

# TAUNTON DAILY GAZETTE

## Band aid

Helpful hints on hiring your musicians

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**GateHouse News Service**

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Peter Hennes has been entertaining brides, grooms and their families and friends since he turned 13. And he's been playing professionally at weddings since 1980.

Today, this accomplished guitar player is the frontman for the Chicago wedding band Peter Hennes Orchestra — a band that, as he says, can play everything from Frank Sinatra to Lady Gaga.

Hennes knows what makes for a good wedding band: The best bands will make everyone in the crowd happy, from the 18-year-old with an iPod filled of alternative music to the 80-year-old who still loves the big-band sound.

"I've done some amazing things in my music career, but nothing gives me as much fulfillment as playing for a wedding," Hennes said.

If you're searching for a band for your wedding, Hennes has plenty of advice:

### 1. Make sure you're comfortable with the band leader

It doesn't matter how talented the members of a band are. If you're not comfortable with the leader, you won't be happy, Hennes said. There's a reason for this: The band's leader generally serves as the wedding reception's master of ceremonies. You want to make sure you don't cringe when the band leader announces it's time to cut the wedding cake or do the "YMCA."

### 2. Look at the videos on a wedding band's website

But, you won't get a true picture of how good the band can sound at your reception if those videos don't show live wedding-day performances.

Many bands stock their websites with videos and sound clips of them performing in the studio, Hennes said. A band can sound great in the studio but terrible live.

### 3. Choose a band that can make everyone happy

Hennes disputes the notion that you can't please everyone. The best wedding bands can play everything from punk rock to classical to big band, swing and Motown. Only those bands with the widest range will make all of your guests, no matter their ages, happy during your reception.

### 4. Energy is key

It isn't always easy to fill the dance floor at a wedding reception, especially during the event's early hours. But the best bands have an energy that practically propels people onto the floor, Hennes said. It's important to find a band whose leader is adept at convincing your guests that it's OK to have some fun.

### 5. Look for references

Another key when hiring a wedding band, as it is when hiring everyone from a financial planner to a plumber, is to ask for a list of references of past customers. Call these customers and ask them about the band's performance.

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