



## BUYING A DRUMSET?

BY JOSH GOTTRY

It's been on your wish list as long as you can remember; you've saved allowance and gift money for months; you are now ready to shop for your first drumset. It's a fairly significant investment. You may not be able to afford your dream kit, but you'd like to buy something that will last for quite a while. So, what should you look for?

### BUY USED

It certainly requires more patience, but buying a used drumset can save you hundreds of dollars. A typical used drumset can be found in classified ads or on-line for around \$600, while the same drumset would run you \$1200 or more if it was brand new.

### BUY BRAND NAME

No one can claim to have researched every drumset by every manufacturer available on the market and every legitimate manufacturer strives to offer a better product for less money. In my experience however, certain companies have consistently produced quality. Based on that experience, I can at least offer ideas of what is likely to be a smart investment. Here are the brands I typically suggest. Keep in mind, however, that every brand has their "best" kits and their "starter" kits and there will be a difference.

- Yamaha
- Tama
- Pearl
- Drum Workshop (DW or PDP)

Also consider . . .

- Premier
- Remo
- Mapex

As far as cymbals are concerned, there are only three quality cymbal manufacturers and if anything can make or break the sound of a drumset, it is the cymbals (so don't cut corners on this one).

- Sabian
- Zildjian
- Paiste

Wuhan is also worth consideration for china cymbals and splash cymbals only.

### WOODS & PLY'S

All quality drumsets are made of quality wood. The best products use maple and birch, with a few companies now also trying oak. Many entry level kits will use mahogany or a mahogany blend. Plys refer to the number of layers of the thin pieces of wood used in each shell. Most drumsets worth your time are 6-8 plys. The exterior of the shell is either stained with a protective lacquer or a layer of laminate is adhered to the wood. Both are acceptable with the laminate providing slightly more protection and the stained wood creating a more natural resonance.

### OTHER FACTORS

A standard drumset includes a snare drum, bass drum (with pedal), three tom-toms (two mounted above the bass drum and one floor tom), high-hat, crash cymbal, ride cymbal, and a stool. The term 5-piece or 4-piece drumset refers only to the drums included, so the above example is a typical 5-piece kit. All the drums should have both a top and bottom head. The bass drum outside head may or may not have a small hole in it (either way is acceptable). Drum heads for a 5-piece drumset could cost approximately \$125 to replace, so if the only obvious shortcoming of a used drumset is the condition of the heads, keep that figure in mind. The primary thing to examine on a used drumset is the condition of the shells (no scratches or dents), hardware (no rattles or wobbles), and cymbals (no cracks). If possible, having a professional or more experienced percussionist come with you to look at a drumset is certainly recommended.



**Josh Gottry** is an active percussion instructor, performer, and composer in Gilbert, Arizona. He serves as an instructor for several local percussion ensembles and private percussion students, and performs regularly as both a soloist and ensemble member. As a composer, Mr. Gottry is a three-time ASCAP grant recipient with seventeen works published for percussion. Josh Gottry is a clinician for Mike Balter Mallets, Pro-Mark Sticks, and Yamaha Percussion.