

# He's only just begun

## 10 QUESTIONS FOR ... a wedding bandleader



SUSAN BLOND INC.

**How would you define your musical background?**

I'm a trombone player, a singer and a violinist, all kinds of things. The whittler comment is because I was in the original cast of the Billy Joel musical "Movin' Out" for four years, where I played trombone and I sang most of the background vocals.

**Has music always been in your blood?**

I come from a musical family. I was actually trained at the New England Conservatory in Boston, and thought I was going to go into a symphonic career. But then I moved to New York after college and started getting calls for rock bands. I played with Bowie and 10,000 Maniacs. And I've sung on a lot of commercials — I'm actually the new voice of the Jolly Green Giant, which my friends are pretty shocked to hear.

**How do you prep for that gig?**

Meaning we really take the night before. That's a few weeks, you gotta sound like you didn't sleep.

**How did you start singing at weddings?**

I've been doing it since college on the side and then when I came to New York, through a friend of mine I made contact with one of the partners of Hank Lane Music. I was in his band as a singer and trombone player. I think he always knew in the back of his mind I should be a bandleader.

**What's your favorite song to perform?**

I don't even know sometimes until I see the dance floor packed what I'm going to do. That's what's exciting to me is to be able to improvise. But obviously I love a little Bee Gees I want Billy Joel. And people always love classic songs like "The Way You Look Tonight" by Brno.

**What's the scariest request you've ever had?**

I had to deal with a bride who only wanted me to play 12/8 songs for the whole night. 12/8 is a tempo like on "Unchained Melody." She would try to get me to play that style regardless of what her guests wanted. And you have to look what the client wants, but I actually told her she was going to ruin her own party and then she thanked me at the end of the night.

**How do you get most gigs?**

The thing about this business is it's word of mouth. You're only as good as the last party you played.

**What did you do for your own wedding?**

I sang a song to my wife [laughs] per force with my band. As a violinist and violist, it was "My One and Only Love." I had some friends play. I didn't want anyone to feel like they were working.

**What's your feeling on wedding deejays versus wedding bands?**

You gotta be kidding. A deejay is a special thing for a special occasion but you can't... it's just completely different to have live music. There's nothing like the visual. And when we play, whether it be U2 or Van Morrison or Steve Wonder, it sounds like the record without playing the record.

**How many gigs can you do in a weekend?**

I never do doubleheaders. I don't do more than one on Friday, one on Saturday, one on Sunday. Consider it quality control... it's pretty special to know that you're pretty much responsible for the most important day in some of these people's lives.

Patrick Fitzgerald



**Kevin Osborne**

AGE: 43

**JOB:** Wedding bandleader

**HOURS/WEEK:** Several hours to five hours, gigs with frequent and occasional travel. Approximately 30 hours total.

**TIME ON THE JOB:** 15 years

**SALARY:** \$10K and up per gig (split with eight or more other band members)