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STEREO

*Here
Comes
The Bride*



*Virgil Fox
Organist*

At The Lane  *Record Album*

A complete program
of music for
Wedding Ceremony
and Reception,
as compiled
by **Virgil Fox**
and the Editors
of

the **BRIDE'S** magazine





WHAT'S THE SCORE ON WEDDING MUSIC?

A guide
to
proper,
practical
and
personal
selections
by
the editors of
**The
BRIDE'S**
Magazine

FROM BRIDE MAGAZINE

Music is always food for the soul—whether the soul requires uplifting, gaiety or solemnity. This is never more evident than at a wedding. Music adds a spiritual aura to the ceremony—be it performed in church, hall, hotel or garden. It helps the guests feel like participants in the ceremony instead of an audience watching a show. The musical selections you choose can also provide a personal touch which makes your wedding unlike any other.

The rules on wedding music vary with the religious denomination, the section of the country, and even the individual clergyman, so you should make a point of discussing the subject with your minister, priest or rabbi before making any decisions. He'll explain what's permitted in your case, and, if necessary, will put you in touch with the choir director or other person in charge of musical arrangements. The latter can also make suggestions if you don't know exactly what musical pieces you'd like to have.

Some clergymen are quite liberal about wedding music, and allow almost anything

short of rock and roll. Others permit popular music to be played, but not sung. Still others insist that all music must be in prayer to or in praise of God, and make no exceptions—even for the popular wedding marches (which are of secular rather than religious origin). Thus, you can easily see why it's important to begin your planning in the clergyman's office if you're planning a religious wedding ceremony.

WEDDING MUSIC

Most weddings include a musical recital during the half hour before the ceremony begins. The music is played softly, but that doesn't mean it has to be dull or monotonous! Several different tempos might be included as long as all selections are in keeping with the joy and dignity of the occasion. The entire recital is often played on the organ. If vocal music is allowed, however, you might also consider having one or two solos.

If you plan to include a soloist, you'll probably have one song—a hymn, perhaps—sung 10-15 minutes before the service begins, and another sung just before

(or after) your mother is seated. Your soloist doesn't have to be a professional, but an experienced singer is less likely to get stage fright.

Still, if you have a relative or friend with a good voice, his or her participation will probably have more meaning—even if it's less polished—than that of a stranger. If the is a professional or member of the church staff, he or she should be paid. Otherwise the soloist is treated like a member of the wedding party and given a gift.

Almost every church has its own organist who plays for worship services. Since this regular organist is familiar with the church instrument and acoustics, you might prefer that he or she play at your wedding—in fact, church rules may require it. If not, you may ask a friend or relative who is an accomplished organist to play, but be sure to get prior approval from your clergyman. You should also arrange a mutually convenient time for your friend to practice on the church organ, for no two instruments are exactly alike. It is customary to pay the church organist a fee (depending on local customs, the size of the wedding, and the

amount of time required for rehearsal), but a friend need not be paid.

After your mother has been seated (and the soloist, if any, has finished), the procession begins. The processional music should be both joyous and dignified. Although it is usually played on the organ, you might want to consider having a choir, a group of instrumentalists, or, for a non-church wedding, a recording. To mark the appearance of the bride, there is always a change in the music—be it a completely different tune or merely an increase in volume or tempo. The processional need not be in march tempo, as the wedding party walks at a normal pace.

Although most clergymen require absolute silence during the marriage vows, some allow soft background music to be played up until that ceremony. The rules are, of course, are more strict in churches than in other locations. If you plan to be married in a hall, hotel or home, you'll find that background music helps to create a spiritual atmosphere. Either way, it's best to check with the officiating clergyman or civil authority to be sure service itself calls for music (as in a Catholic Mass), the organ will probably accompany the choir

or congregation. Solos often substitute for prayers by the congregation, but other pieces are sometimes sung between the exchange of vows and the moment when the bride and groom are actually pronounced man and wife.

The music begins anew after the bride and groom exchange their ceremony-closing kiss. As the newlyweds turn and lead the rest of the wedding party from the church, the music should be joyous and triumphal. The tempo of the recessional music may be a little quicker than that of the processional, the same general rules apply.

