

There are several places in your wedding where music can be played, as well as the hymns that will be sung. There's lots of scope to be creative with choices that make your wedding really personal to you.

A bride and groom with singers behind them

Your vicar (or the organist at the church) will be delighted to help you decide on all the music for your ceremony and will want to make sure everything works well together. Some churches have special facilities, for example, if you wanted any recorded music playing from a CD or MP3 player, but talk to your vicar about what may be possible in the church.

1. Choosing musicians and instruments

Some couples like to use the church's musicians, like the organist or choir, throughout the whole service because their sound suits the church acoustics so well. If the church has musicians and you'd like them to be part of your ceremony, talk to the vicar about their availability, costs and capabilities for the music you have in mind.

But you might also like to hire your own musicians, and you can, from classical soloists to rock bands. You may have friends or relatives who are talented with a particular instrument and you'd like them to be involved in the service. The scope is very broad, but the vicar will be happy to support you in choosing suitable pieces for particular parts of the service.

2. Choosing music

Some popular choices of music are offered below, but you can discuss other ideas too with your vicar or the church organist; the organist's capabilities and the type and size of organ they use all need to be taken into account.

For the bride's entrance

Music for this moment might be gentle, dramatic, emotional and touching, but always positive. The type of music you choose may depend on the size of the church and which songs or music really mean something to you both. These are some popular, classic pieces:

Bridal Chorus from Lohengrin, Wagner

Trumpet Voluntary, also known as the Prince of Denmark's March, Jeremiah Clarke

Trumpet Tune, Purcell

Canon in D, Pachelbel

St Anthony Chorale, Brahms

Salut D'Amour, Elgar or it could be played while the guests are arriving

Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring, J S Bach or another choice which could be played while the guests are arriving

For signing the paperwork

You and your two witnesses may move to a different part of the church, (or even go into a separate room), to sign the paperwork. Either way, it is a moment of pause in the ceremony and music is often played at this point.

You can choose a hymn for your guests to sing, or have a piece of music played, either by a live musician, or from a CD/MP3 player if the church has the facilities.

For leaving the church

Music for this part of your ceremony is always upbeat and cheerful. These are some popular, traditional classics, but you can talk to your vicar if you'd like something different:-

Wedding March or Incidental Music No.9 from Midsummer Night's Dream, Mendelssohn

The Queen of Sheba, from Solomon, Handel (sometimes called The arrival of the Queen of Sheba)

Trumpet Tune in D, John Stanley

Hornpipe in D, from Handel's Water Music

Canon in D, Pachelbel

Toccata from Widor's 5th Symphony in F or this works well on larger organs

Nun Danket (March Triomphale), Karg-Elert or also works well on larger organs

For something special

There may be another part of the service where a piece of music is appropriate for your ceremony, for example if you have chosen an additional reading and you'd like it read out while some music is played quietly in the background.

See what the vicar says about all your choices or they'll want to ensure your service reflects your story, but also that it runs smoothly and looks and sounds the best that it possibly can in the church.

Also in this section

A traditional hymn board inside a church

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Hymns

A close up of the Bible open at 1 Corinthians 13 with a wedding ring on the text

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Bible readings

Cross painted on cloth in an abstract style

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Choices for your wedding ceremony



Countdown to your church wedding

Wedding decorations: a bow tied to a pew end

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Ceremony planner

A couple and the vicar at a wedding rehearsal

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The rehearsal

A wedding photographer setting up a group shot

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Professional photography

The bride and her father walk down the aisle

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Walking down the aisle

A couple in church listening to the vicar

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Reading of banns

An open book on a table

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Additional readings

Inside a church. A cross, a candle and some white flowers.

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Prayers

A bride and groom join hands in front of the vicar

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Wedding ceremony words

A couple standing at the front of church with guests watching on

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Wedding blessings

A couple making their wedding vows

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Wedding vows

A videographer filming a wedding in church

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Filming

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