



Frequently Asked Questions for Those Planning a Wedding

For booking information, visit www.suiteoccasionsmusic.com or contact Faith Miller at: suiteoccasions@gmail.com cell: 860-688-1869 OR 603-876-4712

For what type of events do Suite Occasions groups play?

Any social event aiming to extend an atmosphere of elegance benefits from music performance by Suite Occasions groups. We have extensive experience in providing the music for weddings (ceremonies and receptions), corporate receptions, holiday parties, and dinner events.

What instrumental combinations does Suite Occasions offer?

A range of instrumental combinations and soloists are available through Suite Occasions. Most typically, clients hire trios (2 violins & cello...flute, violin, cello...flute, violin, guitar...trumpet, violin, cello, for example) or quartets (2 violins, viola, cello or flute, violin, viola, cello usually). Also available are various duo combinations (violin and cello...flute and guitar, etc.), soloists (violin or cello or flute or guitar, for example), and custom combinations.

What instrumental grouping will be best for my occasion?

The number of players and exact instrumentation for a particular occasion can best be determined by this combination of factors: repertoire rating highest on the client's 'wish list,' venue conditions (i.e. outdoor space? size of an indoor space?), number of guests to be entertained, the client's budgetary realities. Given those factors, we can assist you in considering the best options. [Pricing is 'per musician.' See Booking an Instrumental Group section below]

How far do you travel?

Suite Occasions groups have played in southern CT since 1985. While based in greater Hartford, CT, groups also frequently play elsewhere in CT as well as south-central MA. Our groups also perform for events in southwestern NH and southeastern VT; our northern home base is Keene, NH. Travel fees will apply (and will be quoted prior to booking) for events taking place outside of greater Hartford, CT, or greater Keene, NH.

Do you play for outdoor events?

Yes, weather conditions permitting. As is stated on a Suite Occasions contract: “outdoor playing OK as long as air temperature equals or exceeds 70°F; musicians must be able to set up on level ground, out of direct sunlight, and in avoidance of any precipitation whatsoever.”

What performing experience do Suite Occasions musicians have?

Suite Occasions players are all professional musicians with years of experience playing special events, concert chamber music and orchestral music. Suite Occasions owner and director Faith Miller has been playing such events, and working with clients in the repertoire and instrumentation planning phases, since 1985.

Does the contracted ensemble require any special equipment at the event venue?

The musicians each require an armless chair; the group needs to be able to set up on level floor or ground, out of direct sunlight. Suite Occasions musicians provide their own stands.

When will the musicians arrive to the event?

Suite Occasions musicians arrive 25-30 minutes prior to the contracted music start time.

What will the musicians be wearing as they perform at my event?

Suite Occasions standard ‘dress code’ is formal black and white.

Will I meet the musicians prior to the event?

Faith Miller will be your contact person in arranging the details of your Suite Occasions group. While an in-person repertoire planning meeting with clients was somewhat typical years ago, such a meeting is not the norm at all any more. Faith will pull together a music planning sheet for individual clients, and the sponsor and Faith work through the details via phone conversation and even more frequently! e-mail exchange.

Where can I see a Suite Occasions group performing live?

Most of the Suite Occasions performances are for privately contracted events that are not open to the general public. However, we do perform annually for such advertising events as ‘bridal showcases’ at various venues. Please call Faith Miller (860-688-1869) to learn of any such upcoming events in your area. And, of course, you can hear samples of our groups’ performances on this website and on our classical sampler CD.

PLANNING MUSIC FOR AN EVENT

How far in advance of my event should I book a Suite Occasions group?

When booking a Suite Occasions group for a wedding or other special event, we strongly recommend that you contact us and book us as early as possible. Experience has taught us that many clients book their wedding music eight to ten months prior to wedding day, so that is a recommendation guideline. However, some clients do make a first contact with many fewer months to go, and that often works out, as well. We look forward to reserving your special date in our calendar, so do be in touch.

How do I go about planning the repertoire to be played at my event?

Suite Occasions groups long specialized in classical repertoire, but have now expanded our playlists to include arrangement for classical instruments of light popular music. You may want an all-classical music event, or all light pop, or a mix of the two general styles. [See our posted play list for ideas!] Faith Miller will be happy to help you with music suggestions, what pieces might best go where within a wedding ceremony, etc.

