

Gabe Lucas Piano Productions

Wedding questionnaire

My goal is to determine the best music selection and configuration for your wedding day. Thus, I have devised this lengthy but important questionnaire to find out as many details as possible. While I am more than willing to meet with prospective clients before a contract is signed, I do ask that you complete this form as best as possible, and then bring it to our meeting. Your cooperation will make the most effective use of the time we have together face-to-face.

I hope that at the very least you find enlightening some of the issues raised in this questionnaire. Indeed, even if you choose not to work with Gabe Lucas Piano Productions, I hope this form becomes a useful tool to plan the music details.

If you do not know the answer to any question, or you seek more guidance for that issue, simply indicate "Don't know."

General Information

First and last name of groom	
First and last name of bride	
Date of wedding	
Expected guest count	
Name of wedding coordinator	

Approximately what percent of your guests fall into each age range?

Under 16	
16-25	
26-34	
35-49	
50+	
Total	100%

I. Ceremony

Do you still need music for the ceremony?

If yes, continue. If no, skip to II, Reception.

A. General details

Where is the ceremony?

City	
Name of facility	
Type of facility	
Specific room/area	
Address	
Directions (if necessary)	
Free parking available?	
Phone number	
Name of contact person	

What time are guests told the ceremony will start?

What is the denomination (if any) of the ceremony?

In what attire would you like the ceremony musicians?

Tuxedo, suit, dress casual, theme (please describe), other

Wedding ceremony sound system

A sound system would include microphones and speakers, useful for your guests might not be able to hear the ceremony. Costs run from \$100 and up, escalating quickly as the complexity rises. The primary issue to consider what kind of microphone(s) you would use. First, if you are having people do readings in the ceremony, you'd need a standing microphone for them. Standing microphones can be wireless or wired. Wireless are more expensive, but can be easily moved without the hassle of wires. (In general, wires are not that big of a deal, except they don't look as aesthetically pleasing.) For the primary ceremony participants (bride, groom, celebrant) you have a couple of options. First, you could just have one microphone on a stand, positioned primarily toward the celebrant, who would be doing most of the talking. If you use a microphone on a stand, it would be present in most photographs (although not too conspicuous). However, it would not be as effective as picking up the words of each of the three people (bride, groom, celebrant) as would individual clip on microphones. If you were to use clip on microphones, realize that they do stand out more against white clothing than black clothing. Also, each person must carry a transmitter box.

For the bride, it would have to be either on the outside of the dress (and very noticeable) or attached to her somehow under the dress.

Would you need us to provide a sound system for your ceremony?

If yes, please describe your preferences.

Is the ceremony outside?

If no, skip to B. Live music details. If yes, continue.

Please describe any sound restrictions. If you have a copy of the restrictions, please attach them to the back of this questionnaire.

Sound restrictions include amplification rules, instrumentation rules, mandatory ending times for music, and decibel level rules. (Exception: if you are getting married at Gamble Gardens, San Rafael Elk's Lodge, The Lyford House, or Holbrook-Palmer Park, we are familiar with the restrictions.)

Please describe the contingency plan for rain. Will there be a tent, or is there an inside area?

Will there be shade or heat lamps (as needed during extreme weather conditions) available for the musicians?

B. Live music details

1. Instrumentation

The instrumentation is really up to you; there is no right or wrong answer. Solo piano is great and can cover most music needs. Other combinations are nice for enhancing the arrangements to produce a fuller sound.

Please circle any of the instruments below that appeal to you, indicate the total number of instruments you'd like in the ensemble, along with any comments.

Piano	Organ	Guitar	Harp
Vocal	Trumpet	Flute	Clarinet
Violin	Viola	Cello	

Total number of musicians:

Comments:

If you are not considering a piano as one of the instruments, skip to 2, As guests are seated.

Is there a real piano on-site and in good condition?

If yes, skip to 2, As guests are seated.

Today's keyboards provide a piano sound virtually as authentic as a real piano. The primary issue is whether you want the look and feel of a real piano. As for uprights versus grand pianos, that again is an elegance choice that is more for you to decide than for us to have any specific needs or requirements.

