

An iPod Wedding? Are You Kidding?

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*Getting married, mister? Congratulations.
Are you handling the details with your fiancée? Great.
Your job is to arrange the music? Brilliant.
You are doing it yourself? How so?
Your iPod! You're kidding, right?
How much are you spending on your wedding?
Oh, it's a control issue? You want your favorites played?
Have you thought this through? Didn't think so.*

Although, iPods are a very efficient personal music system, there are several legitimate problems for depending on your iPod during your wedding. Here comes the "tough love". Here comes some friend to friend medicine for you to take. I'm Ed Mullen and I've been a mobile disc jockey since 1979. I have some frank advice for you, since you get only one chance to handle this wedding music issue. What is your risk vs. reward? Brace yourself. Let's talk.

Get a pro. A professional experienced disc jockey solves so many reception issues in the planning. Your preferences and song list should be completely explored months before the ceremony and delivered by someone who has been there before. The well-prepared DJ also has professional grade sound equipment and back-up gear that is dependable.

Got some home speakers? What are you using for your amplifier? Briefly, my professional D.J. speakers are better than your home speakers. I use powered JBL EON-15 G2 speakers. A mobile disc jockey depends on durable, high-performance equipment gig after gig after gig. Rental equipment costs money. Rental equipment cost time. Pick-up and drop-off does not include your shopping time spent finding the right sound rental company. Got time? In the week previous to your wedding, time is your most precious commodity. Does the money-back guarantee give you any comfort if it fails at your wedding reception?

Risky business. You will not get a chance to test rental equipment. Are all the connecting wires included? You can't even do a venue sound-check, if your XLR cables are matched with quarter-inch speaker inputs. Too technical? This is just chapter one. Cheers to...? Do you plan on any toasts or blessings to be delivered? Did you forget about the microphone? Would you say that all microphones the same?

When you are listening to your iPod, you involuntarily adjust the volume to your comfort. You'll soon find out that all songs are not recorded at the same volume. Since you are pumping raw iPod sound, you have no volume control or equalizer (bass vs.

treble) control. Your iPod is smaller than your keys. Have you ever misplaced your keys? Doesn't it turn your stomach if you drop your digital camera on the floor or your cell phone on the parking lot? How durable is your iPod? Any back-up plan? What could possibly go wrong?

What about your song selections? With an iPod wedding, you'll get your songs and your random mix, but, you won't get pacing, which is "breaking up a lengthy, fast-paced set with one or two ballads". This is vital to the reception of a group with a variety of ages. Are guests of all age groups attending?

Got my favorite song? Maybe, but who will be asked this question? You will. It seems you forgot about audience requests or what tendencies are occurring on the dance floor. Observation is one of the most important skills of disc jockeying.

Your disc jockey needs your song list and wants the wedding couples' favorite preferences to provide the guests with the bride's and groom's individual musical signature. "Reading the crowd" is the disc jockey's primary skill. By the way, the biggest insult to any disc jockey is that the crowd will dance to anything, anyway?

Should your wedding day responsibilities include trouble-shooting power needs like batteries or chargers? Your attention will be directed to many different people during the ceremony and reception. Every person, in attendance, would like some of your time. Not to mention, your new partner. Your priorities need to be re-examined if your iPod gets as much attention as your new wedding ring. This statement will also be posed to you, by your new spouse. Guaranteed. Remember the difficulty that you two had selecting the names on your guest list? Your time spent with selected family and selected friends is such a memorable part of the wedding reception, so hold it as a gift with great value. Is your attention going to be diverted by sound equipment during your "most important day in your life"?

Maybe it was your breakthrough idea to ask a wedding party attendant to watch your iPod? So it seems that they are no longer a guest, but they are now working for you? Maybe you'll trust a non-guest who will baby-sit the iPod? Think about a first-time chef baking your wedding cake? Good luck with that. Don't you want experienced vendors? Also, are you aware that experienced vendors like the disc jockey, caterer, photographer, venue manager, video-grapher and wedding coordinator work out the final event timing, during the event!

Is it cheaper? Sure, hiring a professional costs more than a do-it-yourself project. Is your wedding a do-it-yourself project? This may not be the best time to show how frugal you are. You are planning the biggest party in your life and you got the opportunity to select experienced, professional vendors, so do the right thing. Although your input and your needs are essential in the "planning" stage, you must transition to your "guest of honor" stage to allow yourself to enjoy "the most important day of your life". Don't you want to experience it as the happy couple?

You will get a fair representation of what the modern disc jockey does during your personal meeting, months before your event. That's why I like meeting the wedding couple to get both bride and groom perspectives on what to do and what not to do. The clients supply me with a song list and wedding preference timeline, just like they will tell their needs to the caterer, florist and so on. Your mix of traditional and modern choices makes your wedding unique.

You should know, by now, that the modern disc jockey is not so anxious to play line dances. This optional choice is covered in part of the couple's song-list and is called the "do not play list". We understand and appreciate that kind of instruction. You should know that the modern disc jockey uses judgment concerning objectionable lyrics. Your iPod does not have that kind of filter. There is a glut of sunny wedding music advice on the web that does not give you the real-life pros and cons about the modern disc jockey. There are some major practical limitations when you pre-program the music event, days before your guests see you walk down the aisle.

Every vendor wants a well-planned wedding, just like every client. So, let the chefs cook. Let the florist bring the flowers. Let the photographers shoot. Let the limousine driver drive. Let the newly-weds be embraced by their friends and family. Let the professional disc jockey provide the soundtrack for your once in a lifetime reception.

Did you ever hear the old line about "making or breaking the reception"? What do you think they were talking about?

A smart bride once said, "Good entertainment isn't cheap and cheap entertainment isn't good".

So, you want to have an iPod wedding? Are you kidding?