

Everything from symphonies to circus acts can be seen at weddings nowadays

OH! SO DRAMATIC

From a grand entrance for the couple to a dash of local culture, wedding entertainment is getting bigger and better

If you walk into a friend's wedding and see dancers or a circus act on stage, know that you are seeing the latest in wedding entertainment.

Like many things in our lives, this, too, has been outsourced and acquired a theatrical sheen. "People want aerial acrobats, international circus acts, contortionists, symphonies, dance troops and musicians," says Candice, wedding planner, Marry Me.

The customary family and friends' dances remain a part of the classic *sangeet* evenings. Special wedding choreographers work on creating a flawless series of movements for the enthusiastic amateurs. Hot on the menu are the chartbuster item numbers from Bollywood.

The music setup at some weddings could give clubs a run for their money. "The latest trends are laser shows and video DJing, where the video of the song is played on LED screens around

the venue while the DJ spins the track," says Jatin Mehra, proprietor, Stallion Events. Alongside this, however, weddings do still make space for traditional instruments like *dhhol* and *shehnai*. The two different music corners together create a nice 'East meets West' atmosphere.

Now that destination weddings are a big trend, planners often synchronise the music to the culture of the place, e.g. a wedding at a Rajasthan fort will have *ghoomar* or *kalbeliya* performers, or a Goa beach ceremony will be

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brightened by a Goan music and dance troupe. The rich cultures of India offer many such creative opportunities.

If the whole wedding is designed as a stage set, and the guests make up the cast, naturally the lead performers are the bride and groom, and they play their role with panache.

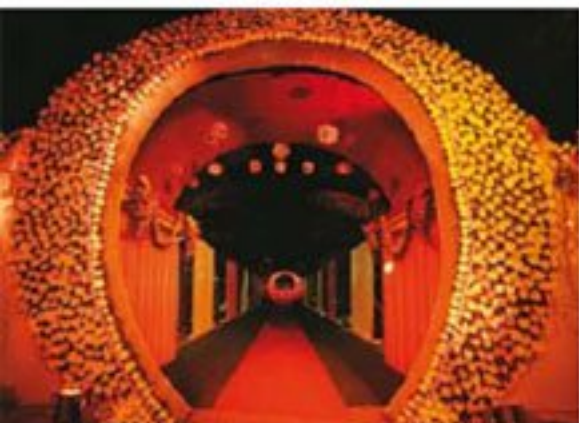
"Some families opt for a dramatic entry of the bride and the groom, and it becomes a part of the entertainment," says Rajeev Jain, Rashi Entertainment, an event management firm. Rotating stages, helicopter arrivals, elephant entrances, are some of the options available.

The biggest thrill that a wedding can offer to its guests is, of course, a top Bollywood star, in the flesh. Tajveen Kaur, director, T'zires, a wedding and event management firm, is someone who gets this request a lot.

With ideas galore, it's easy to get carried away, but budgeting is essential. Keep 10-20 per cent of your estimate as a cushion. Just in case a bright idea strikes you at the eleventh hour. ■

LIVING THE DREAM

From a fresh new colour palette to innovative photography, transform your wedding with the latest trends



The real fun part of the wedding is the planning. You could stick to the traditional *shaadi* or follow the lead of the latest Hindi blockbuster, Bollywood being the trendsetter for weddings in India.

We all love a bit of drama, in the stage setup, entertainment, colours. Red still dominates, but purple, pink and rich blues are collecting new fans. Doff your cap to tradition with a burst of yellow and orange, colours that are as mood-lifting and welcoming.

Another area of change is wedding photography. No longer happy with predictable bride-groom-guests shots, couples are opting for candid moments in their album. Wedding photographer Priyanka Sachar explains, "Most Indian weddings have the couple on a stage as people hand them gifts. Traditional studio photographers cover that. I stay away from the stage when the gifts are

given, and click the guests when they are not looking at the camera."

Centred around the main event – the *vivab* – are a cluster of activities to keep the guests entertained. These days, this involves much more than making the groom blush with wedding night jokes or the bride's aunts dancing to disco-*bhangra*. A whiff of the Wild West brings in wilder themes. The Las Vegas

Share your big day

The Internet influences weddings, too. Bridal bloggers Kismet Jewell Nakai and April of the *The Unreal Bride* are a photographer and a stylist, respectively. They create a look for a bride, or are hired to photograph a wedding. Then they blog about it. A bride-to-be can also get ideas beyond the obvious from their blog.

theme is for poker nights and playboy parties. *Qawwali* nights for *sangeets* are now a big hit, with *mogra* strings as a part of the decor for a perfect feel.

At cocktail parties, you can have set designs and skits to complement the food and drinks. "Create a gazebo on farmhouse land with diffused lighting for a club-like feel," says Jatin Mehra, proprietor, Stallion Events. Themes also vary for meals – a sit-down affair with white place settings for breakfast; large *oorlys* with flowers, *diyas* and folk music for the evening *mehndi*.

The trend in floral arrangements is to look further than *genda*. "Go for hydrangeas, peonies, calla lilies, etc," says Candice, planner at MarryMe.

One trend that's eternal is romance. As author Mignon McLaughlin said, "A successful marriage requires falling in love many times, always with the same person." ■