Beyonce - Halo
Kodaline - The One
One Direction - Little Things
Van Morrison - Brown Eyed Girl
Nat King Cole - L-O-V-E





Don't forget the last dance

Or the last 2-3 songs of the evening!

Often overlooked, to our mind these are almost as important as the first dance song.

The last song is inevitably a tune which is very special to you and your partner. The 1-2 songs before it are usually an ideal opportunity to get all your guests onto the dancefloor for the big finale!

Songs we've seen work really well at the end of the evening include:



Take That - Never Forget



Van Morrison - Brown Eyed Girl

Bill Medley & Jennifer Warnes - (I've Had) The Time
Of My Life



Frank Sinatra - (Theme From) New York, New York

Neil Diamond - Sweet Caroline

The Monkees - Daydream Believer



Robbie Williams - Angels

Oasis - Don't Look Back In Anger

Oasis - Champagne Supernova

Queen - Don't Stop Me Now

Queen - Bohemian Rhapsody

Andy Williams - Can't Take My Eyes Off You

The Beatles - All You Need Is Love

The Beatles - Hey Jude

The Proclaimers - I'm Gonna Be (500 Miles)

Journey - Don't Stop Believin'

Ben E. King - Stand By Me





What is a cheesy song anyway?!

Or, to put it another way, what music would you (and your guests) like to hear?!


Whether you decide on live or recorded music, and decide to hire a DJ or choose to address the music yourselves, we'd strongly advise giving careful consideration to just what music you and your guests will want to hear.

Of course, it is absolutely your decision to state the music to be played. It is your day, after all. However, please do consider the age range and preferences of your guests. If you and your partner are huge fans of 90's Trance and Techno, yet your guests will span a wide range of ages and tastes, is it going to be a night which your Grandma and Great Uncle Bill enjoy if they hear nothing but Ian van Dahl, Basshunter, and Tiesto all evening?!

Back when we used to provide evening entertainment, including DJ services, we always discussed music choices at length with our clients. Completing a song request sheet always proved an effective way of starting that conversation. Sometimes the list consisted of just a few songs; other times it ran to 4 or 5 sides of A4! This is the stage where your supplier should manage expectations with you. If you're going to be prescriptive and state a significant number of songs which need to be played, please consider just how many can be squeezed into the evening. For instance, let's say a 'typical' evening party will start at 19.30 and end at midnight. That's 270 minutes. Take out 30 minutes for cutting the cake and the first dance and you're left with 240 minutes. If a typical song is 4 minutes long, that's 60 songs which can be played in total. If you request any more than that, it will be impossible to play them all. Please also bear in mind that this number will be significantly reduced if you book live music. Additionally, filling the available time in full with your own choices leaves no option for requests from guests, nor does it provide your DJ / musician(s) with any scope to 'read the room' and use their experience to play songs which they believe will work well with your guests. Again, this is completely your choice, though we know from experience that most suppliers will appreciate a list that provides them with a reasonable number of guaranteed floorfillers whilst allowing them to use their own experience to gauge what to play as the night progresses.

One final point - when supplying your playlist, aim to make it as specific as possible. For example, as hinted at in the title of this section, we've been asked on a few occasions not to play any 'cheese'. But just how is cheesy music defined?

Some previous clients have classed this as the likes of Abba, The Time Warp, Macarena, Agadoo and suchlike, whilst others have considered classic pop tunes / artists, such as Whitney Houston, Erasure, The Spice Girls, and even The Beatles (!) as cheese! So if you do state requirements along these lines, please be as specific as possible.





To DJ or not to DJ?!

You might think this is an easy decision to make. Surely all weddings need a DJ? That isn't always the case though...

The DJ is usually an integral part of the traditional evening party, and is one of the key factors in ensuring you and your guests have a wonderful evening. However, we have played at many weddings where a DJ hasn't been deemed to be necessary.

Firstly, if you are booking live music, determine if your chosen singer / band are willing and able to also fulfil DJ duties for the full evening. If they are, check if this will cost more or if it is included in the initial quote. Also, please don't feel bad about asking your singer / band just what DJ duties they deliver. There is a world of difference between someone who will stay on the microphone all night and act as a 'traditional' DJ and a live music act who will play their live sets and then simply set off a playlist on their laptop whilst they head off for a drink and a chat for an hour or two.

