ELECTRIC IDOLS

Guide to Booking a Wedding Band

“Everything you need to know about booking a professional band for your big day!”

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Introduction

We're a professional band for hire from Yorkshire and **we perform at weddings and parties all across the UK**. We're lucky enough to have built up a great deal of experience over the years, so **we put together this handy little guide to help anyone booking a band for the first time**!

Around 85% of our gigs are weddings

We're almost exclusively a wedding band, in fact!

We generally see more weddings than photographers, more than florists, more than most wedding venues even. We see the good (and the bad!) that happens on the big day, so we thought it was time to write some of it down to help make your wedding a beautifully crafted masterpiece of matrimonial perfection!

We can only really help with the evening part of your day, but we guarantee that if you put this guide into action, well, there's not much more you can do to make sure things go to plan...

"The music was just out of this world.. & had us dancing all night... A massive bonus for us was they learned our first dance song and for us made it truly special!"

Charelle and Danny - Treyarnon Bay, Cornwall

What Do I Ask My Venue?

I Is there enough space?

A 5-piece band like us need a sturdy, even area of **4.5m (width) by 3.5m (depth)** to perform, but we might be able to to squeeze into a smaller space than that, so if your venue is particularly small, feel free to get in touch and we'll let you know if we'll be able to perform there.

The bigger the better.

It's better for a band to have a bit of space to perform. For us, a space of 6m x 4.5m or larger would be great, but we don't consider it necessary.

II Is there enough power?

An indoor wedding venue is typically going to be able to cover a band's power requirements quite easily. We need at least two standard plug sockets and that's all really. However if you're getting married in a marquee or tipi, the power is likely going to be coming from a generator, and under those circumstances it's best to check that they can cover the amount of power a band will draw, which is around **7 kW (8.75 kVa)** for us.

Power requirements.

We generally need around 7 kW (8.75 kVa) to power our sound and lighting systems and other equipment.

III Is there a sound limiter?

Around 1 in 5 wedding venues have a sound limiter installed at their premises that restricts the volume a band can play at. It works by temporarily cutting power to the band's equipment when they play over a certain decibel level, which is sometimes set very low by the venue.

Sound limiters are usually set somewhere between 80 db and 95 db. In our experience, it becomes difficult to perform at a volume lower than 95 db. At the lower end of that threshold it would be impossible for any band to perform live.

It's a good idea to find out if your venue has a sound limiter installed, and what level it's set to. If there is one, let us know and we'll get in touch with your venue and find out if we'll be able to perform there.

A handy decibel guide:

65 db – Conversation
70 db – Shower
75 db – Washing machine
80 db – Vacuum cleaner
85 db – City traffic
90 db – Lawn mower
100 db - Motorcycle
100-105 db – Our typical unrestrained volume
110 db – Rock concert
120 db – Jackhammer

Timings

It normally takes a band around an hour to setup and sound-check their equipment. They'll then typically need 15-20 minutes before they start performing to get changed and warm up their voices etc. (see below for our recommended set times).

Arrival time

Bands usually aim to arrive to events at 6pm, but for us this is totally flexible depending on what fits best with your day. We're able to arrive as early as you need (but we do charge a small hourly fee to cover the extra time required from our musicians if it's before 5pm) and we can arrive as late as you'd like, however we recommend this is no later than an hour and 30 minutes before our first set.

Set times

If you're not sure when to have your band play, here are our standard recommended set times:

- First set: 8:30pm
- Second set: 10:30pm

The only time we'd recommend a different schedule is if you're having a wedding in the height of summer and you're planning for your guests to be outside in the late afternoon/evening. Not many people will want to dance in a stuffy room when the sun is blazing down outside and they've got a nice cold drink in their hand – and rightly so! We recommend starting as late as possible in this situation - something like the following:

- First set: 9:15pm
- Second set: 11pm

Set lengths – 2 x 60 minutes or 3 x 40 minutes?

We always recommend having 2 x 60 minute sets whenever possible. We find this flows much better during an evening than 3 x 40 minute sets, which typically creates a stop-start vibe that can make it more difficult to fill the dance floor. We only recommend 3 x 40 minute sets if you're working around other activities.

Avoid the buffet

Our biggest recommendation is to avoid having the band performing when the buffet comes out. We find that very few people (if any) will want to dance for around 45 minutes after the buffet is served. Our advice is to have the buffet at the end of the band's first set (or an hour before if the sets are very late).

Song Requests

A lot of bands are happy for you to choose which songs you'd like them to play from their set list, including us. **We can also learn one new song free of charge for your wedding**. This could be your first dance or a song that means something special to you and your friends or family.

