



HOW TO FIND THE RIGHT DRUMS FOR YOU!

With the wide variety of name brands, models, features and countries of manufacturing, it can be very confusing to find the right instrument for you.

At Music Go Round, we are all about “The right gear for the right customer.” In an effort to further support our philosophies, we have created an easy to follow, but detailed document on how to find the right Drum Set for your needs.

Of course, Music Go Round loves used gear, but this document will benefit you if you are looking at new or used products.

Here are some FAQ's our sales associates hear every day!

Q: I see Drums sets advertised as having 6 lugs or 8 lugs...what does this mean?

A: Lugs are the port mounted on the side of the drum that holds the tension rods. They are part of the mechanism on a drum that not only holds the drumhead on the shell, but also applies a specific amount of tension to the head at that point. Applying specific pressure at these points is how to tune the drum. The more Lugs you have, the easier it is to tune and maintain a constant pitch on the drum.

Q: Why are some Drum Sets \$300 and some are over a \$1000? Are they not all made of wood and metal?

A: As with most products in the world, they all drum sets are not all created equally!

There are many factors that go into the “value” of a Drum...some are tangible and some are intangible.

-Some of the **tangible** values of a drum are:

- **Where the product is manufactured** has a tremendous bearing on the value or cost of an instrument. Generally, the most expensive instruments are made in the USA. Korean and Chinese instruments follow with other Asian countries like Indonesia, Vietnam and India coming in towards the bottom. Yes, the labor costs to build instruments have some impact on the overall cost, but what you will always find is that an American made instrument is of the highest

quality woods and products, with the best workmanship, quality and consistency. Asian made instruments, while very good products, are more “mass produced” and use lesser quality woods and finishes.

- **The quality of wood used differs from piece to piece.** The higher quality the tone wood used, the more expensive the drum will be. Maple is on the top of the ladder, Birch and Basswoods are in the middle and more common woods like Mahogany and Lauan (an Asian Mahogany) are found in student or entry-level drums.
- **Type of construction.** Much like an onion, Drums are made in plies or layers. Most drums will have between 6 and 9 plies or layers. The number of layers has more effect on the sound of the drum than the cost, but a more expensive drum would have 9 plies of Maple vs. 7 plies of birch, and so on.

- Here are a few examples of **Intangible** values:

- **Name Brand.** Yes, you can and will pay more for a popular name brand compared to a similar model with a lesser-known brand (Pearl® or Tama® vs. Percussion Plus® or Astro®). When looking at drums made in most Asian countries, many of them are made in the same factories, with the same part, finishes and by the same people, they just have a different label put on them when the guitar is finished.
 - Don't be fooled by a logo or name brand. Many “big” brand drums are similar in quality as their Asian made counterparts. Your best bet is to test the instrument and let your ears decide!
- **Popular models played by popular musical artists** Certain name brands are synonymous with a specific artist (Neal Peart plays DW Drums®, John Bonham and Ringo Starr played Ludwig Drums®). These specific models may cost more based purely on supply vs. demand economics. Many famous drummers also produce “Signature” model drums and cymbals that are built to their specifications. Depending on the name brand and the artist, these products can be very expensive compared to their “stock” counterparts.
- **History of a specific mode, finish or year.** The world has become a place for collectors...just look at eBay® if you don't agree! Products from the past hold intrinsic value based more on nostalgia than playability. Still, it is fun to find old drums and find new uses for them.

Many older kits have a considerable resale value based on being from a specific era, or having a specific finish (marine pearl or sparkle finish).

With any vintage instrument, there are many factors that will go into the valuation of that specific piece. We always suggest getting an appraisal on any vintage product that you are considering so you can be sure you are getting what you are paying for. Always remember, just because it is old, doesn't mean it is worth a lot of money!

Q: Why are there so many sizes and colors? Does the size or finish of the drum make a difference in the sound?

A: The size of the drum has a considerable impact on the pitch of the drum, the larger the drum, the lower the pitch that resonates from it.

The finish of the drum typically does not impact the tone unless you are dealing with higher end drums that have a lacquer finish. Remember that a drum creates sound by the shell resonating, so any finish that would impede the drum from resonating would affect the sound.

Most student and intermediate model drums have a vinyl wrapped finish or are painted and have numerous coats of lacquer applied to protect the drum.

Q: Cymbals also vary greatly in price...why is there such a difference?

A: Again, not all products are created equally. The difference in cymbals is in their construction and materials used.

