

Hi there,

The greatest wedding booze I've ever seen was at Alexa and Dane's reception at the Art Institute of Chicago. This was way back in 2012. This booze was epic. It was unforgettable.

It didn't look like much.

I don't know how it tasted, either – I was playing with the pop strings trio, and Backthird performers don't drink while we're working.

I don't even remember if this booze was whiskey or bourbon or what. I just know it was incredible. **Because it had a story to it.**

This booze was home-made by Alexa's grandfather right after she was born. He'd made it then to serve today, on his granddaughter's wedding day, which turned out to be **33 years later**.

That's some finely aged, hand-crafted happy-drink.

How do I know this story? Because Alexa's DJ, Derek, stood up to welcome guests and said, "We'd like to tell you something special about the booze you're about to taste." And then **he handed the microphone to Alexa's grandfather.**

## **Weird takes work**

That's how you do "weird" at your wedding. That's how you personalize in the best, most memorable way.

And that's how your entertainment company helps. You bring the weird; we make it work. We help you pour your quirky self into a wedding plan so everybody else gets to enjoy it with you.

This email is the first in a series explaining how "weird" happens at my company, [Backthird Entertainment](#). Think of the next week like a **mini-course in wedding entertainment**: You'll get one 2-minute email every day for a week.

In that time, you'll learn how we plan receptions that are quirky enough to be awesome, without feeling so "out there" that your guests can't join in the fun.

And that should help you understand your own wedding a little more – whether or not you choose to hire a Backthird DJ to be part of it.

Here's what we'll cover:

- Finding your DJ style
- Do you need live music?
- Wedding sound and lighting
- Basics of wedding band and DJ cost
- How to plan your agenda and pick your music

If you that sounds like more info than you need, skip the lessons and just [talk to an Account Manager](#). It's our job to work out the above stuff FOR you; give us 15 minutes on the phone and you'll get an entertainment plan customized just for you. All you need to know is your wedding date and location.

Catch you tomorrow, when we'll learn **how to find your DJ style**. 'Til then –



Benjie Hughes

Backthird Entertainment

More wedding stories  
[video]

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Backthird Entertainment 127 S. First St., Suite 102 Geneva, IL 60134

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Hi there,

So which kind of DJ are you interested in: A super-cheesy DJ? Somebody who uses guilt and bullying to get your guests onto the dance floor? Or are you more of a “disorganized mumblor” type of couple?

I kid, I kid. **Those were the kinds of DJs I wanted to avoid** at my own wedding, too – and they’re a big reason we [train](#) our own DJs pretty obsessively before we certify them to do weddings as part of Backthird Entertainment.

But even if you know you’re going to work with a **professional DJ**, it can be even nicer to work with **the right DJ**.

## What's your DJ style?

That’s part of your [Account Manager's job](#) at Backthird Entertainment. He or she will jump on the phone with you before you book to ask a couple basic questions about your personal taste and style. Then, your AM will assign the Backthird DJ for your wedding who’s the best possible fit.

How do we know? Here are the kinds of things we’ll ask about:

**1. What’s your reception style?** When it comes to your party agenda, some couples are “traditional.” Others are “minimal.” And still others are “unique.”

You can learn which you are [in this article](#). You might even be a mix!

**2. What’s your dance party style?** If you’ve thought about it, you probably want your DJ to play a variety of dance music – after all, the songs your grandparents will love aren’t the same as the ones your younger cousin wants to hear.

But sometimes it pays to get a little more specific: Is there a certain genre of music that’s especially important? Do you want songs guests are guaranteed to know, or are you more of a “deep cuts” kind of couple? [This post](#) will help you think about your dance party style.

You don’t have to know your style yet – and any of our DJs is equipped to work in any way you’ll need us to. But if you DO feel strongly about one approach, we’ll try to match you with a Backthird DJ who ALREADY loves to party like you love to party.

## Beyond the DJ

Your DJ will steer your reception and play most dance music – but what about cocktails and dinner? If you really want to mix things up, live music is an option for those times. Tomorrow, we'll talk about **how to combine live music with a DJ**.

'til then, keep on keepin' weird –



Benjie Hughes

Founder

Backthird Entertainment

PS – If you're ready for your own DJ match, [use this form](#) to set up a call with your Account Manager. It takes about 15 minutes on the phone for us to put a plan together for your own Chicago-area wedding.