If you are booking a DJ, consider the type of DJ you would like prior to researching options. It should be a given that the vast majority of DJs will read the room and frequently use the mic to make announcements and try their best to fill the dancefloor for you, though please do consider if that is enough for you. If, for example, you want a DJ who will also keep the room entertained by laughing and joking with your guests between songs, please confirm this with your shortlisted candidates as not everyone is comfortable in acting out the uber-confident 'comedy DJ' role.

Also, as suggested earlier, please do consider the size of your venue, in particular the area in which your DJ will be expected to set-up. If it is quite compact, you will need to confirm that your DJ will be able to fit into the space and doesn't have a rig the size of that used by The Chemical Brothers at Glastonbury! The same question regarding space also applies to live acts. We (Lux Bay) have a very compact set-up though many live acts need a considerable amount of room.

If you choose to provide the music yourselves, there are a few important points to note. Consider the set-up you will need - assuming you are playing a pre-defined playlist, do you have suitable equipment (i.e. speakers and potentially an amp) to adequately project the sound around the room? Will you have enough songs to fill the time and, if so, how will you play the special songs (i.e. the first dance) at the appropriate times? Finally, please do consider having a back-up option should your first choice fail for any reason - this is something any competent DJ or live act will already have in hand.





What else to consider?

We hope we've covered all the key areas to consider in this document but here are a few final ideas you may not have previously thought about.

Bespoke lyrics

We've previously mentioned our love of taking classic tunes and rewriting the lyrics to provide a truly unique and magical addition to your wedding day / event. Take this idea and think of ideas of your own which are a little different to the norm and determine if any potential musicians could address these for you. We know from experience that doing something like this really does add a stand-out 'wow' moment to any wedding day but treat this as a blank canvas. If you have an idea, no matter how wacky or strange-sounding, discuss it with potential suppliers - you never know what they might be able to do for you!

Bandaoke

If you book a musician(s) and know you have friends and family who like to sing, why not try to find an act who could deliver a 'bandaoke' service for you, in which the band will play songs whilst your guests sing the vocals? This isn't for everyone, and your musician(s) would need to know a considerable amount of songs to make this work, but it remains a potential way of putting a unique spin on karaoke in a much more memorable and tolerable way than straight-ahead karaoke (in our eyes at least)!

Using technology to do something different

If you book live music, could they potentially live-stream the performance to enable friends and family from afar who can't be with you to still enjoy the evening?

Similar to how some TV shows have been produced during COVID restrictions, could you utilise a big screen and Zoom invites to include a wall of virtual guests who are unable to be with you?

This is your day and the opportunities are endless. Whilst the traditional route works for many, you are limited only by your own imagination - you don't necessarily need to stick to tried and tested methods of entertaining people.





Finally...

There is much to consider when determining what music you would like during your wedding day, quite often significantly more than people initially realise, and we hope this guide has given you some useful pointers and tips.

Ultimately, the one key thing to remember is that this is the most memorable day of your lives. Please do take the time to consider what will be right for you and your partner. Devote enough time to seeking out suppliers / musicians who will be willing to work with you to determine if they can provide exactly what it is you want.

Please, please, please don't make rash decisions. Music, in addition to catering and the venue, is one of the elements of your wedding day which will have the greatest impact, perhaps the greatest impact of all. It is the one factor within the day which will ultimately determine if you, your friends & family remember it as merely a good day or one of the greatest of your / their lives.

We adore a good wedding and we send each and every one of you our best wishes. There is nothing better for us than sharing such special memories with clients, many of whom we now consider to be friends, and helping to make those memories. We rarely see a 'bad' wedding so please rest assured that it is highly likely that you will get things right, no matter how daunting things can sometimes seem during those times of planning and holding initial discussions with people.

If you have any questions at all, please do get in touch with us via any of the channels below. This is absolutely not a hard sell on our part - we love what we do and it is a genuine pleasure to be able to offer advice and guidance to anyone who needs it.

Thanks for reading!

Becci & Mick
(Lux Bay)
xxx

website: www.luxbaymusic.co.uk

e-mail: luxbaymusic@gmail.com

phone: 07875285343

Facebook: @LuxBayDuo

Instagram: @luxbayduo

Twitter: @LuxBayDuo

