

GUIDE

Planning and Booking Live Music For Events



WILEY
ENTERTAINMENT

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Nothing can replace the excitement of watching talented musicians play your favorite songs and put on an amazing show. Whether you are planning a corporate event, wedding, or fundraiser, it is always important to consider what a great live band would add to your event. Live entertainment can turn a reception into a concert and a bland event into an unforgettable party. You want to find a band that gets people up from their seats and filling the dance floor.

Below is a guide to booking the perfect live music for your event. Because there are so many variables that make your event unique, picking the right band can be tricky. Your theme, venue, audience, and budget all have an effect on which band is right for your event. Here are a few things that you may not have considered that can make or break your event.



FIT THE THEME

Over half of all events have some kind of theme. Whether it is an 80s party, a black tie event, or a casino theme, it is important to find a band that can adapt to your party atmosphere. Themed parties are great because they give your guests something to talk about the second that they walk through the door. If executed correctly, themed parties can be fun and memorable as long as you don't cross the line of corniness. Unfortunately too many party planners make this crucial mistake. To keep this from happening, find a band that plays a variety of music and is not only limited to your theme.

Having the band dressed in appropriate attire to match the theme can be an awesome addition. Just make sure that when it comes to the music that you don't get too specific. The only way to please the largest amount of people is with variety. Even if you are having a tropical themed party, limiting the band to only playing Jimmy Buffet can get very boring, very quickly. Although Jimmy Buffet is the cliché choice for all things tropical, it is not a good choice to play all night. There are plenty of other songs that will fit your theme without constraining your band to playing one artist. Talk to the bandleader to see if they have any good ideas to add to your theme. If they are experienced, they will know exactly how to handle themed parties to make everyone happy.

KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

No matter what kind of event you are planning, your main goal is to keep your audience happy. If you are planning a wedding reception, many times people forget the wide range of ages that will attend. You have to keep grandpa happy along with your 15-year-old cousin. Although this is not an easy task, with the right band, it is do-able. The answer is versatility. You need to find a band that can play recent music along with the classics. There are enough timeless songs from every decade to bring together people of all ages.

Be sure to consider your audience, especially when deciding which band to book. If you are planning a corporate event for young professionals with the average age of 25, it may not be the best idea to hire a band of 50-year-olds that haven't learned a new song since the 80s. Although you want an experienced band, you also want to make sure that they have stayed up on the newest songs and trends so it doesn't look like they are from the wrong decade.

CHECK WITH THE VENUE

Make sure that you talk to your venue before booking a band for your event. Most people don't realize that some venues have limitations when it comes to band size and volume. Due to noise concerns, some venues install a "sound limiter" that can turn off the sound if it reaches a certain



threshold. Bands that use 'in-ear monitors' and digital drums are much better at dealing with sound issues than bands that use older equipment. Make your band aware of any limitations that they might encounter to avoid problems during your event. Also take into consideration how difficult it will be for the band to set up in the venue. Things like, flights of stairs, small hallways, or weather can make it difficult for the band to set up. Tell them all obstacles in advance so that they can figure out how to be prepared for the day of the event. Remember, most high quality bands require two to three hours to set up and sound check once their equipment is in the room. This time is vital to making sure the band will sound great as opposed to muffled, loud or painful.

Also, if the venue recommends a band for you to use, ask them if they are receiving any commission from the band or their agent. If you want an impartial review of a band that has played there before, try to talk to someone that is not making money off of you hiring that band.

MUSIC OR PERFORMANCE?

Many bands can be fine for playing music in the background, but if you are looking for a performance to remember, choose your band wisely. All bands are not created equal. If you are looking for a quality performance, you should pick a band with a charismatic band that looks like they are having fun, while working the crowd. It is even better if the band has both a male and female singer. Having both doubles the variety of music allowing the band to appeal to a wider audience. Having a versatile band with energetic performers is the best way to pack a dance floor.

