

Louise Heaney | Wedding & Event Violinist

WEDDING CEREMONY MUSIC GUIDE



*How to choose music that
feels right for your ceremony*



CEREMONY MUSIC

Choosing your ceremony music isn't about ticking boxes or picking the most popular song. It's about flow, pacing and atmosphere. The right music supports the moment without taking it over.

As a violinist, I see firsthand how the right melody can transform a room. Whether you dream of a traditional walk down the aisle to a classical masterpiece or a modern Bridgerton-style cover of your favourite pop song, this guide is designed to help you navigate the flow of your ceremony with ease and confidence.

This guide breaks the ceremony into its key parts and suggests pieces that work beautifully on violin, whether your style is classical, modern or somewhere in between.

1. PRE-CEREMONY

Sometimes called the Prelude, this music plays as your guests arrive and find their seats. It serves as the "buffer" between the outside world and the sacred or celebratory space you've created.

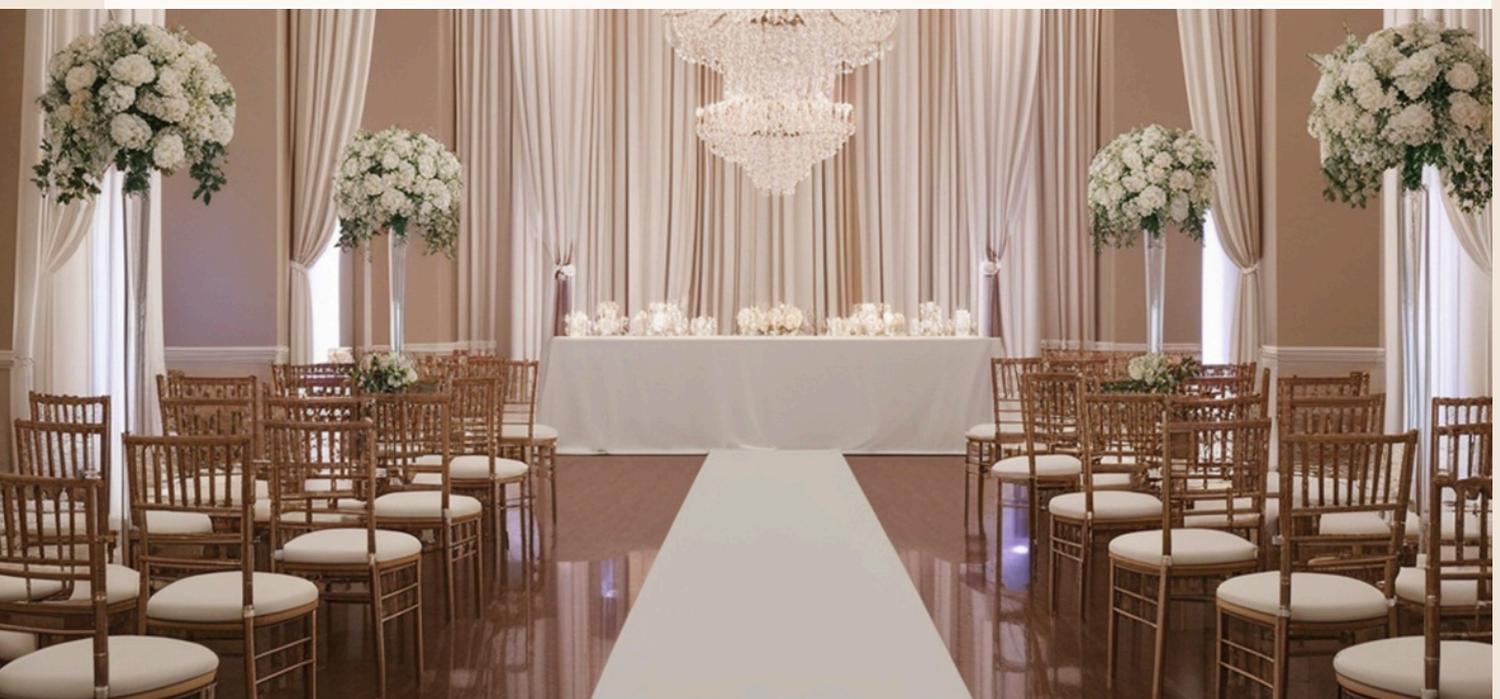
The goal here is ambience. The music shouldn't take centre stage, but, instead, wrap the room in a warm, welcoming atmosphere that builds a quiet sense of anticipation.

The Essential Elements:

- **Consistency:** Choose a series of songs with a similar "texture" (e.g., all violin and piano or all string quartet) to create a cohesive mood.
- **Low Intensity:** The volume and energy should be high enough to mask the sound of shuffling feet and whispers, but low enough that guests can easily chat.
- **Gentle Flow:** Look for mid-tempo tracks that feel relaxed. You want your guests to feel settled and expectant, not rushed.