Choosing Songs for the Band

When it comes to our set list, we tend to say if you select up to 25 songs, that will give us a little wiggle room to make sure the sets flow well. If you don't want to choose that many, simply select a few songs you definitely want, and a few you definitely don't, and we'll write the set list accordingly. A lot of bands differ in this area though, so if we had to make a recommendation, we'd have to say it's best to let the band choose the songs. They see how well they go down night after night, so it makes sense that they know which ones work best!

Choosing Songs for the DJ Set

Pre-Wedding Requests

When it comes to our DJ Package, you can select as many songs as you'd like before your wedding and we'll play as many as we can fit in on the night!

Guest Requests

The same as your pre-wedding requests, we're happy to take requests from your guests on the night. Don't worry though, we'll try to avoid requests for the Macarena or YMCA unless they come with your direct approval!

"You were awesome and complimented our day perfectly. The song choices, performance and interaction with the crowd were amazing."

Greg and Natalie Drury, Lake District

Band Requirements

Most wedding bands don't tend to have a rider as such - no bowls of green M&Ms or anything like that! But **there are just a couple of things we ask for that hopefully aren't too much trouble** that will help us perform without any hiccups on the night.

Refreshments

Your band will normally request a meal and soft drinks/water to be made available during the night. This is standard practice for professional groups as they're often away from home for more than 12 hours (that's how long it takes us to do an average gig).

For us, access to the buffet and a small bar tab for soft-drinks is more than generous when it comes to refreshments, which is always very much appreciated during a long night of performing!

If either of these items cause any problems please let us know - we're happy to try and work around them whenever we can!

Changing Room

Your band will need a dry, secure space to get changed and leave some personal items/equipment in during your wedding. The singers in the band will also need to warm-up their voices by making some slightly strange noises, so it's best to keep this behind closed doors or your guests might think a small animal is being sacrificed!

Wedding venues usually have a spare hotel/conference room or other area they let bands use during the evening. The only thing we personally avoid are public areas like kitchens and toilets. We typically do a full change of clothes before and after each set so somewhere better suited is needed.

If you're getting married in a marquee, a full height tent or something similar is no problem for us when there's nothing else available.

Booking and Payment

All wedding bands receive bookings in different ways, so this page a little more specific to us. **The first thing you'll need is a quote from our website.** We can then email you with prices and other information. **And you can of course ask us as many questions as you like by dropping us a reply**!

How to Book

When you get a quote on our website, you'll receive a link to our booking form within our reply. Simply head over to the form and fill in the necessary details. You'll also be able to pay your booking fee here, which is just 20% of the total (this is deducted from your balance).

Paying Your Balance

Your balance isn't due until 2 weeks before your wedding. We'll get in touch with you around a month before this to go through a few final details and raise a final balance invoice. You'll be able to pay the rest of your fee at this point.

Payment Methods

You can pay your booking fee and/or balance by bank transfer or cheque. You'll receive an email from us to confirm we've received your payment, usually within 72 hours.

"On the night I didn't even notice you setting up, you were so discreet and professional. The band came over to me and introduced themselves at the start of the night and they were so friendly and lovely."

Mikhaila and Mark, Mount Pleasant Hotel, Doncaster

Final Thoughts

Thanks for reading through our guide! **Hopefully it's been of some help if you've never booked a band before** (which, let's face it, is most of us!). You don't have to follow it down to a tee of course, but it's always there as a handy resource! And here are a few final thoughts...

First Dance

The first dance is a great time to kick the evening off with a bang, so we recommend having your first dance at the beginning of the band's first set. It's a great opener and it usually fills the dance floor right off the bat!

PLI and PAT Certificates

Your venue will require public liability insurance up to £5million and a PAT certificate from all wedding suppliers. We can send you both of these at any point so just let us know if you need them or if you'd like us to forward them to your venue.

Delays

In our experience, quite a large proportion of weddings run behind schedule. It's certainly not a bad thing that your wedding party have so many nice (or embarrassing) things to say about you in their speeches that they can run on a bit (there are a few other things that can send timings a bit wonky too) but ultimately these delays can lead to the band's first set being delayed until the buffet is due out, which might kill that wonderful dance floor vibe. It's always useful to check with your venue in advance if they could delay the buffet in such a scenario until the band have finished their first set.

Unloading Equipment

It can be a good idea to check that your band can haul their equipment to the performance area without too much trouble. They'll have a large van load of gear and some of it's astonishingly heavy, so the route to unload should ideally be no more than 50 metres. They should still be able to unload if it's an really long trip, but it's useful to know beforehand so they can come extra prepared if so!

Sound Check

It generally takes a band 2-3 minutes to sound-check, but during that time they can be quite loud as they're adjusting their levels. It's best to do this away from guests if possible, but don't worry, we find that guests generally don't mind (sometimes we even get a clap at the end!).