BOOKING AN INSTRUMENTAL GROUP OR SOLOIST

How do I book a Suite Occasions group?

Once you know the pertinent information (date, time, venue) for your event, contact Faith Miller by phone (860-688-1869), e-mail (suiteoccasions@gmail.com) or on-line booking (below) to check for our specific availability. Following information exchange we will generate and mail to you a contract for your event. You will receive a per musician price quote. If your event will take place in greater Hartford, CT, or greater Keene, NH i.e. our two 'home base areas'), there will be no additional travel fee; there is a one hour contract minimum in those areas. If your event is planned to take place outside of these 'home' areas, a per musician travel fee and minimum contract length may apply. The contract and non-fundable deposit (25% of the total fee) will be due back to Suite Occasions postmarked no later than 14 days after the contract was mailed to you. Please note that a contract is not firm until we have received your signed contract and deposit.

PLANNING RECEPTION MUSIC

What types of music do Suite Occasions groups play for cocktail or dinner receptions?

When you or your business is planning a sophisticated reception, elegant background music played on classical instruments should be a definite consideration. As Suite Occasions offers both classical and light popular music, you may decide whether to go with all classical for your event OR all light popular OR a mix of both. For example, some clients want to hear light popular music for the cocktail hour followed by all

classical background music during dinner. Speak to Faith Miller for ideas about your options.

What is the ideal location for an instrumental ensemble at reception?

At a reception, it is best to have the musicians set up out of the flow of guest and wait staff traffic. Thus, placement a bit away from a food station or bar area will be better than immediate adjacency to one or the other. Please consult your site coordinator at the reception venue about any restrictions for set-up; that person knows your venue best and will undoubtedly have a few options for your consideration.

PLANNING WEDDING CEREMONY MUSIC

Faith Miller of Suite Occasions recommends that ceremony music be selected in the following general order of importance: processional (bride, attendants, mothers and grandmothers), recessional (for the married couple, and perhaps a second, separate one for the attendants and parents), music for any special moments within the ceremony, prelude (seating) music.

Processionals:

How many processionals do I need?

While it is usually nice to have one special processional for the bride and something different for the attendants, sometimes a single processional piece will be a better choice. In the case of a wedding party consisting of a single maid of honor plus the bride, one processional could be appropriate. The bride and groom's preference in this matter is always key; Faith Miller can help you through the processional selection process as needed.

What is the timing/length of each processional?

The client does not need to worry about length of music for the various segments of processional music. Upon providing accurate information (i.e. how many grandmothers and mothers to be seated? How many attendants? Will the groomsmen be processing with the maids? Will the officiant be processing? Etc.) to Faith Miller, the ceremony-experienced musicians of Suite Occasions will tailor the length of the music to fit the need of the processional as it happens.

Recessional:

How many pieces are played as recessional/exit music after the ceremony?

Most often, one grand piece of music is played for the exit of the bride and groom and also their attendants following the ceremony itself. In the case of a Jewish ceremony that concludes with the breaking of the glass, "Siman tov" is a fun and traditional way to send the newlyweds off in a celebratory way. In contracting, it is best to plan for music to continue until the guests have departed the ceremony area, which usually takes no more than 5 minutes.

Do I need to select all of the prelude (or seating) music?

The prelude to the ceremony is a critical opportunity for the couple to musically welcome their dear friends to the event, and also to set the elegant tone for the ceremony itself. You may want to indicate specific pieces of music to be played during the prelude such that you can indicate one or two of those in the ceremony program, if you will be creating that item. However, it is often the case that, based on the style and mood of your processional and recessional selections, Faith Miller will be able to suggest pieces to be played that will best set up the ceremony.

How do the musicians know when to conclude the prelude and to begin the processional music?

It is very helpful to the musicians to receive the ‘high sign’ from the on-site event planner or one of the groomsmen immediately prior to the seating of the mothers and/or grandmothers. Such an indication launches the processional music. Once the first processional begins, the Suite Occasions group knows when to transition the music based on the wedding party count as given previously by the bride or her designate.

If I want music within the ceremony, where is that best placed?

In the case of religious ceremonies, there are specific moments within the service that are appropriate for music. The couple should first have conversation with their officiant about placement of music and any restrictions on repertoire. With that information known, Faith Miler can thereafter assist the couple in choosing and placing music within the ceremony. Once the ceremony music has been booked with Suite Occasions, the sponsor will receive a structured format sheet from us as a starting point.

