

WEDDING BAND BIBLE

Our thoughts and experiences shared with you

Generally

The band that performs at your wedding will in the end be measured on their ability to entertain your guests and keep the dance floor full for the duration of the programme. A poor choice of band may dampen spirits and leave unpleasant memories. This is why it is so important to *research, research, research* before you book your band.

Responsiveness

Many bands would like to receive your booking. It is at this early stage that the first signs of professionalism and courtesy should shine through. Imagine this...if a band is difficult to contact or awkward to negotiate with at the early stages, the same band might add unnecessary stress for you as your big day gets closer, or worse again on the night itself!

Experience

Like any trade or profession, experience definitely counts. Some experienced musicians become more relaxed about gigs as years pass – perhaps even TOO relaxed. Is your wedding just another night's work for some guitarist?

Or is it the unique "big day" of a lady who hopes to be wed only ONCE in her life and has been planning this day in some way or other since she was 7 years old? We think the latter.

The true professional will treat each gig as if it was special. In short, experience counts only if backed up by a professional attitude. As it happens, we've decades of combined experience and as for our attitude...well, we hope it speaks for itself!

Musicianship

Shoddy musicians make a shoddy band.
Excellent musicians can also make a shoddy band.

So where's the balance? It's sometimes referred to as chemistry and is almost impossible to define.

Think of how hard it might be for you to find a like-minded partner all over again. Now imagine having to find THREE like-minded partners, all at the same time, hoping they would also share the chemistry with each other.

Goodfellas is a meeting of minds! We have all worked with many other musicians but these are the people we WANT to work with! We think that pours off the stage when we play – you can tell we're WHERE we want to be, in the company of those we want to be with! We're lucky enough to be doing the thing we love, with our good friends! Suffice to say if we weren't already us, we'd envy us!



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Sound Equipment & Volume

Some bands we've seen and worked with believe that a big sound system (known as P.A. in the trade) justifies a big fee.

However, ...

Big PA = Loud Volume

Big PA = Increased set-up time (often meaning less performance time)

Big PA = Your recently re-united relatives can't speak to each other in comfort should they not wish to dance.

Big PA = Long break-down time, carrying large and heavy equipment out of the room perhaps across the DJ's dance floor.

Big PA = Great for Bon Jovi at the Point Depot but totally unnecessary for a wedding.

We work with a compact, yet powerful PA system, designed to fill the dancefloor yet leaving your non-dancing guests to chat over an appropriate overall volume level.

But remember, you are paying, so if you're not happy just tell us and we'll sort it. We can organise to put in enough wattage to rival "The Who" if that's what you want but unless you're getting married to Roger Daltrey, the high-quality Public Address amplification we invested in (after much expense and research) puts across the Goodfellas sound without sending your guests to the Eye And Ear Hospital (Adelaide Road, Dublin 2 Tel: 00 353 1 6644600 – just in case you book someone less worried about your listening comfort!!!) the following morning. As always though, it's your call but we'd hope you let our experience guide you here.

Repertoire

The rule-of-thumb is "something for everyone". That's the only thing we have found works and we've played most types of music with many different bands before we went out on our own. "Something for everyone" is a motto that's tough to live up to! However we really try our best...check out our repertoire list and decide for yourself!

Musical Genre(s)

Acts performing a single, narrow style of music – be it rock, jazz, swing - will almost certainly alienate a proportion of your guests sooner or later. It's like the opposite of "something for everyone" (i.e. everything for somebody!). It generally doesn't work as well as a band with a wide repertoire of styles.

You have a wide range of guests who have made the effort to share your special day. You really have to do your best to please as many as you can (as do we). Some people CAN'T be pleased. Every family's got one or two prickly characters!!! We even try hard with them!!

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“Big Name” or “Celebrity” acts

Some couples like the idea of using a well-known celebrity act at their wedding.

- 1) They are disproportionately expensive
- 2) They are disproportionately expensive
- 3) They are disproportionately expensive

And if money's not an issue for you...

- 4) They have limited repertoires
- 5) They are often inflexible regarding programme duration, breaking for refreshments etc..
- 6) Their experience lies in performance where they are centre-stage, not the bride and groom.
- 7) We've known some couples to have been let down because a better gig came along!

Live vs. Backing Track, or Semi-Live Bands

In an age where the majority of bands show up with less members than you can hear from the speakers, we cherish the unrivalled **energy** and **presence** created by a 100% live act. No tricks, no backing tracks...it's just us, warts and all.

It's a bit like going to a nice restaurant to eat and the waiter serving you pre-cooked take-away from Marks & Spencer. It's technically food but that's not what you paid for!

- If there's no drummer (but you can hear drums) – it ain't live!
- If you hear piano, brass, organs etc...but no keyboard player - it ain't live!
- If there are four people in a band but two of them only sing and yet there are full arrangements of your favourite songs – sorry, it ain't live.