RECEPTION MUSIC

Whatever the type of your reception or its location, music will make it more festive. It could be provided by anything from a portable phonograph at home to a 15-piece orchestra at a country club, but something in-between is customary. Some of the most dance able music is played by three to five-piece combos. If you don't plan to have dancing at your reception, you might choose a piano, a wander trio of stringed instrumentalists, or a beautiful record to set a romantic mood.

No matter what type of music you have, you'll probably want it playing in the background as guests move down the receiving line. Then, as the line breaks up and you move to another part of the reception, your arrival will probably be announce with "Here Come the Bride" (unless, of course, you request something else) .

If you're planning to have "live" music at your reception, it's important to make a list of the pieces you'd like to hear, and go over them - and the order in which they're to be played—with the musicians in advance. The first dance belongs to you and your groom, so you'll probably want your favorite song played at that time. You might also wish to request a traditional polka, tarantella, or hora - with all the guests joining in the merry whirl - in honor of your family (or that of the groom). Remember, too, to tell the musicians what number you'd like played as you cut the cake - otherwise you're apt to hear "The Bride Cuts the Cake" to the tune of "Farmer in the Dell."

As you know, music has the power to evoke memories. Choose your wedding music with care, and it will add to the lovely collection of joys and happy thoughts you'll savor on your day of days and forever after.



Some Musical Notes for the Bride-To-Be...by Virgil Fox

In my many years as organist at the great Rockefeller endowed Riverside Church in New York, I was privileged to serve as musical adviser and confidant to thousands of prospective brides. They include the bearers of some of America's most illustrious Social Register names; the daughters of statesmen, diplomats and celebrated stage and screen stars; and many girls of varying economic, religious and ethnic backgrounds.

Some of these brides-to-be had very definite musical preferences of their own.

But more often it was a question of sitting down with the young lady—possibly accompanied by one or both of her parents or even by the prospective bridegroom—and trying to find out in a fairly short time what kind of person she really was. Was she an old-fashioned sentimentalist, or a matter-of-fact, down-to-earth modern? What kind of music and poetry did she know best and enjoy most? Was her taste inclined towards the classic, the romantic or the contemporary in art, literature and music? Was there a

particular poem or song she and her fiance treasured for its sentimental association? Were there any singers or composers among her family and friends? Was there a family tradition related to any particular piece of music? Out of the frank answers to such questions would come a musical pattern for the big day as individualized and custom-designed as that for the bridal gown itself.

Now, by means of this recording, the special sound that, in the past, has made a church wedding such a particularly exciting

and moving experience is available to the increasing number of brides each year who are to be married at home, in hotels, restaurants, clubs or catering establishments. In assembling this “do-it-yourself” package of organ music for weddings, I’ve had in mind also its use for program planning and advance rehearsals even by those who will eventually be married to “live” organ music in a sanctuary. Although it was impossible to consider the preference of every prospective bride, I’ve tried to present here enough variety to suit almost every taste. The choices include a number of popular favorites along with some refreshing alternatives, but I’ve generally kept away from music associated with any particular religious denomination.

THE PRE-WEDDING RECITAL—the music that is played while the guests are being seated—should put everyone into the proper mood. My recommendations are designed to bridge the gap between the everyday world outside and the solemn ceremony that’s about to begin.

The poignant theme excerpted from the first movement of Tchaikovsky’s Sixth Symphony has a definitely romantic connotation and was, of course, the inspiration for a popular song. It is a haunting tune that seems to beckon the listener to lofty heights of spiritual exaltation.

“Impatience” (“Ungeduld” in German) is one of the twenty songs in Franz Schubert’s great lieder cycle, “The Beautiful Maid of the Mill” (“Die schone Mullerin”), a series of first-person love poems by the German poet Wilhelm Muller. This, the seventh song of the cycle, is an outburst of youthful exuberance by an eager lover who wants to shout his new-found joy to the world.

“Calm as the Night” (“Still wie die Nacht”), by the German composer Carl Bohm, was first introduced to the United States by the Metropolitan Opera contralto of the “Golden Age,” Ernestine Schumann-Heink, and has remained a perennial favorite of the concert repertoire. For the wedding day, it speaks eloquently of love that is “calm as the night, deep as the sea...fervent as steel and solid as stone.”

