

SAINT CECILIA MUSIC GUIDELINES

You are about to receive a sacrament. This Sacrament instituted by Christ is a holy and sacred rite. Both of you want the celebration of this sacred rite to be expressive of you in the most beautiful manner possible.

THIS IS YOUR DAY

We are sure you want a service that is personal, inspiring and beautiful - for this is your day.

Happily, the revised marriage rite offers any number of options. To explore these, we suggest you view these options in Father Champlin's book, *Together for Life*.

In addition, an important matter for your consideration is the music:

Style - traditional or contemporary

Instruments - organ alone, folk instruments, trumpets, or other combinations

Individual Selections

It is our intention to maintain a musical standard which will contribute to the dignity and solemnity of the occasion and enhance the beauty of the sacred celebration of your marriage vows.

PERSONAL AND PUBLIC

In the context of the believing community, marriage is both personal and public. It is personal because two individuals pledge themselves to an intimate and lasting union. But the significance of your wedding far transcends yourselves. This public affirmation of the love that has become your life touches the life of the world in which you live and of the Church which you help to form.

YOUR DESIRE: TO HAVE MEANINGFUL MUSIC

On your wedding day you want the ceremony to be meaningful - all the words, gestures and music should visibly manifest what is happening interiorly: **a sacramental encounter with Christ.**

Every note played, every word sung, should be chosen with these points in mind:

Will this particular composition express to everyone present the meaning of this religious event?

Do the lyrics present a Christian view of love?

Does a particular selection emphasize and enhance that part of the ceremony where it occurs, or is it just a "showcase" piece that has no liturgical justification for its use?

Does the music promote further the progress of the ceremony, or does it simply cause a delay?

Ideally, during the ceremony the "soloist" should act in the role of cantor, leading the people to sing simple refrains and acclamations, rather than perform. However, before Mass, the preparation rite, and unity candle, are appropriate times for the soloist.

OUR DUTY: TO COMMUNICATE THE SACRED

Your Wedding Music obviously should be suitable for use in the Church.

Music, by its nature, is neither **sacred nor secular**. What gives music a 'label' is the psychological process known as **connotation**. This means that people and societies gradually come to associate certain selections and styles of music with non-musical places and situations.

When you choose your wedding music, therefore, you should ask yourselves: Will this composition be appropriate to the meaning of our ceremony? Or will it cause a 'communication gap' because people associate it with some other place or meaning: opera, film, sorority, football field?

WITH THE CHURCH

Music worthy of your wedding day should reflect not only good taste (connotation) but good art. True, it is usually difficult to define precisely what makes a selection of music good art. To be of assistance in accordance with the Church's thinking we establish these guidelines pertaining to music used in the wedding rite:

*Any music that deters from the liturgical action, or calls to mind anything but a religious motif will not be acceptable because the lyrics should celebrate not only human love between two persons, but should also have some reference to God, who indeed is Love. The texts, according to the **Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy** "should be drawn chiefly from Holy Scripture and from liturgical sources."*

*Wedding music should emphasize the theme of **joy and happiness in the sacred celebration**.*

May we suggest that songs and music of a more secular nature be reserved for the wedding reception. The extension of the sacramental celebration is the wedding reception where this type of music is proper.

In the event you desire a more contemporary style of celebration, the use of contemporary music is perfectly acceptable if it meets the requirements of these guidelines.

Our Director of Music, Bob Hauser, will assist you in planning your selections and arranging for musicians. It is necessary to consult the Music Director even if you are planning to invite someone from outside the parish to sing or be an instrumentalist. Bob Hauser may be reached at 232-3092.