



PHOTO BY JUSTIN CASH MUSIC

Sixteen-year wedding-industry veteran Julian Leaver is the owner of Julian Leaver Events, a luxury wedding and events planning company based in Dallas. But for the first time in his career, he's also a groom-to-be! Having now experienced the industry from both sides of the aisle, Julian will be walking DWeddings readers step by step through his wedding-planning process—from his delights, pain points, and decision-making factors as a client to his expertise and know-how as a seasoned professional.

Choosing your wedding entertainment is like creating a playlist, a soundtrack—or let's even go a little further back and say making a mixtape (remember those?). What do all of these things have in common? They all require intentional creation. By that, I mean we approach creating them with something in mind. Maybe we want to tell a story or express a theme through the songs we pick.

I believe you should approach your wedding entertainment in the same curated manner. Personally tailored to you, your guests, your lifestyle, and your story. Because while on the surface, the music and entertainment create the atmosphere and set the mood of your wedding, it can also become an incredibly immersive experience for you and your guests.

How can the entertainment we choose resonate with our guests and make them feel connected with us and their role in our story?

It's important for your guests to feel like they are more than just observers at your wedding or subject to listen to some random band you hastily chose in a last-minute whirlwind decision. How much more special does the experience become when everyone feels like they are a part of it and a part of your story? Because they are! These people have been by your side throughout your lives and your love story.

Francisco and I wanted to honor our friends and family through music. Each element of the entertainment we've chosen will resonate with our guests. This includes my family from Oklahoma and Francisco's Latin heritage, the LGBTQ+ community, friends from different times in our lives, and people from the wedding industry. Needless to say, a true fusion of people and cultures coming together to celebrate!

For our ceremony, we hired Dallas singer/songwriter Justin Cash. He plays just about every kind of live acoustic you can imagine, from classical processional pieces to pop mixes. Typically, guests will arrive about half an hour before the ceremony starts. So it's nice to have a bit of light background music playing while guests take their seats and mingle.

Once we've said our I do's, the mood changes, and we'll let Jordan Kahn and his Latin Trio shake things up at cocktail hour. We've also hired a mariachi band to perform during dinner. These are a nod to Francisco's family and will set the stage for the reception party.

Before booking reception entertainment, you will want to consider venue logistics. Because while you'll certainly want to include performers who speak to you and your guests, you must also make sure your venue can accommodate them. Ask your wedding planner or venue coordinator about the performance area and what size entertainment the venue can hold. Are there curfews or volume restrictions? And what about outdoor performances—are they allowed?

ON THE CAR: FRANCISCO AND HIS FRIENDS USED TO GO TO A CLUB IN DALLAS WHERE HIS particular DJ played, so when they hear him at the reception, they'll already be familiar with him and his style. Instant connection!

This brings up another important point to keep in mind when looking for entertainment. Book early! Popular bands, like Jordan Kahn, can be booked over a year ahead, so to avoid disappointment, start your search as early as possible.

And remember, when planning your entertainment, see your wedding as a full story set to music and performance (should you have it). Immerse your guests in that story, and watch how everything comes together in a beautiful symphony.

Join us next month as we talk about choosing stationery. And as always, if you have any questions about your own wedding planning process, I'd love to hear from you.

More articles for you.



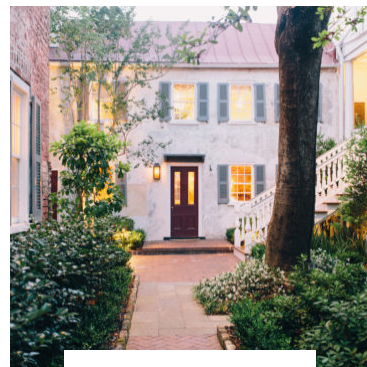
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