From Tchaikovsky’s tone poem based on Shakespeare’s “Romeo and Juliet,” I’ve chosen the immortal passage which underscores the night when, unmindful of tragedy to come, the ardent Veronese pair share rapturously in the first full flowering of a love that has since become the symbol of young love everywhere.

THE WEDDING PROCESSIONAL MUSIC should be chosen with specific relation to the distance to be covered from entrance to altar, the number of attendants in the bridal party and the type of dresses the bride and her maids will be wearing—all of which may affect the length and speed of the steps to be taken, and thus the choice of suitable music.

The piece that first comes to mind is, of course, the Bridal Chorus from Richard Wagner’s opera “Lohengrin.” Actually, this music is not a wedding march in Wagner’s opera at all. The wedding of the mythical Princess of Brabant and her Swan-Knight has presumably taken place at the end of the second act. In the opening scene of Act Three, Elsa, escorted by her ladies, and Lohengrin, accompanied by the King and nobles, enter the bridal chamber where they are to spend their wedding night. The music we call “Here Comes the Bride” is sung by the chorus of men and women at this point, inviting the “champion of virtue” and the “flower of all beauty” to proceed together “where the blessing of love cloth invite.” Since Elsa is the Wagnerian personification of maidenly innocence and Lohengrin a guardian of the Holy Grail, their union is an idealization of all holy matrimony. For this reason, as well as for its irresistible melody and rhythm, the “Lohengrin” Bridal Chorus has become the favorite wedding processional.

For a slow and majestic entry, I would also like to suggest the so-called “St. Anthony Chorale” of Franz Josef Haydn. This theme, best known to concert-goers in the set of eight variations on it by Brahms, comes from an unpublished Haydn “divertimento” for wind instruments, and is thought to have been written originally for open-air performance.

Today’s prospective bride would do well to investigate the wealth of other beautiful music appropriate for her ceremonial entrance. She might, for example consider a tune that was prominent in the 1947 Westminster Abbey wedding uniting the current Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip. Composed by Sir Charles Hubert Parry as part of his incidental music for Aristophanes’ comedy “The Birds,” this Bridal March has the advantage of considerable freedom, with a relaxation of the basic march tempo in several places.

When the bride wants her wedding to strike a note of pomp and pageantry, the Purcell “Trumpet Voluntary in D” might be the perfect processional music. Although there’s some doubt now as to whether this

tune is actually ascribable to the great 17th century English composer, Henry Purcell, or to his younger less famous brother, Daniel, there is no doubt that the arrangement for modern organ, pulling out all the majestic trumpet stops, would have pleased the elder Purcell, who enjoyed a close association with Mathias Shore, “King’s Sargeant Trumpeter” to the courts of James II and William III.

My own arrangement of the “Rigaudon” from the opera “Idomenee” by the French composer Andre Campra lends itself to a somewhat quicker and more gracious walk to the altar than is suggested by the more stately marches and hymns. A rigaudon is actually a type of old Provencal dance, but when I do it for a wedding, I use a more straightforward version, omitting some of the “passing” notes which give the dance its jumping step.

WEDDING CEREMONY MUSIC is played at the discretion of the officiating minister. Most of the clergymen with whom I have worked request absolute silence during the vows, but allow the organist to play during other parts of the ceremony as long as the volume is kept down to a pianissimo background level.

The tender, romantic songs of the Norwegian composer, Edvard Grieg, are perfect for weddings, and I especially recommend “A Dream” (“Ein Traum”), the musical setting of a German poem by Bodenstedt. The poet recounts a dream in which he loved a beautiful blonde maiden in the green shade of the forest on a warm Spring day, then tells how the bliss of his dream world was exceeded when he awoke to encounter his real love under almost identical circumstances. At the song’s climax, the awakened dreamer exclaims: “I held you fast, I held you long and I shall leave you nevermore!”

As behind-the-ceremony music, I’ve found my own improvisation on Sir Joseph Barnby’s 19th century English hymn tune, “O Perfect Love,” especially successful. It sets a text which describes a “perfect love, all human thought transcending” and prays that the love of the bridal pair “may be the love which knows no ending.”

