

MONTANA BANDMASTERS ASSOCIATION – PERCUSSIVE ARTS SOCIETY
"Percussion Equipment: What to Get, and How to Make What You Have Sound Better"
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I. RECOMMENDED STICKS, MALLETS, ACCESSORY INSTRUMENTS

From the very beginning of percussion study, students should have a stick bag or carrying case of some kind to keep everything in. Timpani mallets should be kept in their original plastic bag whenever not in use to protect the felt from fraying/extend life of the mallet, and NEVER be used on suspended cymbals (use a yarn mallet instead).

One justification or “selling point” to parents for students acquiring their own stick and mallets: wind players need to continually buy reeds, brass players oil, string players need rosin, strings replaced, bow re-haired, step-up instruments, etc... Encourage or require purchasing at least 1-2 items per year (i.e.: year one = snare sticks and bell mallets; year two = either 1 pair timpani or yarn mallets; year three = the other pair not acquired in year two, etc.).

Not all students will need everything on the list, however, more advanced or “serious” students and those entering ensembles or studies at the university level will be expected to have “the right tools”. University percussion professors generally have a recommended list, which may be exclusive to companies/products they endorse.

STUDENT PROVIDED INSTRUMENTS, STICKS AND MALLETS

Beginning (Elementary School) students:

- Snare Drum: students provide own “beginning snare outfit” or 5x14” metal or wood shell,
- concert height stand (not a drumset stand that is too low) (Pearl SK800C)
- Bell Kits: students provide own “bell set” or school provides (Pearl PL800C has snare & bells)
- Stick/Mallet Bag or case

Snare Drum

- Vic Firth General (SD-1), 5A, 5B or equivalent to fit hand (7A is very thin/light & good for drumset with a small combo like a quartet but too light for snare drum; 2B is too heavy/closer to a concert snare stick)

Bells/Xylophone

- Poly ball/nylon mallet; good on xylophone & bells/harder than rubber but not a hard plastic: Yamaha KPB-91B, Innovative IP902 James Ross, Mallettech BB34 Bob Becker, or equivalent

Stick/Mallet “Packs”

- o Innovative FP1 Elementary Mallet Pack (\$45.00)
 - SB3 Stick Bag; 1 pair F8 Rubber Mallets; 1 pair F10 Bell Mallets; 1 pair IP-LD Lalo Davila Concert Snare Drum Sticks
- o Firth EP1 Elementary Education Pack (\$45.00)
 - BSB Stick Bag; 1 pair SD1 General Snare Drum Sticks; 1 pair M5 Medium Hard Rubber Keyboard Mallets; 1 pair M14 Soft Poly-Ball Keyboard Mallets

Intermediate (Middle School) students:

- Stick/Mallet Bag or case

Snare Drum

- Vic Firth General (SD-1), Innovative IP-JC James Campbell, Innovative IPLD Lalo Davila
- Don't use concert sticks on drum set

Bells/Xylophone

- Poly ball/nylon mallet; good on xylophone & bells/harder than rubber but not a hard plastic: Yamaha KPB-91B, Innovative IP902 James Ross, Mallettech BB34 Bob Becker, or equivalent
- **Stick/Mallet "Packs"**
 - o Innovative FP2 Intermediate Mallet Pack (\$70.00)
 - SB3 Stick Bag; 1 pair F2 Hard Marimba Mallets; 1 pair F9 Xylophone Mallets; 1 pair GT3 General Series General Timpani Mallets; 1 pair IP-LD Lalo Davila Concert Snare Drum Sticks
 - o Firth EP2 Intermediate Education Pack (\$70)
 - BSB Stick Bag; 1 pair SD1 General Snare Drum Sticks; 1 pair SD2 Bolero Snare Drum Sticks; 1 pair M3 Medium Hard Yarn Keyboard Mallets; 1 pair M6 Hard Phenolic 1" Keyboard Mallets; 1 pair T3 Staccato Timpani Mallets

Timpani

- Vic Firth T3 Staccato (smaller head than a T1 General), Innovative GT-3 Medium or equivalent

Marimba/Vibraphone (also for use on suspended cymbals)

- 1 pair medium yarn mallets: Yamaha KYB-13, Innovative IP240 or equivalent, OR
- 1 pair medium hard yarn mallets: Yamaha KYB-12, Innovative IP275 or equivalent

Drum Set

- 5A, 5B or similar (7A is very thin/light & good for small combo like a quartet but not large ensemble work; 2B is too heavy/closer to a concert snare stick)

Brushes

- Vic Firth Jazz Brush

Advanced (High School) students:

Snare Drum

- Vic Firth General (SD-1), Innovative IP-JC James Campbell, Innovative IPLD, Cooperman #1 (Graham C. Johns), Cooperman #5 (Nick Petrella), or equivalent, AND
- Vic Firth Bolero (SD-2), or equivalent
- Don't use concert sticks on drum set