Examples:

- Air on a G String - Bach
- Spiegel im Spiegel - Pärt
- Theme from Amélie - Yann Tiersen
- Fields of Gold - Sting





2. THE PROCESSIONAL

The Processional (or Grand Entrance) is the "heartbeat" of the ceremony. The Processional covers the entry of the wedding party and, ultimately, the walk down the aisle. This music is the emotional bridge that transitions the event from a gathering into a ceremony.

The Essential Elements:

- **Distinct Contrast:** Many couples choose a softer track for the wedding party and a definitive shift (a new song or a dramatic volume increase) for the final entrance to signal that the "big moment" has arrived.
- **A Walkable Rhythm:** The beat is crucial here. You need a tempo that mirrors a natural walking pace—not so slow that you stumble, but not so fast that you race to the altar.
- **Emotional Weight:** This is the time for "goosebump" music. Whether it's a soaring cinematic score or a sentimental ballad, it should resonate with the gravity of the commitment you're about to make.

Examples:

- Canon in D - Pachelbel
- A Thousand Years - Christina Perri
- Perfect - Ed Sheeran
- Now We Are Free - Gladiator

3. SIGNING OF THE REGISTER

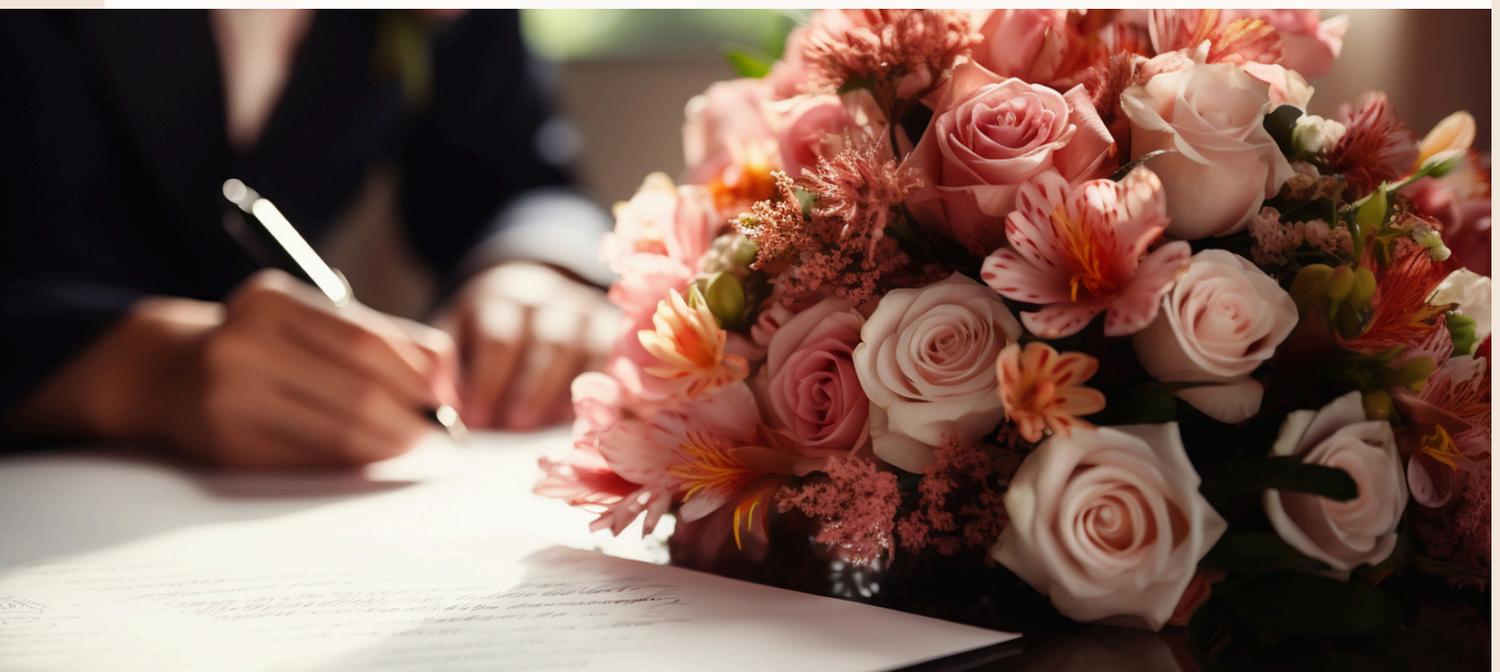
While you are busy with the legalities and photography, your guests are essentially "waiting." The Signing of the Register music fills this transition period, keeping the momentum alive while you take care of business.

The Essential Elements:

- **Lyrical Meaning:** Since there is no walking or speaking during this time, guests are actually listening. This is a great spot for a "special song" that might have lyrics too distracting for the vows or the walk.
- **Mid-Range Energy:** It should be more upbeat than the Prelude but less "explosive" than the Recessional. Think of it as a pleasant bridge that keeps the mood light.
- **Flexibility:** Pick two songs (roughly 5-7 minutes of music). Sometimes the signing is quick; sometimes it takes a bit longer. Having a second track ready ensures there isn't an awkward silence while you're still hunting for a pen.

