

# WEDDING MUSIC GUIDELINES

## CATHEDRAL OF SAINT RAPHAEL

The marriage liturgy is unique among the festivities of a wedding. The rites speak of the marriage contract in a way other than the concerns of a civil ceremony or a social reception, because the couples exchange their vows as an act of worship of God within the church. While this is an intensely personal event in your lives, it is more than a private celebration. It is a solemn and public exchange of vows before God in the presence of the church community. It is an act of worship on the part of all present to offer thanks to God for the love of a man and a woman; a symbol of the love of Christ for His church, as well as to ask God's blessing on the couple's future life together.

Your wedding music should obviously be suitable for use in church, but by its very nature music is neither secular nor sacred. When you begin to choose your wedding music, ask yourselves whether this particular composition expresses to everyone present the meaning of this religious event, or will it cause a communication gap because people will associate it with some other place or meaning, such as a film or play. The judgment about music belongs therefore, to the head as well as to the heart. Too often the heart dictates the choices of pieces, primarily on the basis of tradition.

The key word is prayer. Music that contributes to prayer and the context of worship is appropriate. Admittedly, there are a few popular songs which fulfill these criteria, but in the sacrament itself the Lord Jesus calls you to go beyond the ordinary and the popular; He calls you to love each other as He has loved you. All of the music, whether it comes before, during or after the wedding should serve to direct the people's attention to the sacredness of the event and the presence of Christ in the holy union of marriage. Any music that does not serve this purpose will only detract from it.

If your reception of the sacrament of marriage is taking place within the Mass, take the opportunity to further explore Sunday worship and ask yourself, "What happens at Sunday Eucharist celebrations?" "How is the assembly involved and active?" "How are they encouraged to participate?" (readers, gift bearers, musicians, but also the entire assembly)

Just as on Sunday, the assembly is not an audience. They are essential to the liturgy and should be encouraged to participate as fully as possible. This is a challenge! By drawing them into the celebration, they become an active part of your marriage liturgy. Just as you plan your reception to be a joyful celebration of your love, plan your liturgy to be a joyful, involving celebration of your faith in God and your trust in His guiding force in your lives.

## CRITERIA FOR MUSIC SELECTION

All music chosen for your wedding should reflect the dignity and the reverence of the occasion and must coincide with the liturgy to express the Christian nature of love, faith and marriage. The following should NOT be used:

1. Any music that is purely secular in nature, and as such, neglects the sacred union of the couple. This includes most love songs and secular ballads.
2. Trivial and frivolous music.
3. Popular, operatic or Broadway musical favorites which merely recall sentimental or personal associations. Such music should be reserved for the wedding reception.

Wedding ceremonies celebrated in place of the wedding mass are still celebrations of a sacrament of the church, distinct from the wedding reception. Therefore, the above principals still apply.

**Upon receiving confirmation of your wedding date from the parish office, you must contact the cathedral music director and organist Jim Mendralla. He can be reached at (563) 582-7646. Please carefully review the section “KEYBOARD/INSTRUMENTALISTS” for the specific Cathedral policy regarding your primary musician.**

## **WEDDING MUSIC WORKSHOPS**

Now that your wedding date has been confirmed, these music guidelines are being sent to you. The music staff of St. Raphael Cathedral provides wedding workshops between the months of March and November to assist you with music arrangements for your special day. **IT IS REQUIRED THAT ALL COUPLES ATTEND A WORKSHOP BEFORE THE WEDDING.**

The wedding workshops at the Cathedral were designed to address the specific needs of couples involved in planning music for the liturgical service. Because most couples have not had experience with planning a wedding service before, we hope you will feel comfortable relying on the expertise of the music staff for guidance. In the workshop we will ....

1. Discuss the order of service with you and show you how to implement your musical choices within the liturgy.
  2. Provide a wealth of repertoire choices for each portion of the service that requires music.
  3. Offer you the opportunity to hear vocalists and instrumentalists sing and play the music selections available to give you a sense of how the music will sound at your service, and provide you with the opportunity to hire the musicians that appeal to you.
  4. Provide a forum for questions about wedding music and the liturgy.
  5. Help you prepare and finalize your music arrangements for the wedding day.
- We encourage you to bring any music ideas with you to the workshop for consideration.**

## **WORKSHOP DATES**

The workshop dates for 2014 are as follows (All dates are Sundays at 1:30 p.m. in the church):

**October 13 (2013)   March 16   April 27   June 1   August 3   October 12**

The music workshop is the normative planning experience for couples here at the Cathedral. We encourage you to choose a date well in advance of your wedding so that if a conflict arises on your intended date, you will have future options still available.

Please inform the Director of Music once you have chosen a workshop date. This allows us to plan for the number of people we are to expect for that session.

Workshops are not scheduled from **DECEMBER – FEBRUARY** of any given year. If you have a wedding scheduled during the winter or early spring months, plan on attending a fall workshop.

