

CHECKLIST OF QUESTIONS TO ASK MUSICIANS BEFORE HIRING THEM

It might be surprising to know how many times I am contacted by people planning events and their only question is, "How much do you charge?" Perhaps after reading this list of questions to ask musicians, you might see some other factors that you might not have thought of. Sometimes finding the least expensive musician can be very costly in terms of your time and stress.

- AUDIBILITY:** Specifically what do you provide to insure that the volume of music is appropriate for the space and the people (neither too loud nor too quiet)? What qualifications do you have in working with sound equipment?
- BREAKS:** Do you take breaks? How long are your breaks? What happens when you take your breaks?
- EATING/DRINKING ON THE JOB:** Do you or any of the musicians drink alcohol at the job? Do you or any of the musicians help themselves to the food without being invited? Do you require for me to provide a meal?
- RELIABILITY:** Have you ever cancelled a job or sent someone else to do the job for you? Why did you cancel or send someone else? What work do you do to prepare for the job, besides taking down the basic information? Have you ever been late for a job? (If yes, how often has that happened?) Have you ever double-booked a job, arrived at the wrong place or has there ever been a misunderstanding on how you were supposed to dress, or the time you were to set up or start performing? How do you prepare for the job? (what research do you do ahead of time)
- ARRIVAL & SET-UP:** How far in advance do you arrive for the job to set up? Are you ready a bit early in case the guests arrive early? Do you need any assistance in moving the harp or other equipment if there are no stairs? If the room is dark, do you provide your own lighting?
- WHAT STYLES OF MUSIC/MOODS CAN YOU CREATE?** What type of music can you play? What qualifications do you have to play those styles of music? How often do you update your repertoire? How much do you invest in your arrangements? How much repertoire do you have? How long does it take to switch from one selection to the next? (How do you organize your music?) If the music seems a bit dull or boring, what can you do to liven things up? What other types of musicians do you perform with?
- APPEARANCE:** What will you and the other musicians wear?
- CONSULTING:** Can I meet with you to discuss the details? Where do you meet clients? Is there an extra charge for meetings? Are you willing to meet with me outside of your home? Is there a charge for that? Are you willing to come to a meeting at the venue? If there is a charge for that, what is the cost? Do you perform at the Dress Rehearsal? If there is a charge for that, what is the cost?
- OVERTIME:** If the job goes later than the contracted time, are you available to continue performing? Is there an extra fee for that (overtime)?
- EXTRA CHARGES:** In addition to your performance fee, are there any other costs involved in hiring you?
- OUTDOOR PERFORMANCES:** Can you play outdoors? What will you do if it rains? What will you do if it is too cold?

