

“Music Vs. Film”

by Peter Merry

We have all looked through wedding magazines from time to time in an effort to see how brides are being informed (or misinformed) about our services. But have you ever seen an article in any of those magazines that is informing brides on how to hire film? You won't ever find such an article, because they're not informing brides about film, they're informing them about hiring photographers. But yet, you can easily find a plethora of articles that are informing brides about how to hire music. What's the difference?

Film is just a tool that photographers use to capture the memories of a wedding day. In the same way, music is just a tool that we use to create the memorable moments that the photographer will be trying to capture. So why do the magazines promote hiring photographers instead of film while educating brides about hiring music instead of entertainment? I can think of several reasons.

We promote it.

We allow it.

We sustain it.

How do we promote it? A large number of Mobile DJ's are still marketing and selling themselves primarily as music. But it is safe bet that most of them also bring a microphone for announcements, regardless of how general or personalized those announcements may be. A large majority of them probably also do some planning, whether they are just calling to find out in advance what the First Dance song will be, or whether they are actually creating a smooth-flowing reception agenda script with their clients. Most of them are helping to direct the flow of the reception, whether they are using the mic to ask everyone to find the Father of the Bride for the Father/Daughter Dance, or they are constantly communicating behind the scenes with the VIPs and the other vendors. No matter how much or how little of these additional services you currently provide, these services are much more than just music, they are the necessary components for delivering entertainment.

How do we allow it? We allow it when we sit back and wait for someone else to fix this identity crisis for us without helping to bring about the necessary change. Photographers are promoted as photographers, and not just film, because they are widely recognized as professionals with unique skills, talents and a range of personal styles. Mobile DJ's should also be recognized as professionals with unique skills, talents and a range of personal styles. But until we are all working together in an organized manner to change this mis-perception, our chances for successfully effecting change will be limited. If you are not already a member of the ADJA, join with us and help us to make this change happen. If you are already an ADJA member, then get involved, help start a local chapter, or run for a position on the national board of directors.

How do we sustain it? By feeding the beast. If you pay to advertise in any of the wedding publications that are still telling brides that we are just a commodity called music instead of promoting us as the uniquely personalized entertainment services that we truly are, you should be asking yourself “Why?” By paying to advertise in a forum where your services are not being properly promoted or represented, you are

giving them permission to do more of the same. Your advertising dollars have value and power. Brian Graham of Tennessee understood this when used his advertising dollars to convince a local wedding publication to call the ADJA Office for accurate information about our industry. The resulting article in the publication was focused on hiring entertainment, not just music, and Brian got a much better value for his advertising dollars.

In conclusion, the ADJA is committed to changing the public's perceptions about our services, but we need your help to make this change happen. We look forward to your continued support.