If that don't bother you, fair enough. The number for Marks & Spencer is 01-679-7855. Order the grub from there while you're at it!!

We know of acts that pay “dummies” a reduced rate to stand behind keyboards and mime to the backing track - no word of a lie! Is this what the happy couple paid for?

Suppose you have a family member who you'd like to sing during the evening? Unless you have a live band...forget it.

Acts that are not COMPLETELY live suffer the same inability to adapt to changing audience taste because they tend to work from pre-set song lists. Without these lists they would need time between songs to locate the next backing track. It only takes seconds to clear a dancefloor. That's not the name of the game.

Non-live bands also find it difficult to fine-tune the speed of each song to YOUR audience. No two audiences are ever the same. So why should a pre-programmed songlist, at pre-programmed tempos work on every audience? The answer is that they DON'T!!



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Band Viewings

Many couples are invited to view a band by discretely 'crashing' another wedding. This is universally accepted to be the best way to see the band perform in the wedding environment and to measure the ability of the band to entertain the guests.

However few of us would be callous enough to sit through the entire performance at another couple's wedding so the "stolen" minutes generally spent may vary in content depending on what time you show up at. For this reason you should insist on seeing a repertoire list and get hold of some live recordings of the band. Only in this way can you truly get an idea of how your own night will turn out. Your brief visit to view the band should satisfy your requirements about how the band presents itself at a wedding and remember, trust your own instincts...if the band is good and people aren't dancing they might just be a dull bunch!

Band Age Profile / Audience Age

A band of twenty-somethings will have a job on their hands entertaining guests aged sixty-something and vice-versa. For best results the band should be representative of the average guest in age terms. This way the guests will be able to identify with the band and their music. Avoid the 'Dad's Army' band as much as the young lads from the garage around the corner!

Set Duration & Format

We've seen many bands quote many different positions on this one.

Some bands will do 1.5 – 2 hours and won't stop for the refreshments which you may want to provide for evening guests (we don't understand that since it's your wedding??)

Some bands will quote a three-hour set between fixed times e.g. from 9-12. However if Dad's speech went on just a little and the band didn't start until 10:15 (after a long set-up time), the band switches off at midnight. Are the bride and groom happy?

Everyone in the business knows that a wedding is a delicately choreographed day where one hitch early in the day has a knock-on effect on everything else that follows. For this reason flexibility is the key. It's not the band's fault that the hairdresser was late. The band were present at the agreed time but every effort must be made to make the most of the evening. This always comes down to planning and communication with the band before and during the big day.

Alcohol

The evening reception of your wedding is the band's job. They are being paid for it and they should be in the best condition to fulfil their responsibility to you. Granted, nobody wants to be a killjoy but where's the limit?

Out of respect to the bride and groom we've decided the limit is NO alcohol on stage. You can offer us a drink afterwards though! Not saying you have to mind...!

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Equipment Set-Up

An average wedding band should be able to set-up in 30 minutes after the speeches have been completed. Some venues have a more awkward “carry” or access route than others. Be sure to tell the band you’re dealing with the name of the hotel and if possible the room you’ve booked to help them figure out what time to arrive at.

Depending on the function room, set-up may only be possible when the room is being cleared and re-set for the evening reception. Guests will want to stretch their legs, chat to mates at other tables and the bride and bridesmaids may wish to freshen up before the final part of the celebrations. The band should generally be waiting for the bride and groom and not the other way around. Remember the danger of large sound systems and long set-up times!

In some cases it may be difficult for the band to gain access to the stage after guests have been seated for dinner earlier in the evening. In this case it may be worth giving consideration to asking the band to set up before dinner. However this does mean that the band needs to be at the venue approximately three hours earlier than otherwise required. An extra charge for this time can be expected to cover time and subsistence.

Price

Contrary to popular belief you don’t always get what you have paid for. Many couples continue to overpay for underperformance. Others spend too little on entertainment and live to regret it.

Think of it this way, if you have 150 guests and spend €X per head for dinner & drinks then what would be an appropriate entertainment budget for the same guests? Bear in mind that the meal and the band are the two items that people normally remember (given our often goldfish-like ability to remember the most recent of happenings!)

At time of writing in early 2007 the cost of an average 4/5 piece wedding band in Dublin is in the range €1500-€2000. The upper end of the market is asking for €3500-€5000.

Guest Singers

Guest singers can make or break the evening. We advise you to consider carefully. You don’t wish to offend Uncle Frank or Aunt Kathleen but you also don’t want to break the flow of the evening. At the end of the day it’ll be your call. We only take instructions from the bride and groom.

BUT REMEMBER, IT’S YOUR NIGHT!!!!

Whichever band you book we hope you have a great night and of course, live happily-ever-after!