Similarly, in the case of civil ceremonies, interfaith ceremonies, or religious ceremonies with no particular pattern for music placement, the couple should first have conversation with the officiant about options. While there are many fewer musical restrictions on non-religious ceremonies, couples can be creative in adding music between readings, as background to symbolic unity ceremonies, or other moments. Again, Faith Miller of Suite Occasions can assist you with this process.

Will the Suite Occasions group play for my cocktail hour as well?

Certainly! A nice start to the main part of the reception is that segment of the party in which light refreshment is offered and soft background music surrounds the conversation of your guests. Some clients want to continue the musical style of the ceremony into the cocktail hour while others prefer to change it up. For example, a mostly classical music ceremony playlist might transform into a mix of classical and light pop OR all light pop during the cocktail reception. Similarly, in those events kicking off with a festive welcome reception prior to the ceremony, the background music can provide complement or contrast to the ceremony music itself. Speak to Faith Miller for ideas about your options.

What about music for the reception?

Suite Occasions frequently provides the dinner background music for receptions. We will also assist you in planning an abbreviated set of dance music repertoire (i.e. bride and groom's first dance, bride's dance with father, groom's dance with mother, etc.) if your preference is for moderately to slow-paced light popular and 'standard' tunes. We do not provide dance bands in the wider sense, however, so it is often the case that clients cover the dinner and dancing portion of their event with music from a DJ or 'dance band.'

What is the ideal location for an instrumental ensemble at wedding ceremony and reception?

At a wedding ceremony, the musicians can be placed up front and off to the side, or toward the back of the ceremony space, or in a loft space if available. While it is nice for event attendees to be able to see the musicians, one will want to avoid any placement that would leave the musicians as a part of every photograph of the bridal party! Of course, the musicians need to have a clear, unobstructed view of the aisle to be able to properly time the length of music for the processional(s). At a reception, it is best to have the musicians set up out of the flow of guest and wait staff traffic. Thus, placement a bit away from a food station or bar area will be better than immediate adjacency to one or the other. Whether a reception in a specific venue or a ceremony in a place of worship, please consult your site coordinator about any restrictions for set-up.

Will the musicians come to the wedding rehearsal?

Suite Occasions musicians do not come to the wedding rehearsal unless you specifically contract them to do so. Armed with accurate information provided by the couple as to ceremony music selections and composition of the wedding party, Suite Occasions musicians will be set to play for your service.

Will the Suite Occasions musicians perform with the regular organist or cantor at my church or synagogue?

This is a great question! The one to first answer the question is the organist or cantor associated with the church or synagogue. Various places of worship have different policies on this matter, and the couple needs to first learn of the restrictions or flexibilities at the venue. Once the couple has been given the go-ahead by the organist or cantor, Faith Miller will gladly assist in the process of setting up some collaboration. Note: It is advisable to limit the number of pieces for which collaboration between Suite Occasions musicians and non-Suite Occasions musicians will be occurring. The 'free to the client' rehearsal time between the two entities can occur during the 20-25 minute set-up time prior to the contracted start time for the Suite Occasions group. Fitting in rehearsal of more than one or two pieces during this time would be less than ideal.

Will the musicians play instrumental accompaniment for my friend who I have asked to sing at my ceremony?

This matter is certainly a discussable one. Sometimes the couple has a close relative or friend who has offered to sing for the ceremony, and has a particular song in mind. Faith Miller needs to hear about such a plan well in advance of wedding day. The friend-musician needs to provide us with a copy of the song sheet music in the key in which it will be sung, and must make phone or e-mail connection with Faith Miller no less than one month in advance of wedding day in order to sort out any plans on the part of the vocalist to alter the printed version of the song. Again, it is advisable to limit the number of pieces for which collaboration between Suite Occasions musicians and non-Suite Occasions musicians will be occurring. The 'free to the client' rehearsal time between the two entities can occur during the 20-25 minute set-up time prior to the contracted start time for the Suite Occasions group. Fitting in rehearsal of more than one or two pieces during this time would be less than ideal. NOTE: Suite Occasions cannot be held responsible for the performance quality of non-Suite Occasions musicians.

HAPPY PLANNING!