
The Wedding Music Planning Guide.

Get the soundtrack to your day right — without the stress.

A short, practical guide from Matt Rooney DJ

MATT ROONEY DJ

www.mattrooneydj.co.uk · 0161 524 0068 · mattrooneydj@gmail.com

When to decide what.

Music decisions land at different times. Spread them out and none of them feel big.

9–12 months out. Book your entertainment — good DJs take one event per date, and peak Saturdays and December go first. All you need at this stage is the date and the venue.

3–6 months out. Start a shared playlist or notes file. Every time a song makes you both smile, add it. No pressure to organise it yet — you are just collecting.

6–8 weeks out. Turn the collection into three short lists: must-plays, would-be-nices, and do-not-plays. Confirm timings with your venue — meal end, evening guests arriving, last orders.

2 weeks out. Lock the key songs: first dance, entrance music if you want it, and the last song of the night. Share final timings with your DJ and venue.

On the day. Nothing. If you have done the above, your only job is to dance.

With Matt, all of this lives in your own online planning portal — add songs at midnight from the sofa and it lands with him instantly, nothing lost in email chains.

Building the playlist.

The three lists that actually matter.

Must-plays (10–15 songs). The non-negotiables. Keep this list short enough that every song on it genuinely matters — a floor full of your absolute favourites beats two hours of maybes.

Do-not-plays (as long as you like). Just as important. An ex's song, an overplayed track you cannot stand, a genre that empties your particular crowd — a good DJ treats this list as law.

Would-be-nices. Everything else you have collected. Your DJ blends these with what the room responds to on the night.

A note on guest requests

Requests keep guests invested — but the do-not-play list and the read of the room come first. Tell your DJ how you want them handled: take them all, filter them, or politely park them. There is no wrong answer; there is only *your* answer.

Trust the room

The best dance floors are planned loosely and read closely. A fixed minute-by-minute setlist cannot see who is actually dancing. Give your DJ the ingredients and the freedom to cook.

The key moments.

A handful of songs carry the emotional weight of the day. Choose these first.

The first dance. Pick something that means something — not something that photographs well. If a full song feels long, your DJ can fade it or invite everyone to join partway. Practise nothing; sway with intent.

Entrances. Ceremony, wedding breakfast, evening reception — each is a chance for a moment. One confident song choice per entrance is worth ten decorations.

The cake, the toss, the sparkler exit. If it is scheduled, it deserves a soundtrack. Thirty seconds of the right track turns admin into a memory.

The last song. Decide it now, together. It is the final note of your wedding day, everyone arm in arm — do not leave it to chance. Big singalongs beat slow burners; you want the room loud, not reaching for coats early.

Undecided on any of these? That is normal — a good DJ will shortlist options with you based on your taste, not push a stock answer.

Questions to ask any DJ.

Five minutes of asking saves months of hoping. Any professional will welcome these.

- **Will you personally be our DJ?** Agencies can send whoever is free. Book direct and the person you plan with is the person on the decks.
- **Are you insured, and is your kit PAT tested?** Most venues require both before a supplier can set up. Ask for certificates — they should appear without fuss.
- **What exactly is included?** Sound, lighting, setup time, hosting and announcements — get it in writing so the quote you compare is the service you get.
- **How do we plan the music with you?** Email chains lose things. Look for a proper system — you should be able to add songs and timings whenever they occur to you.
- **What happens if something breaks?** Professionals carry backup equipment and plan for the worst so you never notice it.

The short checklist.

- Date and venue booked with your DJ — confirmed in writing, deposit paid securely
- Must-play, do-not-play and would-be-nice lists started
- Venue timings confirmed and shared
- First dance and last song chosen together
- Insurance and PAT certificates sent to your venue

Planning a North West wedding?

Matt Rooney is a wedding and events DJ based in Bolton, playing 30+ venues across Manchester, Lancashire, Cheshire and Merseyside. Evening packages from £500, full-day hosting from £750 — booked direct, fully insured, with your own online planning portal included.

www.mattrooneydj.co.uk · 0161 524 0068 · mattrooneydj@gmail.com