Would you be more inclined to rent a piano (\$250-\$600+) or use a keyboard (\$75+)?

Are there stairs, lawns, gravel, or other hazards between the car drop-off point and the location of the ceremony music?

2. As guests are seated

We have found that most wedding coordinators—and many guests, parents, etc.—are uncomfortable with musicians standing around and not playing right before the ceremony. There is nothing more awkward than a parent telling musicians to start playing, when those musicians are not contracted to start playing until the moment of the ceremony. To avoid these uncomfortable situations, we require scheduling the music 15 minutes prior to the start of the ceremony. At the same time, we have found that very few guests arrive earlier than 30 minutes prior to the ceremony, so we do not recommend scheduling the music to start before then. (Two exceptions are if photos involving many people happen prior to the ceremony, or if the ceremony is near where many people from out of town are staying.)

What time would you like the pre-ceremony music to start?

Do not feel obliged to give us specific song requests for the pre-ceremony music. For one, you will not be around to hear them! Second, we are very experienced with selecting appropriate, elegant classical music as your guests arrive. Many of our favorites can be found at:

<http://www.dewmusic.com/songs/repertoire/weddingsongs.html>

Our classical repertoire can be found on the classical page of our song list, or on-line at:

<http://www.dewmusic.com/songs/repertoire/classical/classical.html>

Do you have any specific song requests as guests are seated?

3. Bridal march

We like to work backward from the Bridal march.

Will the bride be walking down an aisle?

Will the bride be escorted? If so, by whom?

Would you like the traditional Bridal Chorus (Here Comes The Bride)?

If yes, please indicate as such and skip to 4, Processional/bridal party. If no, continue.

What song would you instead prefer?

Or, if you're not sure, please circle a, b, c, or d to indicate what type of song you'd like:

- a. A similar march-type song to "Here Comes The Bride"
(Suggestions include Trumpet Tune, Trumpet Voluntary)
- b. A more relaxed/solemn/open-feeling song than "Here Comes The Bride"
(Suggestions include Jesu, Ave Maria, Pachelbel's Canon, Arioso)
- c. A festive but still classical song
(Suggestions include Vivaldi's Spring from The Four Seasons)
- d. A different type of song altogether
(Suggestions include Someone To Watch Over Me, When I Fall In Love)

4. Processional/bridal party

How many bridesmaids (including maid of honor)?

Will they all be walking down the aisle?

How many groomsmen (including best man)?

Will the groomsmen (please circle a, b, or c)

- a. Escort the bridesmaids down the aisle?
- b. Walk down the aisle, separately from the bridesmaids?
- c. Come out before the bridesmaids from a route other than the aisle?

Number of other people walking down the aisle (flower girls, ring bearers, etc.)

Who is the last person to walk down the aisle before the bride?

Give both the name and relation; i.e., Jane, the flower girl.

Generally, if no more than two people (other than the bride) are walking down the aisle as part of the formal processional, you may not want a song just for the processional, for this will be too short of a period to complete even part of a single song. Rather, we would suggest combining the processional music with either the events just prior (e.g., parent seatings, appearance of the groom and officiant) or the events just after (bridal march, if the song for the bride is not "Here Comes The Bride").

Do you have a song selected for the processional?

If yes, please tell us and skip to Section 5, Prelude. Please indicate "same as bridal song" if you want the bridal song to also be the song for the processional.

If no, would you instead prefer (please circle a, b, or c):

- a. A contrasting song in style to the bride's song
(i.e., if the bride's song is a march, have a more open/relaxed song for the processional)
- b. A similar song in style to the bride's song
(i.e., if the bride's song is open/relaxed, have another open/relaxed song for the processional)
- c. A song that builds up to the bride's song
(i.e., if the bride's song is a march, have a quieter march for the processional)

5. Prelude

Often, the signal that a ceremony is about to begin is the formal seating of parents, grandparents, or other "distinguished relatives." This is another opportunity to select music selections. The prelude rarely consists of more than two songs: one song for the parent seatings, and one song for the appearance of the groom, his groomsmen, and the officiant. And in fact, most of the time one song is sufficient for both these activities. And as discussed earlier, if the prelude or the processional are expected to be very short (less than one minute), you should consider combining the prelude song with the processional song.