[What's your DJ style?](#)

[Plan your wedding now](#)

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Hi there,

Why does anyone watch all the weirdos on YouTube?

Think about it: Most of us have big-budget movies and TV shows a few clicks away at almost any time these days. And yet... there's something so compelling about YouTube, where we can watch ordinary people playing with puppets, telling jokes, cooking meals or doing whatever else it is they do.

I think a lot of the attraction is the sense that YouTube creators are **so real**. These are actual people, right in front of us, doing what they love without a lot of editing or CGI. This is **authentic**.

## No faking

Add professionalism, and **that's the attraction of live music** at your wedding too. DJs are great for directing agendas and packing your dance floor, but if you want something special during cocktails or dinner, there's nothing quite like real musicians making music from scratch right in front of you.

At least, that's what I think. About half of Backthird wedding couples feel the same – that's how many book live music at their wedding along with a DJ.

If you think live music is for you, here are 3 questions to consider:

**1. What kind of music?** Check out a [video of our pop strings groups](#), and [one from our jazz groups](#). For pure class, you can't beat jazz – but if your style's a little more offbeat, pop strings might hit the spot. There's no wrong answer here.

**2. What part of the day?** You can include live music for your ceremony, cocktail time or dinner – even for all three. Different couples prioritize different parts of the day. [This breakdown of the differences between cocktails and dinner](#) is a good place to start.

**3. How many players?** With Backthird you can book five musicians, or just one – or anywhere between. You could even vary your ensemble size throughout the party, so the sound is always changing for your guests. [Here are a 5 ideas](#) for how to mix it up.

## Don't know? Don't worry.

Don't fret if you're not sure about your answers to these questions. There are SO many ways to do live music at your wedding – which is why if you go that route, your party won't

be quite like any other. But it also means the best way to navigate these questions is with a little expert help!

If you're ready to talk through the above with an Account Manager, [use this form](#) to request a meeting. In a short phone call, we can get to know you well enough to write a couple custom options you'll be guaranteed to like.

Benjie



Benjie Hughes

Founder

Backthird Entertainment

5 ways to combine  
DJs and live music

Plan your wedding now

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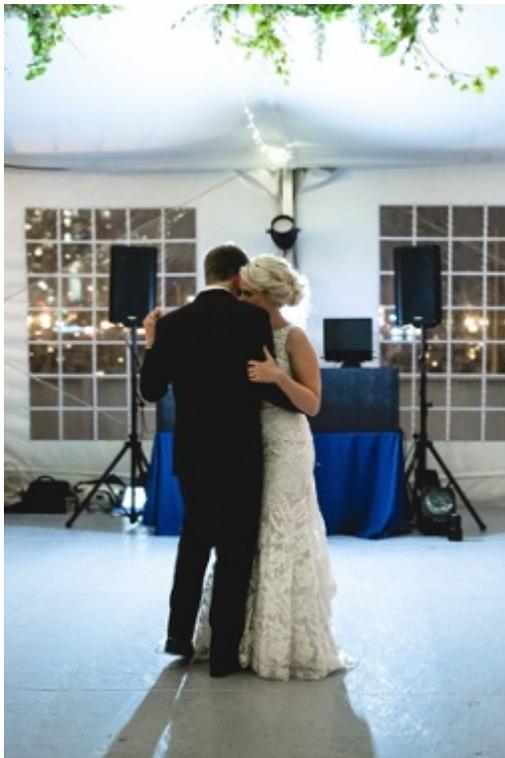
Hey there,

### **It's none of your business what kind of speakers your DJ is using.**

I don't mean you shouldn't care – we list our standard setup at the [bottom of this webpage](#) for those who do. I just mean that it's literally not your job to sweat equipment. It's my team's job. Your audio is OUR business.

Because you've already got enough to do, Backthird Account Managers take a simple approach to sound and lighting: We find out what you NEED and we always, always include that. Then, we ask you what you WANT and add that in as well.

### **3 Questions We Ask**



Here's what we'll need to know to plan your wedding setup:

**1. How many rooms** is your reception in, and how are those rooms used? If you're holding a cocktail reception, dinner, toasts and dancing all in one big space, that's a pretty simple setup. If you're moving into different spaces for each, that's a little more complex.

