

A note about obtaining an instrument:

There are many places to buy a musical instrument including department stores, catalogs, guitar stores, internet sites, private individuals and wholesale clubs. Many times these non-school music stores will offer what seems like very inexpensive instruments. With these instruments, there is no after-sale support, no repair service or a direct working relationship with the manufacturer and the instruments are typically imported instruments of low quality. The results when purchasing from a non-school music type of source are often frustrated students and higher long-term costs for the parents. We recommend renting or purchasing an instrument from a store that specializes in school music service.

When you are ready to rent or purchase an instrument, here are a few "pointers" to help you choose a good quality instrument.

- ***Musical instruments are NOT toys!***

A usable instrument is a well-constructed work of art, combining both the latest technology and time-tested old-world craftsmanship.

- ***Watch out for internet auction sites!***

Often, students/parents who purchase instruments from auction sites end up frustrated due to the poor quality of the instrument or because the instrument is in need of serious repair. Not all manufacturers build instruments according to specific standards with up to date technology. Most school music stores offer only quality brand name instruments that directors prefer.

- ***Play the instrument before you buy it!***

This will not be easy with internet/catalog companies. It will cost more in shipping and restocking fees than if you went to a local school music store.

- ***Get a name brand instrument.***

Do not waste your time on unknown instrument brands. Non-brand name instrument manufacturers often do not make parts available to repair centers. Quality brands to look for are: Armstrong, Bach, Buffet, Cannonball, Conn, Eastman strings, Gemeinhardt, Getzen, Holton, Knilling strings, Hans Kroger strings, Leblanc, Selmer, and Yamaha. All too frequently impressive sounding Austrian, German and Italian names are put on inferior instruments made in China just to make it seem like you are getting a great deal. The old adage applies: *If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.*

- ***An inexpensive instrument can be a waste of time and money.***

Not all instruments are created equal! Cheap instruments are usually just that, cheap. If you purchase a "questionable" instrument, you may spend more on repair just to make it usable. Some brands of instruments manufactured offshore or even domestically cannot be supported with critical parts for proper maintenance and repair. It would be much better to purchase a quality used instrument and have any necessary repairs made than to purchase one of these "disposable" instruments.

- ***Don't be afraid of school music store salespeople.***

These people are a great resource. They are typically professionally trained and often work hand in hand with us and make weekly visits to the school. School music stores have quality used instruments that are usually available at a reduced fee.

- ***Consider the value of service after you have purchased.***

Service and repair are an inevitable fact. Alternative sources often do not offer maintenance programs. Most school music stores offer maintenance programs as part of their rental/purchase plans. Usually, the cost is nominal and is well worth the small expense. Maintenance is included in a Paige's Music contract. Remember, it is a matter of "WHEN" not "IF" an instrument in regards to repair and service. Brass and string instruments should be serviced once per year and woodwind instruments should be serviced twice per year.