

THE BAND IS BACK

A lot of couples rely exclusively on DJs to score their big day, but if you're looking for something a bit grander, consider trading in the turntables for a horn section. We asked Chicago's most in-demand bandleaders for the inside information on scheduling and musical styles—plus what tunes are sure to get your guests dancing. Here, all you need to know to bring in the band.

By Jenny Berg



Don Cagen, Cagen Music

His Bands Don Cagen Orchestra, Incognito, Big Beat, Orchestra Chicago

On the Playlist Cagen sits down with couples to help them pick personalized tunes for all of the wedding's special moments. He's been known to position rock violinists on the dance floor during dinner or have vocalists perform an acoustic set. His orchestras also offer surprise "pop-up" recessional music in which musicians and singers are seated among the guests, and they pop up and perform.

On the Lineup "Choose one company to provide the music for the entire day, and trust the bandleader to recommend the best talent for each part of the wedding and celebration," Cagen says.

When to Book "Our clients often plan the date around our availability, so book as soon as possible after getting engaged," Cagen advises.

Top Note "Dance early and often!" Cagen says. "Our clients have music at a very high priority and often want the bride and groom's dance at the beginning of dinner, right upon their introduction, so dinner and dancing are integrated rather than separate."

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DON CAGEN PHOTO BY JENNIFER MORDINI