The touching Bach song, “Be Thou With Me” (“Bist du bei mir”) is, like much truly great music, all things to all people. The song comes originally from the “Anna Magdalena Bach Notebook,” an anthology of family favorites put together by Johann Sebastian Bach for his young wife, the mother of 13 more musical Bachs.

Mendelssohn's "Incidental Music to a Midsummer Night's Dream" includes a dreamy "Nocturne" intended for performance between the third and fourth acts of the play. The confused quartet of Athenian lovers are peacefully asleep in the wood where Puck has anointed their eyes with magical juices so that, on awakening, "Every man should take his own... Jack shall have Jill; nought shall go ill." This music of rare serenity evokes a mystical kind of stillness which accents the spiritual aspects of the ceremony at the altar.

FOR RECESSIONAL MUSIC, the Wedding March from Mendelssohn's "Incidental Music to A Midsummer Night's Dream" has long been a popular favorite. The march was composed to signal the arrival of Shakespeare's bridal couples at Duke Theseus' palace after they had been "eternally knit" in the temple following "a feast in great solemnity." Just as the contemporary recessional music acts as a bridge between the solemnity of the ceremony and the joviality of the reception, Mendelssohn's march was originally sounded at the entrance of "the lovers full of joy and mirth." One great advantage of this piece as a wedding recessional is that it's primarily the same musical stanza repeated over and over, and can be easily stretched or shortened to fit the size of the wedding party and the length of the aisle. It is also adaptable to several different tempos.

George Frederick Handel composed his famous "Water Music" for a royal water party on the Thames in July of 1717. The complete "Water Music" was in 20 movements, but most contemporary concert-goers know only the 6 arranged into the popular symphonic suite by Sir Hamilton Harty. It is the last of these which I have adapted for organ and used with great success as a wedding recessional. Its spirited beat and air of jubilation make it an appropriate finale to the marriage ceremony.

One of the two hymns personally selected by Queen Elizabeth for her wedding was "Praise My Soul The King of Heaven,"



Sir John Goss' setting of Henry Francis Lyte's poetic paraphrase of the 103rd Psalm. Although it is a straightforward English hymn tune, my own improvisation on Goss' melody suggests an alternate recessional.

Another great composer's outpouring of joy and exultation is found in the rhythmic finale of Beethoven's Ninth or "Choral" Symphony. The text Beethoven chose was the Ode "To Joy" ("An die Freude") by the German poet and dramatist Friedrich von Schiller, and the opening words sing "Hail to Joy, from God descended, Daughter of Elysium." One verse invites, "You who wife have won and treasured, to our song your voices lend." In improvising on Beethoven's familiar theme, I have tried to set a march rhythm which is easy to walk to.

AT THE WEDDING RECEPTION, an endless variety of music may be played as the guests pass down the receiving line and toast the happiness of the bride and groom. It seems to me that this is the time for some of the popular sentimental songs, of which we've chosen four random samples.

The song "Because" was composed by a French woman named Helene Guy, who wrote under the nom de plume of Guy d'Hardelot in the days when women composers were not taken seriously. The original French lyrics don't have quite the same spiritual intent as the familiar English version, which promises: "Because God made thee mine I'll cherish thee, through light and darkness, through all time to be."

A short song that has a long history of popularity with bridal couples is "I Love You Truly," by the American composer Carrie Jacobs-Bond. Mid-Victorian in its musical style and lyrical content, Mrs. Bond's song reminds the bride that "Life with its sorrow, life with its tear, fades into dreams when I feel you are near, for I love you truly, truly dear."

Although best known in German as "Ich liebe dich" and in English as "I Love You," Grieg's "Jeg Elsker Dig" was originally composed to a Danish text by Hans Christian Andersen. The poem is believed to have been dedicated to the "Swedish Nightingale," Jenny Lind, with whom Andersen was deeply but vainly in love. Equally appealing to the modern bride is its pledge: "I love thee now and for eternity."

From the 1932 Broadway musical of the same name, Vincent Youmans' "Through the Years," with words by Edward Heyman, has already taken its place among the wedding classics. The tender lyric promises that "Through the years I'll take my place beside you, smiling through the years... Through the years I'll keep my place beside you, smiling through your tears."*

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