

## **A Guide to Booking a Band for your Wedding**

from Happening Entertainment - A Class Act in Live Entertainment

**Go to a reliable and trustworthy agent** – Whilst it may look impressive, be wary of agents that have an endless list of bands on their books, they cannot possibly vet and keep track of all of these bands and the quality of what they are offering. It is often very difficult to arrange for clients to see professional function bands beforehand, as they tend to perform at private functions, so you are relying on the honesty and integrity of the agent. It is the agent's job to vet and only recommend bands that they not only know are talented but are 100% reliable, are right for your event, and have suitable back up plans to cover any eventuality on the night.

**Check your venue allows bands** – 90% of wedding venues do, but don't assume it!

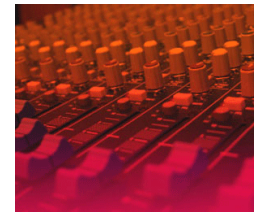


**Be realistic with your schedule** – No matter how well you plan your evening, the ceremony may overrun, speeches may go on longer than planned, the meal may take half an hour longer than you expect. Allow a little room for manoeuvre.

**Allow time for the band to set up** – If your meal is in a different room to where the band will be playing then you don't usually need to worry about this. If the band is to set up in the same room as the meal, have you allowed them time to do this without getting in the way of the guests? Most bands will usually require 1-1.5hrs to set up and sound check. This is best done after the meal if there is sufficient time, or else before the meal begins - though this will usually carry an additional charge for the extras hours involved.

**Check that the band's equipment is PAT tested** – many venues will ask to see the band's PAT (Portable Appliance Testing) certificate to prove that their equipment has been tested and declared safe before the band is allowed to set up.

**Does your band use good quality equipment?** – A PAT certificate shows that the equipment is safe to use, though how good the sounds is, depends largely on how much the band have invested in it. Even an outstanding band will not sound good if they have skimped on buying decent equipment. This again comes down to your agent knowing their bands well enough to be able to recommend them to you with confidence.



**Does the band provide their own lighting?** – Lighting makes a big difference to the atmosphere of any event. Your guests are far more likely to want to dance under some appropriate disco lighting rather than the full glare of the venue's main lights or near total darkness.

**Can your band provide recorded music during breaks?** – Most bands should be able to offer this though it's worth asking just in case. This will usually mean an iPod or equivalent being played over the band speakers, though the quality of music will vary from band to band.

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**First dance request** – Most professional bands are happy to learn a song of your choosing for your first dance as long as it can be adapted to the band line-up, but don't leave this until the last minute! Professional bands are very busy over the summer months so the more notice you can give them better, and certainly no less than three weeks.

**Can your band provide any extras?** – Some bands may be able to offer you live background music during the gap between your ceremony and wedding breakfast. Many couples like to have jazz or classical music at this point, to create a little atmosphere whilst welcome drinks and canapés are being serviced. Not only is it more economical to have the same group of people performing (as there are no additional travel or set up costs) it also cuts down on coordination and equipment being carried through your reception.



**Check your band has public liability insurance** – many venues will not allow a band to perform without it, for obvious reasons.

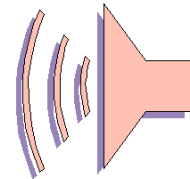


**Has sufficient space been allowed for the band to set up?** – Most venues have a designated area for bands to set up in. It's best to check with them that this space will be available when the band arrives. If your venue is not used to having bands on a regular basis, make sure a suitable area is going to be left clear for when the band arrive.

**Has a room been set aside for the band?** – After setting up their equipment, the band will need somewhere to get changed and to keep their valuables. Many venues, particularly hotels, will have a spare room or conference room that they will be happy to let the band use for this purpose.

**Has food been arranged for the band?** – It is likely that your band will be at your venue for 6 hours or more and they will have been loading and unloading before that. They will need to be fed during that time and it is normal practice for the client to provide a hot meal for each band member.

**Sound meters** – These are electronic devices that some venues have fitted that tell the band (usually by way of a traffic light system) when they are playing louder than the venue can allow. Professional bands should adhere totally to this and turn their equipment down to a level that is within the limit set or else the metre will trigger a temporary power cut to the band's equipment.



**ENJOY YOURSELF** – This is YOUR wedding and it is for YOU and your guests to enjoy. Of course you want the evening to be special, enjoyable and memorable, but don't put so much pressure on yourself that you spend more time worrying than enjoying your big day. Booking through a good agent will mean that the vetting has been done, your band knows what to do, when to do it and how to deal with any obstacles. Leave the management and planning to them – that's part of what you're paying for after all, peace of mind and assurance that things will be taken care of for you on the most special day of your life!

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