

Music Selection

No doubt you will want to have some input with your DJ about your music choices for your day. The featured dances (First Dance, Bride/Father Dance, etc are covered under my Wedding Reception Planning Worksheet. I like to understand what type of music the couple really likes. This way, I will know what tastes they have, but it also leaves options open for the DJ to "read" the crowd, take requests, and generally keep the party moving along. I have had brides that have submitted over 100 songs to be played at a reception. This is not feasible- the math doesn't work. For example: A four-hour reception: Arrival and dinner will last approximately 90 minutes. With time out for toasts, featured dances, etc, your typical 4-hour reception will have about two good hours of dancing (maybe two and a half). The average song length is 3.5 minutes, working out to about 17 songs per hour. This equals about 35-45 songs per reception.

The Human Jukebox

Do not make the mistake of insisting certain songs being played at certain times, or to give the DJ a list of 40 songs to be played "in that order." The problem arises if: the DJ is sticking to you list and no one is dancing or responding. You really would not want the DJ continue with the list- he needs to have the flexibility to do his job. There are also problems with a 40-50 song list where the DJ can play selections "in any order," but cannot deviate from the list. It again restrains the DJ too much for him to successfully do his job. Micromanaging the DJ is the same as being in the kitchen with the caterer telling them how to prepare the food. Relax- this is what you are paying for... the DJ is paid to know his stuff! If you absolutely insist on having total control on what music is played (and in what order), you may be happier hooking up an iPod and letting it play.

But I Want MY Music! (For Brides and Grooms)

You and your friends and family may have definite tastes in certain music. Odds are, though, not everyone attending your reception likes the exact same thing. Your wedding is all about you. Your reception is, too, but it's more about your guests celebrating your day. Don't make the mistake of letting your ego get in the way and thinking *"It's my day and I don't care what anyone thinks! I'm going to do it my way!"* If this is the case, and you *just* can't get past it, you would probably be better off eloping in Las Vegas. To a certain extent, it is about your guests. For example, once in a while the groom does not want to do that "special dance" with their mom (or dads, for the brides). The excuse usually is something like *"I don't dance that well", or "I don't feel comfortable"*. Those dances aren't really for the bride or groom, anyway. It's about honoring your parents for being part of your special day. Emotions run high during this very special day of your life. If you really want your guests to attend a wedding they will remember forever, remember them, too.

Interactive Stuff

Most of the interactive activities such as blow-up guitars, funny glasses, and balloons have been used to death. So much so that I never get requests for them now. Especially at weddings, the interactive DJ nowadays is more subtle and focused.

Dancing

No one can guarantee your guests will dance. There may be DJs out there who claim they can, but no one can control how someone else feels or acts.

SECRET- There are many ways to set the mood if you think have a tough crowd.

The three things you want to achieve are: Having a hard-surfaced dance floor, (not carpet); dimming the lights- darker is better; and having the music at a loud, but not uncomfortable, level. Why so? Number one, people are reluctant to dance on carpet. The subliminal message is not to dance.

"If there is no dance floor, dancing is not appropriate" is what the message says.

Number two, having the room as dark as possible makes people less self-conscious. Notice how sometimes folks are reluctant to be first on the dance floor? The same principle applies here. If people feel other guests are not staring or looking at them, they are more apt to "get comfortable" out there. This is why receptions at night already have something going for them in a "party" sense. An afternoon wedding, at a Country Club with beautiful views of the golf course, can be wonderful. But it does not set the mood for dancing. Your DJ will have to work a little harder.

Number three, the music should be loud enough so your guests do not hear their footsteps, or dancing steps, on the floor. That's right, it goes back to the old self-conscious thing. The majority of people do not consider themselves to be professional dancers, and if they can feel the beat of the music, they are less timid to "cut loose"

Other Secrets to People Dancing

What other things help get people on the dance floor? The old hard-and-fast rule applies here as well: an open bar can't hurt. Alcohol simply lets people act sillier. Of course this is for adults over the age of 21 and older.

If the bride and groom remain on the floor, at least for a few songs, you'll be amazed at how many of your guests will stay with you. If you go to sit right down, many of your guests will follow.

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