

# Weddings

# DJs VS. bands

Live music may be more exciting, but the guy with discs offers variety



**TOVAH O'ROURKE 25,**  
NOISE  
COPY EDITOR

Tovah is getting married on Sept. 25 in Ann Arbor to her rock-star sweetie John Olson. Between copy editing and making music with her band, she's spent countless hours looking at wedding Web sites, books and magazines. She swears she's not a bridezilla.

## COMING NEXT

- **Invitations.** Sure, you can buy invitations, but that can get pretty expensive. We'll show you how to make your own, and what information you should include.
- Read past articles in our "Marriage Madness" series online at [www.lansingnoise.com](http://www.lansingnoise.com)

## ADVICE

- **"Get everything in writing,** from the directions to the hall, to contracts and paperwork," says Jodloski. Leave nothing to chance or misinterpretation.
- **Have a good time.** You set the mood. "The less traditions and formality, the better the party."
- **Book in advance.** Six months should be enough time.

You're going to want music for your wedding reception. Unless you're a big fan of player pianos or silent group reflection, chances are you're going to hire either a band or a DJ. The question is which one?

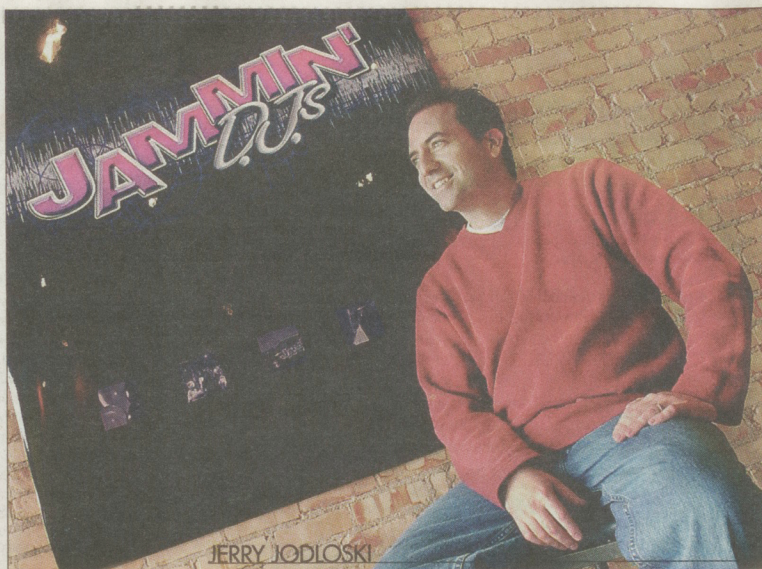
DJs usually have cost and music selection on their side. There are no songs for them to rehearse, no egos to check, no guitars to tune. But anyone who's been to a wedding with live music knows the energy that comes with a band. When was the last time you saw someone throw undergarments at a DJ?

NOISE tracked down the owner of Jammin' DJs in Lansing and the bassist for The Just Jake Band in Grand Rapids to find out what they offer and why they think you should hire them.

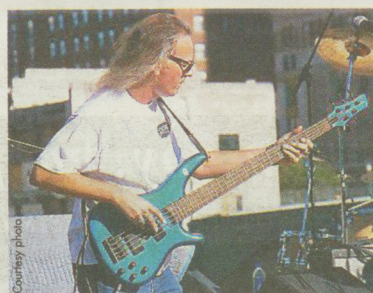
## THE DJ

**JERRY JODLOSKI, 36, LANSING**  
Jammin' DJs, 619 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing, 332-JAMS, [www.jammindjs.com](http://www.jammindjs.com)

- **Background:** Jodloski started his DJ business in 1991, moving to his downtown Lansing location five years ago. He's since given up the turntables to focus on the business side. He's got nine DJs available and the best are dedicated to weddings.
- For Jodloski, this is definitely not a hobby. But if you want a professional, you've got to pay for a professional, and they cost more than the guys who work out of their basements.
- "It's a premiere service," says Jodloski. "If you want to spend \$300, I can recommend people, but you get what you pay for."
- **The cost:** Four hours with the DJ, who brings his own equipment, colored lights and mirror ball, will run you \$750. It's \$25 an hour thereafter.



JERRY JODLOSKI



ROBERT DECOCCQ

Tips aren't expected, but it's nice to feed the DJ. To save big bucks, sometimes as much as 50 percent, book off-season (November to April) or on a weekday or Sunday. This is one benefit of having a DJ. Bands don't usually offer discounts.

You can get DJs for much less, starting at about \$200, but Jodloski says he's heard lots of horror stories about these part-timers. You never know what you'll get with the cheap ones, he said. Maybe they don't have the right equipment. Maybe their music selection is nothing but hair metal. Maybe they spend their time at the mic trying to channel Howard Stern. Do you really want to take a chance with some newbie who might tell dirty jokes to your grandma?

- **Experience:** Jammin' DJs will customize each reception. You want the DJs getting people psyched and on the dance floor? They'll do it. Prefer a toned-down affair? No problem. Jodloski says they sometimes act as a "pseudo event planner," helping couples decide the mood and theme of the reception. He says Jammin' DJs offers "fun without cheese." That is, they won't wear sequined jackets or costumes unless you ask them to. What's more, he said, they'll perform MC services, something you won't get with a lot of bands.
- **Songs:** There are hundreds of songs to choose from. Want your guests to make requests but are afraid they'll ask for "YMCA"? You can create a "do not play list" to spare yourself the headache. If you've got specific tastes, say Afghan music or underground hip-hop, you're welcome to bring your own CDs. If you want the first dance to be something original, avoid songs like "A Whole

New World" and "Unchained Melody." That doesn't mean you should use a Metallica song, though Jodloski says people have done it.

Jodloski says DJs and partygoers alike are sick of embarrassing reception standards like the "Chicken Dance" and "Electric Slide." He suggests playing songs people actually like.

- **The final tally:** Even though Jodloski is big on DJs, he still can't dismiss "the magic of live music." He offers a compromise — a live band, and a separate DJ for the breaks and MCing.

## THE BAND

**ROBERT DECOCCQ, "MID-40S",**  
SAND LAKE, MICH.

The Just Jake Band, (616) 696-8181, (616) 696-7736, [www.justjakeband.net](http://www.justjakeband.net)

- **Background:** Grand Rapids rockers The Just Jake Band have been playing weddings and clubs since 1991. If you don't want a rockin' set from the full band, you can hire a more mellow trio or acoustic duo. Decocq plays bass, piano and guitar.
- **The cost:** A typical gig costs \$1,200 to \$1,500, with extra costs for travel. There's no discount for off-season or weekday shows. There's no gratuity expected, but some grub would be nice.
- **Experience:** The band plays classic rock from artists like Bob Seger to Neil Young and Todd Rundgren, basically music from the '60s through the '80s. Decocq says they're a "dance-oriented party band." Don't worry about dead air. The band DJs between sets.

If you're feeling adventurous, perhaps after a couple of champagne toasts, you can join the band on stage to sing a tune. But don't think that just because you played guitar in college you can grab the \$2,500 vintage strat.

- **Songs:** There are 120 songs to choose from and the list is constantly updated.
- "If someone requests a song, we'll try to play it, within reason."
- **The final tally:** When it comes down to it, Decocq says you have to have live music. "Live music is best, always," he said. "It's a give and take with the audience. It's more personal than a DJ."
- "Anyone can spin a record," he added. "These guys have no talent, they're taking work away from musicians."