If you don't know, don't worry – we've worked at a lot of Chicago-area venues in the last decade. Chances are, we already know what it takes to work at your wedding venue.

**2. Will you need ceremony sound?** If you're hiring us for your wedding ceremony, you might need amplification for that part as well – or you might not. Again, we'll probably know the answer

even if you don't – but [this article](#) will tell you how we think it through.

**3. Are you interested in uplights?** Whether or not you do uplighting at your wedding is entirely your call – your party will work fine without it (even if it might not look as cool).

[Here are 3 reasons](#) you might want to book uplighting - and 3 reasons you might not!

## Needs and Wants

In general, your sound setup is **essential** – the party just won't work if folks can't hear what's going on! Uplighting, on the other hand, is **optional**: Your party will work fine without it, but it will definitely have a different feel.

If you're wondering how all this affects your final entertainment cost, you're not alone! We ALL have a budget (even DJ companies!). Tomorrow I'll explain some basics of how wedding entertainment cost is calculated.

In the meantime, you can [connect with an Account Manager](#) to get an exact cost – or a couple different options – for your wedding day. It takes about 15 minutes on the phone to customize a plan for you.



Benjie Hughes

Founder

Backthird Entertainment

[Does my wedding need uplighting?](#)

[Plan your wedding now](#)

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Hi there,

My past few emails have covered lots of wedding entertainment basics – from DJs, to live music, to sound and lighting needs. Today, I thought we'd put it all together and see **how your entertainment cost is calculated**.

## 5 questions for cost

There are five factors we use to find your total wedding cost at Backthird Entertainment:

**1. How long's the wedding?** Most receptions in the Chicago area last for between 5 and 6 hours. But if yours is a little shorter or longer – or if you want to hire us for your ceremony, too – your costs may vary from our standard rate.

**2. How many rooms?** A party in more than one space requires more than one sound system.

**3. How many live musicians, and for how long?** Your DJ will be present for your WHOLE reception, but musician costs depend on how much live music you opt for. There are a lot of options here!

**4. What extra sound or light is needed?** Uplighting is the most common “extra.” If your guest list is more than 300 people, we'll add extra sound support as well.

**5. Is the wedding downtown?** Parties in downtown Chicago are the bomb – but it takes a little extra time and muscle for performers to load in and park at these locations.

## So many choices...

Obviously, combining everything above leads to a LOT of different possibilities. Backthird DJ weddings typically book around the **\$1500** mark, while weddings with live music AND a DJ range from **\$2500 to \$4000** and up.

You'll find some more specifics on [our pricing page](#), but the best way to know your actual wedding rate is to [talk with an Account Manager](#). It takes just 15 minutes on the phone with you to write up several plans and rates that match your wedding.

Hiring your DJ and other vendors is a big step – but most important part is yet to come. Tomorrow, I'll show you how you actually PLAN your wedding and make song requests.

Benjie Hughes



Founder

Backthird Entertainment

[See Pricing Options](#)

[Plan your wedding now](#)

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Hi there,

You're a little strange. Your relationship's a little strange. Your music taste's a little strange.

At least, I hope so.

None of us is normal – not really. And part of the point of the point of throwing a massive party on your wedding day is that's it's a big celebration of the things that make the two of you the two of you – your roots and traditions, your quirks and your passions.

So how's that happen? After you BOOK your wedding entertainment, how do you MAKE your wedding entertainment?

In this email, **I'll show you how we plan your wedding entertainment** - step by step, in detail, with pictures. (If this email is a little hard to read with all the pictures, [try the web version](#) instead.)

## **1. Complete your online planners.**

About a week after we get your contract, your Account Manager will send you your very own login to the Backthird website. You'll go to [backthirdplanning.com](http://backthirdplanning.com), which looks like this:



### Site Logon

Username

Password

Log On

Remember Logon Info?  
[Forgot your password?](#)

That's my name up there, but we'll give you your own ID after you book. Then you'll have access to the website up until **one month before the wedding**.