How many formal parent/grandparent seatings will occur?

How many songs would you like played during the prelude?

Do you have the song(s) selected for the prelude?

If yes, please tell us and skip to section 6, During ceremony. Please indicate "same as processional" if you want the processional song to also be the song for the prelude.

If no, would you instead prefer (please circle a, b, or c):

- a. A contrasting song in style to the processional
- b. A similar song in style to the processional
- c. A song that builds up to the processional

6. During ceremony

How long do you expect the ceremony to last?

There are two reasons to consider music during the ceremony. First, if you plan to have any special "activities" during which no one is speaking, you may want music during the silence. Those activities include: candle lighting, flower presentation, communion, etc. Second, you may just want to have an interlude or moment of reflection at some point in the ceremony.

Do you want any music during the ceremony?

If no, skip to Section 7, Recessional.

If yes, for each musical piece please describe:

- What song you want, or at least what style of song you want.
- What else would be happening during the song (if anything).
- What the cue would be before the song.
- Whether you would want the song to end once whatever was happening ended (e.g., candle lighting done), or when the song ended. If it's the former, realize that you may not hear the entire song. If it's the latter, determine whether you would be comfortable doing nothing while the song finished.

7. Recessional

Will you be walking back down the aisle?

What is the cue for the recessional music to start? Please circle a, b, or c:

- Right as you kiss.
- The officiant says, "I present to you for the first time, Mr. and Mrs. X."
- Breaking of a glass
- Something else:

Would you like the traditional Wedding March recessional?

If yes, skip to Section 8, Post Recessional. If no, continue.

If no, would you instead prefer (please circle a, b, or c):

- An equally upbeat/festive song?
(Suggestions include Ode To Joy, a selection from Vivaldi's Four Seasons)
- Something more relaxed/solemn/open feeling
(Suggestions include Pachelbel's Canon, Arioso)
- Something more unique/jazzy/modern
(Suggestions include Linus and Lucy, Our Love Is Here To Stay, How Sweet It Is)

8. Post-recessional music

If you need music for the early part of the reception, will the ceremony musicians have to move to another location?

If no, skip to Section II., Reception. If yes, continue.

How far would the musicians have to move? Are there stairs or other hazards involved?

II. Reception

Do you still need music (live or DJ) for the reception?

If no, you're done with this questionnaire!

In what attire would you like the reception musicians?

Tuxedo, suit, dress casual, theme (please describe), other

Will the musicians have to move performance locations during the reception? If so, when and how far?

A. Site details

(If your answers for questions in this section are the same as those for the ceremony, just enter 'same.')

Where is the reception?

City	
Name of facility	
Type of facility	
Specific room/area	
Address	
Directions	
Free parking available?	
Phone number	
Name of contact person	

Is the reception outside?

If no, skip to B. Piano rental.

Please describe any sound restrictions. If you have a copy of the restrictions, please attach them to the back of this questionnaire.

Sound restrictions include amplification rules, instrumentation rules, mandatory ending times for music, and decibel level rules. (Exception: if you are getting married at Gamble Gardens, San Rafael Elk's Lodge, The Lyford House, or Holbrook-Palmer Park, we are familiar with the restrictions.)

Please describe the contingency plan for rain. Will there be a tent, or is there an inside area?

Will there be shade or heat lamps (as needed during extreme weather conditions) available for the musicians?

B. Piano rental/keyboard

Are you considering a piano or a keyboard as one of the instruments?

If no, skip to C, Load-in.

Piano rentals run from \$250 - \$600+, and keyboard deliveries run from \$75+.

If you want only jazz and swing music, you can get by without a keyboard. On the other hand, if you want rock and dance music, you will need a keyboard for string, organ, and other synthesized parts. Keep this in mind when you consider using a real piano versus a keyboard. Occasionally, we use both a real piano and a keyboard for larger events.

Today's keyboards provide a piano sound virtually as authentic as a real piano. The primary issue is whether you want the look and feel of a real piano. As for uprights versus grand pianos, that again is an elegance choice that is more for you to decide than for us to have any specific needs or requirements.