## THE WEDDING CANTOR/VOCALIST

The role of the cantor in Catholic worship is that of leading the community present in sung prayer. This musical leader is a foundational part of all celebrations in Catholic worship at St. Raphael where music is part of the prayer experience.

Music that is sung adds more meaning to the celebration. The cantor is present not only to sing the solo selections you have chosen, but also to encourage participation from your guests. Guests are encouraged to sing as a way of supporting your union. Through participation, the feeling of unity not only between the couple is present, but is felt when your family and friends support you in word and song.

It is Cathedral policy that musicians not perform **DOUBLE ROLES** within your wedding celebration (play and sing at once). The accompanist and cantor are separate ministers. The cathedral cantors are qualified musicians that are capable of singing the solo pieces as well as leading the congregational responses. All couples will need to engage a cantor in addition to the Cathedral organist.

## KEYBOARD/INSTRUMENTALISTS

Jim Mendralla, Director of Music, is the primary musician at the Cathedral for wedding service playing (organ, piano, harp).

**\*\*\* Please note: It is the policy of the Cathedral that the Director of Music play for ALL scheduled weddings. There are no exceptions to this policy.** You are welcome to engage guest instrumentalists and vocalists to work with the Director of Music. (please carefully read the section on guest musicians if you plan on engaging a friend or family member – see below)

Music arrangements for your wedding need not consist of only a vocalist and keyboard. Trumpet, flute, guitar, cello, violin and harp are additional options that can enhance your celebration. We will provide examples of some of these options at the wedding workshop to introduce you to these wonderful possibilities. You will be able to formally speak with instrumentalists after the workshop session to ask questions and hire the people for whom you would like to minister at your celebration.

We will be happy to make references for any instrumentalist options not present at the workshop.

## GUEST MUSICIANS/VOCALISTS

Occasionally a couple may have family or friends who wish to offer their services for the wedding celebration. The Cathedral supports this, however we advise you to approach the services of family and friends with caution. Although the intentions of those may be honorable, this does not always guarantee that the musical level being offered will be one of quality. With this in mind, we offer you a few guidelines for guests:

1. Guest vocalists who have **professional** experience ministering within Catholic sacramental services are encouraged. Please make sure they will have the ability to remain composed throughout the entire service.

2. Guest vocalists are welcome provided they are capable of meeting the responsibilities previously described in the CANTOR SEGMENT. If the guest vocalist is not experienced leading the assembly in the sung responses of the liturgy or proclaiming the psalmody, it would be advisable to have them participate in a more limited fashion (i.e. prelude or mid-service solo). Please be aware that a cathedral cantor will additionally need to be engaged to fulfill the remaining responsibilities of leading the assembly's sung prayer.
3. Guest vocalists must be **trained musicians capable of preparing the music independently of the cathedral organist**. The organist will provide 1 hour of rehearsal time as part of his fee to review the selections before the wedding. **Please understand you are hiring the organist to play, not to teach the guest how to sing.**
4. **Musicians are not present for the wedding rehearsal.** Please have your guest musician call the music office directly to set up a practice session outside of the scheduled wedding rehearsal time.
5. Guest vocalists will be responsible for ordering their own scores of music. This will ensure that musical copyrights will not be broken by the parish or the guest musician. **The Director of Music is not responsible for providing musical scores for guests.** All parish musicians affiliated with Saint Raphael have access to all scores presented in the wedding workshop.
6. Guest instrumentalists (non parish instrumentalists) will be provided 1 hour of rehearsal time with the Director of Music in preparation for the wedding. If the guest instrumentalist is playing a piece for the wedding that is not part of the standard wedding repertoire, it is requested that the musician provide an accompaniment score in advance. The score will be returned at the conclusion of the ceremony.

7. Family members or friends who play trumpet must be cautioned that all standard wedding repertoire for brass is usually scored in **CONCERT C OR D PICCOLO, NOT B FLAT**. If you wish to use a B flat arrangement for brass, please provide an accompaniment copy for preparation.

## 8. ORDERING WEDDING SCORES

Most of the music found on the repertoire list at the wedding workshops can be obtained from the following three companies...

1. GIA Publications                        1(800) 442-1358  
    1(708) 496-3800
2. OCP Publications                     1(800) 548-8749
3. World Library Publications        1(800) 566-6150

## POST WORKSHOP FOLLOW UP

The music staff of St. Raphael Cathedral would like you to know that assistance from us will continue following your workshop experience. The Director of Music will be happy to meet individually with you to finalize all of your wedding selections, help you with a program if you desire, answer questions and relay pertinent information to every musician involved with your important day.

We are committed to providing you with any assistance you may need to help you prepare a wedding service that is meaningful and prayerful.

Peace,

Jim Mendralla  
Director of Music  
Cathedral of Saint Raphael