- **Construction.** There are two types of construction found in cymbal making. Less expensive cymbals are stamped from sheets, while more expensive cymbals are spun into shape and then hammered to a finish.
- **Materials used.** Cymbals are made primarily of bronze, but there are different types of bronze alloys used. The mix of copper and tin used to create the alloy has a bearing on the cost, as well as the longevity of the cymbal.

Q: There are many different types of cymbals. What do I need for my set?

A: Cymbals come in four families: Hi-Hats, Rides, Crash and FX cymbals

- **Hi Hats** are found in pairs on a stand that opens and closes the pair using a foot control. A riding beat is usually played on these and the open/closed function will vary the timbre and resonance of the cymbals, ultimately varying the sound.
 - Hi-hat cymbals are sold in pairs and are commonly 13" or 14" wide
- **Ride** cymbals are the largest and heaviest cymbals in the category. They are also used to produce a "riding" beat, hence the name.
 - Rides are sold individually and are commonly 18" – 22" wide and in various thicknesses
- **Crash** cymbals are used as an effect or punctuation in a drummer's pattern. They are typically much thinner than the ride cymbal and come in a variety of sizes and thicknesses...all having a unique pitch or sound.
- **FX** cymbals, like a splash or china cymbal, are used more like a crash than the ride or hi-hats. Their use is to add punctuation to a phrase or pattern. FX cymbals have distinctive features and sounds from other crashes, hence the term "FX" or effects. For a beginner, Music Go Round suggests your set include a set of 14" hi hats, a 20" ride and a 16" crash cymbal.

Q: What are some key factors I should look for that will tell me if a Drum is a quality instrument?

A: Music Go Round buys and sells 100's of drum sets every month, so we have a vast knowledge when it comes to indentifying a quality instrument!

Here are a few things we look for when buying our inventory from our customers:

- **Physical condition.** Is the drum and finish clean and free of major dings, dents or cracks? Are the heads clean and smooth? Are the drums round like a circle or are they warped or elliptical? Is the hardware clean and free of rust or corrosion? Are there any parts missing?
- **Bearing Edges.** This is the edge of the drum that the head is pulled over. Is the bearing edge clean and sharp? Is the inside finish of the drum smooth and clean?
- **Adjustability.** Are the tension rods free and moving? Is the hardware in working order?
- **Tone.** When we play the Drum, does is sound right? Is there an issue with the shells or plies? Does the instrument make odd noises or buzzes when played? Is the head of the drum clean and smooth?

Q: Which drumsticks are right for me?

A: To determine the right drumstick for you, you will need to decide what size, wood and type is appropriate for you.

- **Drumstick sizes** are typically defined by a number and a letter. The lower the number, the larger or thicker the stick. The letter that follows the number refers to the taper of the shoulder, or neck of the stick. An example would be 2b or 5a.
- **Wood** types used include Hickory, Oak or Maple. Each has its own feel, weight and rebound qualities. The most expensive sticks are typically made of Hickory. Some sticks are made of plastic or composite materials, but are not recommended for beginning players.
- **Tip Types** are either wood or nylon. Each type has their own feel and creates a slightly different sound when striking a drum or cymbal. There is little difference in price or availability with either type and the decision usually comes down to a personal preference.

Your instructor typically defines the right drumstick for you, but Music Go Round suggests that new drummers start on a 5a stick.

Q: What accessories will I need to complete my drum purchase?

A: Check out the other document on our "Drums" page for advice on getting started. We have a complete list of products and accessories to make sure you get started on the right foot!

Q: Should I take lessons?

A: YES...YES...did I mention YES? We always suggest taking lessons from a qualified educator (like the one's you'll find at Music Go Round). Their input and instruction will ensure good habits and rapidly improve your learning curve, which will make you want to play more and more!

Q: So which Drum Set is right for me?

A: This is a very subjective question and there are a lot of factors that will influence your purchase:

- **How much can you afford?** Keep in mind that there may be additional products you will need to complete your instrument purchase. You may need cymbals, stands, sticks, a drum throne or other accessories
 - Music Go Round is extremely “value-focused” and can surely find a quality instrument package to fit your budget!
- **What kind of music do you want to play?** Certain configurations lend themselves to certain types of music. If you already play or know what your intentions are when you do begin playing, this will have an effect on which type of set you choose to buy.
 - A “Jazz or Fusion” kit will typically have smaller drums in comparison to a “Standard or Rock” kit.
- **What features do you want your instrument to have?** Lugs, finish, hardware, extra cymbals, extra drums? All of this will have an impact on what kit is right for you.
- **Go with your gut!** If it looks good to you, feels good to you and sounds good to you, then you may have already answered your own question. The best drum set for you is the one you think is best...and we will help you find it!