On the site, you'll have a place to write reception events and songs, like this:

dinner		
background music genre:	DJ's choice ▾	
room name:	Terzo Piano	
your wedding party's entrance:	You Are The Best Thing - Ray LaMontagne	
your entrance (if different):	same	
cake cutting:	same	
When will you cut your cake?	before dinner ▾	
special toasts		
	name of speaker	relationship to me
first toast:	Bail Organa	bride's father
second toast:	Luke Skywalker	best man
third toast:		
fourth toast:		
fifth toast:		
When would you like toasts to be made?	first toast before dinner, others between courses ▾	
prayer/blessing (if desired):	N/A	
notes about dinner:		

And you'll have another section to make song requests for open dancing, like this:

## Song Requests

Planning  
Options

### Must Play

- |                                     |                                     |                 |                          |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Bon Jovi        | Livin' on a Prayer       |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Bruno Mars      | uptown funk              |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Lil John        | Turn Down for What       |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Michael Jackson | The Way You Make Me Feel |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | the Beatles     | Twist and Shout          |

Total Added: 5 Estimated Playing Time: 17.5 minutes

### Play if Possible

- |                                     |                                     |                           |                     |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Bel Biv Devoe             | Poison              |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Blue Swede                | Hooked on a Feeling |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Capital Cities            | Safe & Sound        |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | DJ Got Us Fallin' in Love | Usher               |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Flo Rida                  | Low                 |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Justin Timberlake         | Suit & Tie          |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Peter Gabriel             | In Your Eyes        |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Rob Base                  | It Takes Two        |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Simon & Garfunkel         | Cecilia             |

Total Added: 9 Estimated Playing Time: 31.5 minutes

### Do Not Play

- |                                     |                                     |              |                  |                                    |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------|------------------|------------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Miley Cyrus  | Party in the USA | please do not play ANY Miley Cyrus |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Robin Thicke | Blurred Lines    |                                    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Taylor Swift | shake it off     |                                    |

Total Added: 3 Estimated Playing Time: 10.5 minutes

You can get very specific with your online plans, or you can keep it super simple. If there's something you don't know or don't care about, leave it blank – your DJ will ask you about it later if it's that important.

You've got until **one month before the wedding** to write what you want in these online plans; then we lock you out so there's no chance of getting signals crossed while your DJ downloads your plans. Once he does, it'll be time to...

## 2. Meet with your DJ.

About a month before the big event, we'll get you direct contact info for your Backthird DJ and remind you that it's time to meet. You can do this by phone or face to face – it's up to you.

Your DJ will show you a rough agenda when you meet, based on the plans submitted so far. It might look like this:

## Han & Leia's Wedding Reception

DDMMYY

Reception start: 6pm

Final Version? YES

<u>Time (approx)</u>	<u>Event</u>
1. 5:45 pm	ceremony prelude music begins in Griffin Court
2. 6:00pm	Ceremony – string duet <b>Wireless handheld mic (no stand) for officiant &amp; readers</b>
3. 6:30pm	Cocktail Hour at other side of Griffin Court – Twin Strings trio
4. 7:30pm	guests move to <u>Terzo</u> Piano room
5. 7:40pm	Grand Entrances (see separate intro sheet)
6. 7:45pm	Cake Cutting – “You Are the Best Thing” continues <i>Announce cake cutting but no hullabaloo!</i>
7. 7:50pm	Welcome Toast by FOB Bail <u>Organa</u> (“BAIL Or-GON-uh”)
8. 7:55pm	Dinner (Music style: DJ's choice)
9. After salad course	Toast by Luke Skywalker (Best Man)
10.9:10pm	First Dance “Dancing in the Moonlight” (King Harvest) <i>Can fade early if appropriate...</i>
11.9:15pm	combined Father/Daughter Dance & Mother/Son Dance – “Stand by Me” (Ben E King) <i>Leia and her father begin dance. Han and his mother to join about 1:30.</i>

By the way, if your name is Han or Leia and your best man is called Luke Skywalker, I really apologize for these examples. We were trying to use names that didn't belong to real couples on these images. And also, we were nerding it up a little.

Together, you'll review your DJ's plan-so-far and you'll make changes. Your DJ might ask you questions about things that weren't clear, or she might have some suggestions for how something you wrote down can be improved or tweaked. She's definitely going to want to ask you questions like, “You said not to play The Imperial March from Star Wars, but what if a ton of people ask for it? Should I go with what's requested, or stick with your plans?”

This meeting helps your DJ get to know you well enough to represent you at the wedding. Lots of stuff is going to come up behind the scenes at your reception – most of which you'll never know about. But the better your DJ knows you, the more equipped she'll be to say, “I know just what Han and Leia would want me to do in this situation.”

