

The Ins & Outs of Hiring a DJ for your Event

Music has been instrumental (pun intended) to celebrations since the beginning of time. The most popular music option we see at Elk Point by far is the use of a DJ. From our perspective, a good DJ can make your event a great event, while a poor DJ can absolutely destroy it. More than any other vendor we encourage our clients to hire a DJ. We met with DJ Montoya from Ruby Frog Entertainment to discuss the ins and outs of hiring a DJ for your event. Ruby Frog Entertainment has 13 years of industry experience and has worked numerous events at Elk Point.

According to DJ Montoya the DJ is your Master of Ceremonies. They keep your event moving along. The DJ often acts more like a wedding planner from this perspective. We often see wedding planners attempting to be the center of attention to run the event to their liking. With DJ's, the good ones at least, they are always working and following the timeline to keep the event running.

The DJ will work to get the guests attending the event as much as the client wants them involved. At times the DJ is on the floor working to get conga lines started or directing participants into position for toasts. Often, they are successfully able to perform these tasks from behind the sound board. DJ Montoya says the DJ is at times asked to be a fly on the wall. It depends on what the client wants.

Some questions DJ Montoya thinks you should ask your prospective DJ are:

- How long have you been in business as a DJ?
- What type of music do you play?
- How do you get the crowd involved?
- How do you keep the event moving?

Ruby Frog Entertainment meets with their clients for approximately an hour. They feel out the clients taste in music. It is important to play the music that the client wants played. They go over the order of events and ask about any special requests the client may want. This can include anything from the Father-Daughter dance to the Garter Toss. Each event is custom to the client.

It is very important that your DJ and venue have a partnership together. Every venue is different with different sound quality and ordinances in place. We know we are going to have problems when we have a DJ that has never been to the venue or contacted us prior to the event date. DJ Montoya recommends the first thing that DJ's look for when working a new venue is to locate the power source. If performing an outdoor event that source can be a considerable distance away requiring multiple extension cords to reach. Considering that, where the DJ is being asked to setup is important to know. Is there shade or a source to keep equipment from overheating? What is the distance between the ceremony and reception? Are additional speakers required? If your DJ has a partnership with the venue they often know the answers to these questions and can be prepared prior to arriving.

The equipment that DJ's provide is pretty standard. However, we have seen some very interesting setups come through from inexperienced DJ's. DJ Montoya states that Rub Frog Entertainment

provides the sound system, speakers, lights and microphones (ceremony and toasts). We have seen DJ's show up with a home stereo system. We have also seen DJ's trying to run multiple cell phones, mp3 players and I-pads trying to sync music. We even saw one DJ that was so incredibly shy that he would not speak into the microphone and handed it off to someone else to make announcements. This is the difference between an experienced and inexperienced DJ.

Oftentimes, the client has a specific play list in mind and does not want the DJ to deviate from it. Therefore, it is important that your DJ be able to handle requests from guests attending the event. While most of the time guests understand that the DJ cannot deviate from the playlist. A small amount of time there is one guest that will get belligerent with the DJ and will be required to be removed from the venue. We do not see this very often, but it has happened before.

The most requested songs that DJ Montoya receives are songs that are designed for pre-choreographed line dancing. Songs such as the Cupid Shuffle or the Cha-Cha Slide can receive multiple requests per night from guests looking to "get their groove on". These same songs are often on the clients "do not play list" as well.

As we wrap up we need to address the biggest social faux pas committed at events over the last few years, the mic-drop. This popular little trend is despised by DJ's. What guests may not realize is that the microphone they are holding costs somewhere in the \$500 to \$600 range. When the microphone drops, it hits concrete or wood flooring causing damage to the microphone. Who is responsible for that damage? Well, it is usually the client that hired the DJ.

Elk Point provides our clients a list of recommended DJs'. We have seen what a good DJ brings to your event and how a bad one can ruin your event. DJ is one area where we at Elk Point feel you should spend the money and hire the best one available. You and your guests will appreciate it in the end.