Examples:

- Air on a G String - Bach
- Spiegel im Spiegel - Pärt
- Theme from Amélie - Yann Tiersen
- Fields of Gold - Sting





4. THE RECESSIONAL

The Recessional is your grand exit as a married couple. It begins the second you are introduced to your guests and continues as you walk back up the aisle, followed by your wedding party.

Unlike the Processional, which is often characterised by anticipation and grace, the Recessional is a pure celebration. It sets the tone for the festivities to follow and signals to your guests that it's time to cheer.

The Essential Elements:

- **Upbeat Tempo:** This is a "walking with a strut" moment. Choose music with a steady, driving beat that feels joyful and propulsive.
- **Immediate Impact:** The best recessional songs start with a "bang"—think a recognisable melody to match the sudden burst of applause.
- **High Energy:** Whether it's a classical masterpiece or a modern pop anthem, the vibe should be triumphant. You want music that feels like a collective exhale and a victory lap.

Examples:

- Viva La Vida – Coldplay
- Symphony – Clean Bandit
- Shut Up and Dance – Walk the Moon
- Happy Together – The Turtles

ADDITIONAL MOMENTS:

I. RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES

While the four stages of music already mentioned apply to most weddings, a religious ceremony, such as a Catholic Mass or a Church Service, might include extra music during the liturgy. These moments are usually more reflective and serene, and include:

The Lighting of the Unity Candle

A brief, soft instrumental piece as the couple lights their shared candle

The Offertory & Communion

Longer periods where the music provides a peaceful backdrop

Interlude / Meditation

A moment of reflection after the vows or communion

Examples:

- Ave Maria - Schubert
- Panis Angelicus - Franck
- Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring - Bach
- Meditation from Thaïs - Massenet

Additionally, if you are marrying in a church, I recommend discussing your repertoire with your priest or minister early on. Some parishes have specific rules regarding secular or pop music, so it is always best to ensure your choices align with their guidelines.





ADDITIONAL MOMENTS:

II. CIVIL CEREMONIES

Civil ceremonies offer a bit more flexibility in terms of flow, but they often include a "Reflection" moment such as:

The Reflection / Unity Ritual

Many civil ceremonies include a sand ceremony, hand-fasting or a moment of silent reflection

The Pre-Recessional Pause

Often, the registrar will ask guests to wait a moment while you prepare for your exit. A short, "vibe-shifting" piece can sometimes transition the room from the quiet of the vows to the energy of the exit.

Instead of a traditional wedding standard, this is the perfect opportunity to choose a piece that holds personal significance to your journey. Consider a song that:

- **Reflects your shared history:** Perhaps the first song you ever danced to, or a melody from a concert you attended together.
- **Captures your "vibe":** A piece of music that feels like you as a couple—whether that is a stripped-back version of an indie track or a cinematic theme from a film you both love.
- **Provides an Emotional Anchor:** During a ritual like hand-fasting, the music acts as a bridge, giving you and your guests the space to truly soak in the significance of the promises you are making.

RELIGIOUS CEREMONY MUSIC PLANNER

Use this planner for music and song ideas if you are marrying in a church or religious setting.

Pre-Ceremony (Guest Arrival) Vibe: Relaxed & Contemporary (up to 20 minutes of music)

The Processional Vibe: Personal & Poignant

Lighting of the Unity Candle Vibe: Soft & Brief

Offertory / Communion Vibe: Peaceful & Reflective (Pick 2 songs)

Meditation after the vows / communion Vibe: Peaceful & Reflective

The Signing of the Register Vibe: Beautiful & Still (Pick 2 songs)

The Recessional Vibe: Joyful & Uplifting

CIVIL CEREMONY MUSIC PLANNER

Use this planner for music and song ideas for registry offices or venue ceremonies.

Pre-Ceremony (Guest Arrival) Vibe: Relaxed & Contemporary (up to 20 minutes of music)

The Processional Vibe: Personal & Poignant

Reflection / Unity Ritual Vibe: Soft & Brief

The Signing of the Register Vibe: Beautiful & Still (Pick 2 songs)

The Recessional Vibe: Joyful & Uplifting

Notes

ABOUT

LOUISE HEANEY | WEDDING VIOLINIST

Whether you are looking for the timeless beauty of a classical favourite or a contemporary Bridgerton vibe, I work closely with you to ensure every note is perfectly timed and every song choice feels like "you." My goal is to take the stress out of your planning, providing a professional, seamless and stunning soundtrack for your special day.

SERVICES

I offer two core services designed to fit the flow of your wedding day. Both packages include a consultation to discuss your repertoire and ensure the music aligns perfectly with your vision.

- **Ceremony:** Includes all music for your formal ceremony, from the moment your first guest arrives until you both walk back up the aisle as a married couple
- **Ceremony & Drinks Reception:** Includes all music for your ceremony plus up to 90 minutes of music at your drinks reception

CHECK AVAILBILITY

Once you have your wedding date, please feel free to reach out to check my availability to play at your ceremony. Scan the link below to check your date or visit louisheaney.com for more info



WWW.LOUISEHEANEY.COM