LIGHTING

Lighting is one of the most overlooked things at a party. Think about your favorite live performance. Most likely the performer wasn't in some dark corner with no lighting. There was probably a full stage with backlighting and even fun colored lights for the dance floor. Very few bands bring their own top-notch lighting, so it is important to ask them if you will need to rent or purchase your own. If they do not have lighting, ask them what kind they recommend using.

BUDGET

If you are spending thousands of dollars on flowers, food, chair covers, and dessert, why would you skimp on the entertainment? The entertainment is the most memorable part of any event. You don't want to put tons of work into

planning an event just to have people leave talking about how horrible the entertainment was. You want people to be on the dance floor until the end of the night, begging the band for more songs. Remember this when figuring out your budget. If your budget for flowers is more than entertainment, you may want to reconsider.

Remember that booking through an agency can add an extra 20-50% increase in price, and will cause you to deal with an unnecessary middleman. One of the easiest ways to save money without skimping on the entertainment is by booking directly through the band.

LOOK FOR VARIETY



Find a band that can play several genres. A band that can play multiple genres exhibits experience and expertise. Guests will not want to hear one type of music all night. An experienced band will be able to mix it up by playing classics from different genres and decades.

Music variety is never a bad thing when it comes to pleasing a big crowd. Request a list of songs or genres from the band and see if they have any videos of their performances. It is also a good idea to give the band a short list of songs you do/don't want them to play in advance. Also if there is a song that you would like them to learn for your event, be sure to give the band adequate time to learn and rehearse the song and expect an extra fee.

QUICK CHECKLIST FOR BOOKING YOUR PERFECT BAND

1. GET TESTIMONIALS

Talk to others who have hired the band to see how their experience went. What would they change? Was the band professional? Did the band take ridiculously long breaks?

2. CHECK OUT YOUR VENUE

Let the bandleader know if the venue has a “sound limiter” or if they will have difficulty moving in their equipment. Also figure out exactly where you want the stage set up.

3. BOOK EARLY

Nothing is worse than finally finding a band that you love, procrastinating on calling, and them already booked for your date. The earlier you call the more likely they will be available.

4. LOOK FOR VARIETY

Find a band that has expertise in several genres. This will ensure enjoyment for guests of all ages and personalities, making your event a huge success.

5. LIGHTING AND SOUND

Check with the band to see if you need to provide your own lighting and sound equipment. If a band costs more, but sets up their own equipment, they may end up being cheaper than a band that makes you rent your own equipment.

6. TALK TO THE BANDLEADER

If you are booking through an agent, make sure that you request to talk to the bandleader. By talking with the bandleader, you will be able to tell quickly if the band will be professional and accommodating.

7. GIVE SHORT LIST OF “MUST PLAY” AND “CAN’T PLAY” SONGS – this will not only make you happy, but it can also give the band a better idea of what other things you might like.

8. BOOK THROUGH THE BAND

If possible, book through the band instead of an agency to save money and hassle.

9. HAVE A GOOD CONTRACT

The contract can include a multiple of important things. It should have everything from the date, time, and location, to how many musicians will be there.

10. ORDER EXTRA FOOD FOR THE BAND

Don't forget to supply food for the band before the event begins. You don't want your performers to pass out on you, so make sure you supply them with food and water before the event begins and throughout the night.

Whether it's your wedding reception or an annual corporate party, you want your guests to have a great time. Booking a live band can be a great way to ensure a memorable night and countless compliments. If you are still in search of a professional and experienced band with a fun flare, check out Wiley Entertainment.



About the Author

CLINT WILEY FOUNDER OF WILEY ENTERTAINMENT

Clint Wiley has been in the entertainment business for over ten years, and knows what it takes to put on a great show. Unlike many other entertainment companies, he makes sure that Wiley Entertainment provides the complete entertainment package. In less than a decade, Clint Wiley has put together an entertainment experience that's touching lives every single week of the year. With over 2,000 events and counting, he looks forward to raising the bar continually.