

Practical Advice for Hiring a Classical Guitarist

Here I offer a bit of advice to you as you may have never hired a Guitarist to play for you before and may not be aware of some of the details. There is literally a sea of Guitarist's websites out there these days, some never having played a professional engagement and others with years and years of experience, some whose repertoire lists and style completely different from the next Guitarist. Before listing a few general check points below I will first talk about choosing a Guitarist that fits *your* wedding.

If you want the Guitarist to play mainly classical music at your wedding then make sure this is something he/she does. If you want the Guitarist to sing as well then you might well choose a completely different Guitarist. Some strictly Classical Guitarists do not play pop songs arranged for classical guitar so if this is what you want and there aren't audio clips of pop songs on the website then contact the Guitarist and ask beforehand. I have found in my experience that this is the most common style that is requested - Guests like to recognise melodies.

Some Guitarists can arrange any song you want for solo guitar for some other Guitarists this is simply something they do not or cannot do. Just as some singers compose; Paul McCartney, Bruce Springsteen, Elton John, for example, and some do not; Frank Sinatra, Barbara Streisand, Madonna. It doesn't make them any inferior, it just means that their musical inspiration does not come from that area. This, of course, is only of importance if you want songs played that aren't on the Guitarist's repertoire list (maybe your favourite song for the aisle walk or perhaps a song that your fiancé used to sing to you for the signing of the register). If this is the case then make sure to ask early on if this is something the Guitarist can do (and if it is included in the price).

Arranging popular songs is my speciality. I have released two albums of arrangements and sell my sheet music of these arrangements to Guitarists all over the world every day. There aren't many arrangements of 'The Arrival Of The Queen Of Sheba' for solo guitar as it is normally played by String Quartet. I recorded it for my second album after arranging it for a Bride who said she preferred the sound of a guitar to that of a string quartet but was torn as she really had her heart set on walking down the aisle to 'The Arrival Of The Queen Of Sheba' . Now [my arrangement](#) is the most popular arrangement in the UK and US and Guitarists often learn my arrangement when a Bride requests this piece.

Have a good think about when to have the Guitarist play during the day. [click here](#) for a PDF guide on which sections of wedding day are best suited to musical accompaniment. Top tip: Think about having music while guests are being seated. This is often over-looked but can be one of the best live music moments – Guests don't walk in to a silent room it instantly sets and a beautiful relaxing atmosphere.

The logo for David Buckingham, a guitarist. It features the name "David Buckingham" in a gold, serif font, with "GUITARIST" in a smaller, gold, sans-serif font below it. The text is centered between two stylized, gold-colored guitar pick shapes that curve upwards and outwards.

David Buckingham
GUITARIST

Choosing between good Guitarists is subjective and is purely down to your taste and their style. There are however some more technical points which are objective and which should apply to ALL professional Guitarists regardless of style. Here is a checklist:

1. Make sure the Guitarist has all his/her equipment PAT tested – this is a certificate issued by a professional electrician to certify that the electrical circuits are up to current European safety standards. Many venues now will not allow performers who do not have this certificate to perform.
2. Check the Guitarist has Public Liability Insurance. In the unlikely event of someone being injured by the Musician's equipment you will not be held responsible. Again, a lot of wedding venues will not allow the artist to perform without this.
3. Whether booking through an agency or directly with the Guitarist, be sure to sign a contract with the date, venue address, times of performance(s), dress code, and the agreed fee all clearly stipulated. The Guitarist/ Agent should also sign a copy which you should keep. All Agents and most professional musicians should have a standard sheet ready to print and sign which includes the necessary terms and conditions. This means you have it in writing that the Musician will turn up!
4. Make sure you listen to samples of the Guitarist's playing. These days most Artists have some audio clips on their website. Don't even consider a Guitarist if he/she isn't willing to put their work on display.
5. Bear in mind that an un-amplified guitar can be drowned out by the noise of three or four people talking, so in a room, for example, of fifty or so people, the use of amplification might be required. However, make sure the Guitarist knows the meaning of “gentle amplification” if you are hoping for unobtrusive background music.
6. Make sure you stipulate which sections of your wedding you want the Guitarist to play in (ceremony, drinks reception, wedding breakfast) and where your wedding will take place so as to receive an accurate quote. One Guitarist's basic quote that seems cheap but has yet to have travel, equipment hire and other optional extras added may end up being a lot more expensive than another Guitarist's initial quote that has all of this built in. Many different Musicians have different pricing plans which is fine as long as you know what is included and what you are getting for your money.

