

Choosing reception music: Bridging generation gaps

By: Elizabeth Greene

What a joy it is to know you'll be bringing all your closest family members and friends together to celebrate your wedding! As you begin to contemplate the type of entertainment you'll offer your guests, it dawns on you that it will be no easy task to find the perfect wedding band or DJ that will please your entire crowd.

Striking the perfect balance of wedding music to please everyone can be difficult, but if you do enough research you will be able to find seasoned professionals who are used to entertaining people of every generation and musical taste. Bands and DJs that are inexperienced can really miss the mark in this regard.

You can start your planning by really digging into your research as to what songs and artists will please your parents. Everyone loves to dance to familiar tunes that bring back their high school days. Find out what songs were popular when they were growing up. It will make them feel young again and they will really appreciate your thoughtfulness at including "their music." If you spend some time listening to what your parents love to dance to, you will find songs that have broad appeal. These are the songs to request that your band or DJ play.

There are two good approaches to mixing in the "older music." One way to do this is to start out the reception "European style," with lighter and older music that is played at a lower volume. Show tunes, love songs, swing, big band music and oldies work well early in the night with this format. Older relatives are less shy than friends, so they usually love to get out on the floor early.

Later in the night, especially after dinner is completed, you can have your wedding band or DJ cut loose with the perfect mix of songs that you and your friends love. If you add in a ballad here and there, everyone will have a chance to catch their breath, and those who have been "sitting it out" will have another chance to get up and dance!

Another way to keep everyone happy is to mix things up all night long. As long as your band or DJ plays at a moderate volume, even

Marking togetherness: Beyond the unity candle

By now, surely everyone's familiar with the unity candle, but did you know there are other unification ceremonies to choose from when planning your wedding? Although the unity candle seems to have been with us forever, in reality it's only about ten years old. During those years, more "two-become-one" motifs have arrived to round out the theme.

Unification ceremonies are not only a symbol of togetherness, they're also flexible elements of a wedding. These ceremonies can be "opened up" to include important family members, such as the bridal couple's parents. Children from previous marriages can play a part, as can the entire congregation in a smaller wedding. Candle and rose ceremonies are common choices for adapting in this way.

Unification ceremonies can also be "stacked." It's not unusual to find a wedding that includes a hand and water ceremony, for example, or a wine and rose ceremony. Some couples play music during these ceremonies and others don't.

The timing of unification ceremonies varies by wedding, but they most often take place directly before or after the exchange of vows. These ceremonies may be especially important in non-religious weddings, which may end too quickly otherwise!

Let's look at some alternatives to the Unity Candle ceremony:

Rose Ceremony - The rose ceremony is a flexible, informal ceremony especially suited to an interfaith or non-religious wedding, not to mention a garden wedding! In the rose ceremony, bride and groom exchange a single rose as their first married gift to each other. They are asked to recall this symbol of their love during the more trying seasons of marriage.

Hand Ceremony - In the hand ceremony, the bride takes the groom's hands in hers, palms up. The officiant invites her to view his hands as a gift, and says: "These are the hands that will work along side yours,



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the most upbeat music won't be overbearing. If you can, seat your older relatives at tables farther away from your band or DJ's speakers. Younger guests are less sensitive to volume and will object less to the higher levels of sound resulting from sitting in closer proximity to the sound system.

Be sure that any band you consider has many years experience performing at wedding receptions and has an extensive song list. The more extensive the list is, the more likely you will be able to choose the right mix of songs for your crowd.

Don't assume your DJ will have all the songs you want without letting him or her know your preferences well beforehand. Prepare your list and give it to your entertainers at least four weeks ahead of the party. In addition to requesting your favorite tunes, you can also mention which songs you do not want heard at your wedding reception. Clear communication with the bandleader or DJ is essential so the appropriate music is played at your affair.

Your wedding day is your special day, but do not forget you are sharing it with many guests of various ages and musical tastes. With some careful planning and proper communication with your wedding entertainers, bridging the musical generation gap will become possible and significantly contribute to the success of your special day.

as together you build your future, as together you laugh and cry, and together you share your innermost secrets and dreams."

The groom then takes the bride's hands, palm side up. The officiant says, "They are the hands that will passionately love you and cherish you through the years, for a lifetime of happiness, as she promises her love and commitment to you all the days of her life."

Knot Ceremony - In the knot ceremony, the mothers of the bridal couple are given a cord, which the officiant later asks them to give to the bridal couple. The couple ties a lover's knot, which they may save to look back on later.

Sand, Water and Wine Ceremonies - These are all mixing ceremonies suited to a Unitarian or interfaith wedding. The sand ceremony is said to arise from Apache customs, and is popular in beach weddings. In each case, the bride and groom pour sand or liquid from two separate vials into one. In the wine ceremony, they drink the mixed wine.

A nice touch is to have the bride pour white wine while the groom pours red. You can then serve rosé at the reception to remind everyone of the ceremony.

The Salt Covenant - The salt covenant is an ancient tradition, well-described in the Bible, and appearing regularly in Indian-national and Jewish weddings. Like the Jewish Huppah, the salt covenant (a mixing ceremony with ancient connotations of loyalty, protection and hospitality) is beginning to show up in non-Jewish weddings as well.

This short article hasn't covered all the unification ceremonies: there are bread-sharing ceremonies, circling ceremonies, broom jumping ceremonies, and probably more ceremonies that are being invented right now.