



## Recommended “Step-up” Band Instruments



With so many choices of instruments available in stores and online now, it is our hope that this document will help parents and students understand how to choose a quality instrument.

General guidelines:

- **“You get what you pay for”** – this old saying is very true for band instruments.
- **If it comes in different color choices...stay away!** This is a marketing technique used by companies to sell poor quality instruments. Also, another trick is to offer gloves with the instrument. This is also a warning sign.
- **Don’t always believe what you read** – Some say “band director recommended”. This is usually just an advertising ploy.
- **Made in China** – While not everything that is made in China lacks quality, some of the worst instruments on the market today are mass produced in China (or other Asian countries).
- **Check the name carefully** – Another trick of cheaply made instruments is to have their name spelled very closely to a good quality instrument name.
- **When buying online...**Make sure the instrument comes with a case (or purchase one separately). If it is used, be prepared to have the instrument repaired. Woodwind repairs can cost over \$100 because of all the different parts/pads. Brass repairs are typically less than \$100. We recommend that you buy only the brands listed below if you are buying online.
- **Juniors and Seniors** – If you know you are going to be a music major, you may want to specifically talk to the college professor who will be teaching you on your instrument. They sometimes only prefer a specific make, model, and version of your instrument.
- **Questions** – contact your band director for help if you want a second opinion on an instrument.

**\*\*Please note that the following recommendations are in no particular order.**

**All of the following brands have proven themselves to be of a very high craftsmanship and have stood the test of time.**

## Flutes

Look for flutes that have these features (all of these make a significant improvement in sound).

1. Solid Silver head joint (a gold lip plate also improves comfort when playing)
2. B-foot
3. open holes

### Intermediate

- Yamaha
- Pearl
- Di Zhao
- Gemeinhardt

### Professional

- Powell
- Haynes

## Bb Clarinets (including Bass Clarinets)

Do not buy alto clarinets as these are a specialty instrument not used in band.

### Intermediate or Professional

- Yamaha
- Buffet

## Alto Saxophones

Lacquered brass is preferred over silver plated.

### Intermediate or Professional

- Yamaha
- Yanagisawa
- Selmer

## Bb Trumpets

The best sounding trumpets are silver plated.

Mouthpieces...Bach 3C or 5C mouthpieces are the best mouthpieces available and will provide a good sound in all ranges. Gold plated mouthpieces are very comfortable to play on and have the added benefit of being a cleaner metal than silver.

Only buy Bb trumpets. Do not buy Eb trumpets, C trumpets, pocket trumpets, piccolo trumpets, bass trumpets, etc... as these are specialty trumpets that are not used in band.

### Intermediate

- Yamaha
- Getzen Eterna
- Bach

### Professional

- Yamaha Xeno
- Bach Stradivarius

## French Horns

You should only be buying a double horn at this level.

Many people prefer the silver plated French Horns over the lacquered brass.

### Intermediate or Professional

- Conn
- Yamaha

### Oboes

Intermediate or Professional

- Loree
- Cabart
- Fox

### Trombones

Lacquered brass is preferred over silver plated.

Intermediate or Professional

- Bach
- Conn
- Yamaha

### Baritones and Tubas

A four-valve version of these instruments enables you to play lower notes and gives you more options for alternate fingerings (mostly used to play notes in tune).

Many people prefer the silver plated Baritones and Tubas over the lacquered brass.

Intermediate or Professional

- Yamaha
- Miraphone

### Tenor Saxes and Bari Saxes

Lacquered brass is preferred over silver plated.

Intermediate or Professional

- Yamaha
- Selmer
- Yanagisawa

### Concert Band Percussion

Snare sticks:

- 2B or 5B Innovative Percussion
- 2B or 5B Vic Firth

Marimba mallets:

- Innovative Percussion (Soft, Medium, and Hard Mallets)

We do provide sticks and mallets but you may want to purchase your own for practice at home.

### Marching Band Percussion

Snare sticks:

- Innovative Percussion - Mike McIntosh FS-MM

Tenor mallet:

- Vic Firth – Corpsmaster MTS1

Bass drum:

- Vic Firth – Corpsmaster MB0H

Marimba mallet:

- Innovative Percussion – IP240

We do provide sticks but you may want to purchase your own for practice at home.