Will you need a keyboard?

Will you want to use a real piano?

If no, skip to C, Load-in.

Is there a piano on-site and in good condition?

C. Load-in

Are there stairs, lawns, gravel, or other hazards between the car drop-off point and the location of the reception music?

Could the musicians set up immediately prior to playing? If no, please indicate the reason and the time by which all set up must be completed. An example would be if the ceremony and reception were in the exact same location, thereby requiring the musicians for the reception to set up prior to the ceremony. Keep in mind that this is generally only an issue for large instruments, such as piano, bass, guitar, and drums. Horns and strings can arrive at a performance site without attracting any attention.

D. General schedule information

1. Is there a cocktail portion of the reception after the ceremony?

- a. What time will cocktails start?

- b. How many photographs will have occurred prior to the ceremony?

None, some (e.g., separates only), most, or all

- c. What time will cocktails end?

- d. Do you want a DJ or live music during the cocktail portion? If live music, please indicate any preferred instrumentation or song style selection you may be considering.

2. Is there a meal portion of the reception?

- a. What time will the meal start?

- b. Is it buffet, sit-down, or heavy hors d'oeuvres?

- c. If sit-down, how many courses?

- d. Do you want a DJ or live music during the cocktail portion? If live music, please indicate any preferred instrumentation or song style selection you may be considering.

3. Is there a post-meal portion of the reception?

- a. Do you want a DJ, live music, or both during this time? If live music, please indicate any preferred instrumentation or song style selection you may be considering.

4. Circle the events you plan to do:

- a. Toasts
- b. First dance
- c. Second dance (e.g., father/daughter)

- d. Bridal party dance
- e. Open dancing for everyone
- f. Group games/activities
- g. Cake cutting
- h. Bouquet toss
- i. Garter toss
- j. Last dance
- k. Formal send-off (e.g., bubbles, rice)
- l. Other special/cultural dances

E. Music details

Do you plan to have (or is there) a dance floor?

Do you plan to have (or is there) a stage?

1. First dance

Do you plan to have a first dance?

If no, skip to 2, Second dance.

There are two popular times for the first dance, although others are possible. The most common nowadays is after the meal, as the real “dancing portion” of the reception is about to start. The more traditional (especially on the East Coast and for more formal weddings) is right as the cocktails are ending and before the meal begins. Each has its advantages and disadvantages.

The advantage of doing the first dance after the meal is that it is a good springboard to begin a full dance set. The disadvantage is that your guests are unable to begin dancing until you do the first dance, which can get pushed back as the meal drags on and as you go around to each table greeting guests toward the end of the meal.

The advantage of doing the first dance before the meal is that from that point on, the dance floor is open to everyone. This is especially useful if you have a long sit-down meal and are considering a break between courses for a dancing set. The disadvantage is that you don’t have the first dance to kick-off the main dance set after dinner. This can be overcome if you plan to have a father/daughter dance, or if you and your guests are big dancers.

If you want a live band to play the first dance, then you have to pay for the full ensemble from the first dance onward. If the first dance occurs after dinner, you may be able to save money if you have a smaller configuration during dinner. This issue would be less significant if you wanted the full band during dinner, or if dinner were going to be very short.

On the other hand, if you want the first dance from a CD, then it really doesn’t matter from a cost standpoint when you have the first dance.

When do you want to have the first dance?

Do you want us to introduce you onto the dance floor?

If no, will someone else (i.e., a best man)?

If yes, how do you want to be introduced (e.g., "Mr. and Mrs. Smith," "Bob and Jane," "The happy couple," etc.)? Please provide any pronunciations for difficult names.

Have you selected the first dance?

If yes, please indicate your choice.

If no, please let us know:

1. What tempo do you want?

(Slow, medium, uptempo)

2. What genre song do you want?

(Classic standard, 50s, 60s, 70s, 80s, 90s/modern)

3. What style song do you want?

(Waltz, swing, pop, rock, Latin, other)

Do you want the first dance played live or on a CD?