Or whatever your name is.

### 3. It's even simpler with live music.

If you booked live ceremony music, you'll fill out a separate planner with your ceremony song requests:

any, and if we don't already know it, we'll arrange it for you. There's an additional cost for this service, and not every song works well for a pop string ensemble. Your lead musician can advise you when you speak so you can make a final decision about custom arrangements.

Your lead musician will call you about 3 weeks before the wedding to review things personally and send you a final agenda. Not sure what music you want? You can always wait and discuss everything in person then.

prelude style

soundtrack ▼

	song title and artist	notes
your attendants' processional song:	Theme from Anne of Green Gables	
your processional song:	Canon in D - Pachelbel	
interlude song:	At Last - Etta James	
recessional song:	Viva la Vida - Coldplay	

postlude style

popular (upbeat) ▼

other notes

Our ringbearer is a wookiee.

...and then your lead musician will call you before the wedding to review.

This review happens about the same time as your DJ meeting, but it's simple enough that you won't need to meet in person. We'll have a written agenda:

# Han & Leia || EVENT DATE

start time: 5:00 PM

officiant: Mon Mothma

location: Coruscant Cathedral

coordinator: Akbar Nona Events

cue		song title	notes
	prelude	soundtracks	
ceremony start			
	processional	Theme from "Anne of Green Gables"	
	bride's entrance	"Canon in D"	
	interlude	"At Last"	
	recessional	"Viva la Vida"	
ceremony end			
	postlude	upbeat pop music	

...and we'll ask you questions and take notes, so you can clarify things like "our ringbearer is a wookiee, and we're not sure if he'll run really fast down the aisle or if he'll be crying too hard."

Our musicians are flexible, but it still helps to know these things.

If you've booked live music for your cocktail or dinner time, **there's nothing to fill out.** Your musician will call you to confirm details and find out if there's anything in our online song lists you absolutely do not want to hear. Otherwise, we're just going to play as much great music as time allows.

## 4. We've got your back.

All of this is optional, so if you want to go crazy you can - but if you want to leave your plans blank and tell your DJ, "do what you think is best," that's ok too. Our main goal is to **not stress you out.**

Some entertainment companies like to pepper you with questions the last week before your wedding, but we prefer that everything above is done by then! That means you don't have to give us a second thought while you're doing last-minute work, picking up family at the airport or

whatever else comes up that final busy week before your wedding. We'll be ready, we'll do our own homework, and we'll make sure that things go as planned.

At the same time, if you need us or just want to hear a friendly voice – you'll have your DJ's cell phone number, and [your Account Manager](#) is in the office for you 5 days a week.

Enjoy this incredible chunk of your life – it flies by fast, and it's worth savoring.



Benjie Hughes

Founder

Backthird Entertainment

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Hey there,

**5 months, 8 months, and 5 months.**

Those are the average lead times at which couples book 3 different wedding services with us. I'm just not going to spoil the surprise and tell you WHICH services – you'll have to find that out in [the article here](#).

Whether you're looking to include live music at your wedding, go crazy with the uplighting, or let your DJ handle everything – it pays to book early. Plus, it leaves you more time to think about events and song requests.

You know, the stuff that makes your wedding just exactly weird enough.

This is the **last email you'll get from me** for a bit. If you're ready to talk with an Account Manager and get your own wedding plans and rates together, [fill out this form](#)– it takes as little as 15 minutes on the phone with a fellow human to find out what your wedding might look like with Backthird.

If not, no worries. I hope you've found this email series helpful – and if there's anything I can do for you in the future, you know where to find me.

Here's hoping your wedding is **happy made easy** –



Benjie Hughes

Founder

Backthird Entertainment

[How early should I book?](#)

[Plan your wedding now](#)

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Hi there,

I hope you found my mini-series about planning wedding music helpful! If you missed it, check your inbox – you should have a backlog of sweet, sweet emails from me just waiting to make your day brighter and your wedding planning easier.

There's one tip I forgot to mention in that series, so I thought I'd throw it in now: **You must zombie-proof your wedding.**

[Here's one way](#) to get that done.

It's a million to one that we'll actually have some kind of apocalyptic undead outbreak on your nuptial day, but I say better safe than sorry.

If there's anything else my team or I can do for you, just [say the word](#).



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[Zombie-proof your wedding](#)

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