

Let me entertain you!

Music journalist **Elisa Bray** explains how to get your guests up and dancing, whatever your budget

* Budget... On a shoestring

If you're working to a super-tight budget, all you need is your own iPod or mobile phone loaded with tunes, and a good set of speakers. If creating a five-hour soundtrack sounds like a terribly huge amount of work, try new www.WeddingMusicPlaylists.com which creates bespoke playlists for as much of your day as you require. Or why not add song requests to your invitations? Asking guests to suggest a few tracks they'd like to hear at the party is a great way to fill your playlist while involving friends and family so they feel they have contributed. And they will enjoy dancing to their chosen tracks. Win!

* Budget... £700

You may not have the budget for a wedding band, but a good DJ will get the party going and their range of music can be more diverse. Locate a DJ who will play a set that reflects your tastes and expectations for the big day, be it a pop disco or rocking mosh pit. A skilled DJ, costing upward of £500 including equipment for a four-hour set, will pay heed to your all-important song requests (and any no-nos), but remember that you're employing them for their experience so let them incorporate your favourites into their own mix to ensure the dancefloor stays packed. The more eclectic your taste, the more chance of getting aunty Peggy on the floor as well as your friends – so do mash up the genres. Classic pop hits across the decades are good crowd-pleasers (think the Beatles and Queen), but remember that a night of Lady Gaga or hip-hop might just have the older relatives making a dash for the car park well before the night is over. For the ceremony, load music onto your iPod or mobile, or play a CD that you love.

Elisa's Top 10 playlist

1. FLORENCE & THE MACHINE *You've Got The Love*
2. DAFT PUNK *Digital Love*
3. STEVIE WONDER *Signed, Sealed Delivered*
4. THE BEATLES *All You Need Is Love*
5. OUTKAST *Hey Ya*
6. THE SUPREMES *Can't Hurry Love*
7. DEE LITE *Groove Is In The Heart*
8. THE TURTLES *Happy Together*
9. GNARLS BARCLAY *Crazy*
10. QUEEN *Don't Stop Me Now*

* Budget... £1,500

You can't beat the atmosphere a live band creates, plus this option will provide non-stop music between sets. With your budget, you're looking at a three- or four-piece band, costing from £1,200. There's been an increased demand for smaller acts, so many bands offer tailored-down versions to cater for all wallets, such as Hula Groove (www.hulagroove.co.uk). "Having a live band can create an atmosphere that makes the difference between a wedding everyone remembers or one that is entirely forgettable," says the band's drummer Danny Richman. "It can create a shared experience for all the guests, not just a few inebriated 20-somethings."

Just don't forget to check possible council-imposed noise restrictions at your venue. Don't be one of those brides who books a band only to discover that the venue only permits bands without a drummer or uses electronic noise limiters set at a draconian level which shuts off all power at 75 decibels. Yes, it could happen. If you're planning an energetic dance act, go for a céilidh band such

as Licence to Céilidh (www.licence-to-ceilidh.co.uk). Or, if you're more into your indie gigs than slick pop, your venue is more rustic gardens than stately home and you're going for a vintage or shabby chic theme, why not create a mini festival of your own? Obviously, be realistic – The Script might be off limits, but all up-and-coming acts can be found on Facebook and other social networking sites, so it's worth dropping them a line. You could put your own stamp on your wedding by curating a line-up that really reflects you and your husband's tastes – and if your budget stretches, you could always top it off with a DJ or wedding band to satisfy guests of all ages.

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* Budget... £5,000

Bigger budget? You can now opt for a bigger band, giving you a fuller sound. Expect to pay upward of £1,500 for a five- or six-piece band, complete with extra vocalist and pianist. Ronnie Scott's Rejects (www.ronniescottsrejects.com) is one of the more modest-priced bands out there, playing upbeat swing, jazz, funk and soul. If you want contemporary party anthems or a more rock-oriented set – think Kings of Leon – then Manchester-based The Twentysomethings are young, fun and tremendously-priced (www.thetwentysomethingsband.co.uk). For the ceremony, you might want to go classical with a harpist or a string quartet costing from £500. Or opt for a keyboard player or jazz outfit – some bands will add this for a reduced fee if you're booking them for your evening entertainment, such as the swing and pop band Jazz Dynamos (www.jazzdynamos.co.uk), so do ask. Some will even organise a horn section – a 12-piece can cost up to £4,000.

* Budget... £10,000+

Now you can have an all-singing all-dancing top-of-the-range wedding band. A top-notch band with more than eight performers, with the flashy costumes, lighting and soundsystem to match, can cost up to £10,000. Muzika (www.muzika.uk.com) specialises in middle-eastern and oriental music and its fees range from £10,000-£18,000. At this level, you can tailor the band to your specifications, adding horns, strings – the full works! "We recently set up a 26-piece in the space of a fortnight – it was practically an orchestra," says band member Emily. During the day you could opt for a string quartet or jazz band, or have the wedding band play throughout your day. ■

Music makes the people come together

We've scoured the World Wedding Web for the best in music-makers...

■ Swing or jazz? Solo artist or quartet? Lost for choice? Head to Warble Entertainment. The site features a range of high-quality bands, and it's searchable by region so you can find the ones close to you. www.warble-entertainment.com

■ If your favourite band's

tour dates clash with your big day, Fake Bands has the next best thing. Specialising in tribute acts, brides can choose from the likes of New 2, Coldplace and The Antarctic Monkeys to get the party started... www.fakebands.co.uk

■ Set a retro mood with a vintage-themed band from The Band Boutique. The Belles or the

Charleston Charlies are sure to add some swing to proceedings. www.thebandboutique.co.uk

■ All you need is love (and a smartphone) to be your own DJ and organise the running order of your music throughout the day, from walking down the aisle to the first dance. The *My Wedding DJ* app is available to buy through iTunes' app store.