2. Second dance

The second dance, if formally done, is usually between the bride and her father. Of course, other factors are important to consider. The issue of step-parents is crucial, because sometimes one parent can feel left out. Also, the groom and his mother occasionally dance during the second dance. However, complications can arise when the groom plans to dance with the bride's mom, if the groom also has step-parents, or if the groom prefers to dance with his mom separately.

Often, spontaneity is the best approach. That is, if a parent wants to dance with either the bride or groom, there is no reason to offer resistance to such a wonderful moment. We simply need to know what you want us to do in terms of formal introductions and subsequent songs.

One final issue is whether you want us to formally invite the bridal party up to dance before inviting the remaining guests, or simply to invite everyone up once all parent dances are finished.

Do you plan to have a formal second dance, such as a father/daughter dance?

If no, skip to 3, Subsequent dancing. If yes, please continue reading.

Will the second dance occur right after the first dance, or some time later?

If later, at what point will it happen?

e.g., after a certain course in the meal, after the cake cutting, etc.

Have you selected the second dance?

If yes, please indicate your choice.

If no, please let us know:

1. What tempo do you want?

(Slow, medium, uptempo)

2. What genre song do you want?

(Classic standard, 50s, 60s, 70s, 80s, 90s/modern)

3. What style song do you want?

(Waltz, swing, pop, rock, Latin, other)

Do you want the second dance played live or on a CD?

Please describe for whom the second dance will be dedicated, whether a formal introduction will occur, who will do that introduction (e.g., us or a best man), and how you want to be introduced if we are to do the formal introductions (e.g., "the bride and her father," "Mr. Smith and his daughter," etc.). Remember to provide any pronunciations for difficult names.

Indicate whether **anyone else** (groom and his mom, other parents, bridal party, all guests) will be formally asked to come to the dance floor **during the second dance**, and if so, how we should introduce them. Remember to provide any pronunciations for difficult names.

3. Subsequent dancing

If there are more formal dances (like groom and his mom, bride and a step-parent, etc.) before we are to invite everyone up to dance, please provide us the details:

Song #3

Title	
Live or CD?	
Dedicated to:	
Do we introduce them?	

If so, what should we say?	
Anyone else we should invite to the dance floor before this dance ends.	

Song #4

Title	
Live or CD?	
Dedicated to:	
Do we introduce them?	
If so, what should we say?	
Anyone else we should invite to the dance floor before this dance ends.	

Once there are no more formal dances, the next dance is usually the song that kicks off the primary dancing set. We can either invite everyone, or start with just the bridal party (if the bridal party has not already been invited up).

(If you don't plan to have dancing, but did want to have the first and/or second dances, then the third dance can just be a ballad or quieter song. It's possible that people may choose to spontaneously dance; on the other hand, it's likely the music will return to the background.)

A standard technique for getting dancing going is to "ease into" the uptempo music with a crossover song, such as "In The Mood." It's a well-known song that appeals to many generations, and in some sense it symbolizes that the time to dance has now arrived.

If you have a specific song in mind for the "kick off" group dance selection, feel free to share it. However, do not feel obligated to enumerate specific songs from this point forward.

Will this "kick-off" song be just for everyone, or instead just for certain family members and/or the bridal party?

Is there a specific song you'd like us to play to "kick-off" the dancing set?

Feel free (though not obligated) to give more input about song selection and/or instrumentation for the reception.

4. Last dance

A last dance is common if you plan to have a formal send-off (limousine) or if you have a song with which you'd definitely like to close the evening. It could be the first dance song again, or it could be something else. Generally, if the last dance is formally announced, it's a ballad, although it's up to you.

Would you like to have a formal last dance?

Have you selected the last dance?

If yes, please indicate your choice.

If no, please let us know:

1. What tempo do you want?

(Slow, medium, uptempo)

2. What genre song do you want?

(Classical standard, 50s, 60s, 70s, 80s, 90s/modern)

3. What style song do you want?

(Waltz, swing, pop, rock, Latin, other)

Do you want the last dance played live or on a CD?

F. Master of ceremonies

We are happy to be your MC for other events during the reception, including toasts, other special dances, cake cutting, bouquet and garter toss, and anything else. We are also happy to not announce any of these, either deferring to someone else or just letting them begin on their own. In general, our philosophy is to keep our talking to a minimum, just to the extent that things flow together.

To give you an idea of what "normally" happens:

- *Toasts can occur anytime during the meal (usually around the salads)*
- *Special dances can occur anytime during the dance sets*
- *The cake cutting usually occurs after the first dance set*
- *The bouquet and garter toss usually occur either while the cake is being cut, after cake has been served, or right before the bride and groom make a formal exit.*

Do you (please circle a, b, or c):

- Want us to be your MC for the evening?
- Expect someone else to be the MC?
- Not want anyone to be the MC?

G. Other services

We are happy to help you with other music-related details for your wedding. These details including staging, lighting, dance floor rental, piano rental, and advanced sound engineering.

There is generally a 15% to 20% handling charge to cover our labor. On the other hand, we are happy to simply provide you with referrals, and you can arrange the details on your own.

If your caterer is providing rentals (tables, chairs, etc.), it is often cheaper for you to have the caterer do other rentals, including the dance floor and staging. Furthermore, if you have hired a production company for room décor or back lighting,, you may find it more economical to have them handle the sound engineering and stage lighting.

Please circle any of these services that you'd need us to provide:

1. Staging
2. Lighting
3. Piano rental
4. Advanced sound engineering
(Usually necessary for large weddings or facilities with poor sound acoustics)

H. Breaks

Our philosophy is, whenever possible, to schedule breaks to coincide with logical moments during the reception, such as toasts, the cake cutting, etc. We are more than happy to work with you to schedule appropriate times for breaks.

Our prices assume 15 minute breaks between sets lasting 45-60 minutes long (usually the first set is 60 minutes, and subsequent sets are 45 minutes). We are happy to do either of the following, usually at no additional charge:

- *Background CDs during breaks*
- *Stagger musician breaks for continuous music (not recommended during the dancing sets, but excellent for cocktail and dinner sets)*

The following can be arranged, but at additional costs:

- *DJ-style CD playing during breaks (take requests, song mixing, etc.)*
- *Continuous live music with no breaks (an expensive proposition)*

Please indicate which of these four options appeal(s) to you?

Feel free to express other specific needs with respect to musician breaks, as well.

What is the room or location where the musicians can remain during their breaks?

I. Food

It is ironic that a basic topic such as food can cause so much trouble in the wedding industry, but it has!

First, our policy. Our prices assume that musicians scheduled for three or more hours will receive a meal. The reason is simple. If you include the time for set-up, tear-down, and driving, a three hour gig often becomes a five or six hour day, with no time to get food elsewhere during that time. A meal provided to a musician does not need to be the same elaborate meal provided to your guests. However, if no food is provided, we charge a per diem of \$25 for each musician scheduled more than three hours.

Second, the details. If you are having a buffet meal, it is generally not an issue. We are happy to have what is leftover, assuming some food still remains. If it is a sit-down, the caterer usually charges by the plate, although some offer discounted prices for just a basic entrée for the hired staff (musicians, photographer, etc). If it's heavy hors d'oeuvres, then it's a matter of obtaining a plate of food. In all cases, we are happy to eat away from the guests. We will not have alcoholic beverages at your wedding.

Third, the moral of the story. The more respect you show people, the happier they are, and thus the more willing they are to go the extra effort to please you and your guests. This is crucial with respect to not just musicians, but also the photographer and videographer.

Finally, two pieces of advice. No, you don't have to invite people to sit down with your guests. But, it would be nice if the meal consisted of something other than cold sandwiches and potato chips. Second, if the meal is heavy hors d'oeuvres, and you do not want musicians (or the photographer and videographer) to obtain food from the food stations, then arrange with the caterer to have plates of food made up in the kitchen. But as to this last point, in all honesty the more you make hired staff feel "included," the greater their bond will be with your guests.

Please let us know whether you plan to ensure that musicians scheduled for three or more hours will have food available for them.

J. Anything else

Feel use this space to describe to us any other wedding details that you feel we should know prior to meeting with you.

We hope that you have found this questionnaire helpful in terms of raising important yet often overlooked details with respect to music for a wedding. Thank you for your cooperation in providing us this information ahead of time!