Bells/Xylophone

- Poly Ball/Nylon: Yamaha KPB-91B, Innovative IP902 James Ross, Mallettech BB34 Bob Becker, or equivalent, AND
- Either 1 pair very hard acrylic/plastic mallets for bells: Yamaha KPB-10B, Innovative IP906 James Ross, OR
- 1 pair brass bell mallets: Yamaha KBB-9B, Balter 09B or equivalent

Timpani

- Vic Firth T3 Staccato (smaller head than a T1 General), Innovative GT-3 Medium or equivalent, AND
- Innovative GT-4 Hard Staccato or equivalent

- Stick/Mallet "Packs"

- o Innovative FP3 College Primer (\$200)
 - MB1 Stick/Mallet Bag; 2 pair RS251 Medium Rattan Vibraphone Mallets; 2 pair IP240 Medium Birch Marimba Mallets; 1 pair IP902 James Ross Xylophone/Bell Mallets; 1 pair IP906 James Ross Brilliant Xylophone/Bell Mallets; 1 pair GT3 General Series General Timpani Mallets; 1 pair IP-JC James Campbell Hickory Concert Snare Drum Sticks

Marimba

- 2 pair medium yarn mallets: Yamaha KYB-13, Innovative IP240 or equivalent OR
- 2 pair medium hard yarn mallets: Yamaha KYB-12, Innovative IP275

Vibraphone

- 2 pair medium vibe mallets: Innovative RS251, Mallettech DS11 or equivalent OR
- 2 pair hard vibe mallets: Innovative RS301, Mallettech DS18 or equivalent (select a different harness from marimba mallets above for variety)

Drum Set

- 5A, 5B or equivalent; keep separate from concert sticks
- 7A for small combos and light cymbal work, keep separate from concert sticks

Brushes

- Vic Firth Jazz Brush
- Pro Mark "Hot Rods"

Intermediate to Advanced players should also begin purchasing/investing in accessory instruments and equipment such as metronome, tuning fork, dark hand towel to make a "music stand trap table", tambourine, triangle, wood block, maracas, shaker, guiro, claves, additional mallets from above list; depending on personal interests additional timpani and keyboard mallets (soft, very hard, ultra staccato, etc.) should be acquired.

II. SCHOOL PROVIDED INSTRUMENTS AND MALLETS

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

- Bass Drum: 28" or 32" diameter & stand (folding or tilting) (Pearl, Yamaha, Ludwig)
- Bass Drum Mallets: one General, rolling pair optional (Grover, Innovative, Vic Firth)
- Crash Cymbals: 16" pair, medium weight (French) (Sabian, Zildjian)
- Suspended Cymbal & stand: 16" or 18", medium-thin (Sabian, Zildjian)
- Accessory Instruments:
 - o Triangle (6" or 8") & clips; 1 or 2 pairs beaters (medium and heavy weights) (Grover, Abel, Pearl, Sabian)
 - o Tambourine (8" or 10" single row) (Grover, Black Swamp, Remo)
 - o Wood Block (Grover, LP, Ron Vaughn, Black Swamp)
 - o Cowbell (LP204A, LP206A)
 - o Claves (LP, Pearl)
 - o Maracas (LP281)
 - o Guiro (LP243)
 - o Sleigh Bells
 - o Castanets (Black Swamp, Danmar, Pearl)

MIDDLE SCHOOL

- Snare Drum: 5x14" metal or wood shell, and 6.5x14" metal or wood shell
- Bass Drum: 32" or 36" diameter & stand (tilting) (Pearl, Yamaha, Ludwig)
- Bass Drum Mallets: one General, one pair rolling (Grover, Innovative, Vic Firth)
- Crash Cymbals: 18" pair, medium weight (French or Viennese); additional 16" pair if possible
- Suspended Cymbal & stand: 18" medium-thin, and 16" thin
- Bells: 2.5 octave, steel bars preferred (aluminum OK) (Musser M-645, Deagan DG-1590A, Yamaha YG1210)
- Xylophone: 2.5 to 3 octave, wood or synthetic bars; 3.5 octave if possible (Musser, Adams, Yamaha)
- Vibraphone: 3 octave (Yamaha YV-2700, Musser M-55, Adams CV1)
- Chimes: Optional, but frequently written for
- Gong (Tam Tam): 28" with stand and mallet (Wuhan, Paiste)
- Bongos (pair) & stand (LP, Toca)
- Congas (pair) & stand (LP, Toca)
- Timpani: pair (26" & 29") minimum; 32" (if three) and 23" (if four) also, copper bowls preferred or fiberglass if cost prohibitive (Yamaha 6200/4200, Adams, Ludwig)
- Drum Set: standard 5 piece set with 14" hi-hat, 16" Medium Thin Crash, and 20" Medium Ride cymbals
- Tom Toms: 4 concert toms (10", 12", 13", 14") & stands (Pearl, Yamaha); marching toms (quads, quints) may be substituted on an appropriate stand
- Accessory Instruments - same as Elementary School list above, plus:
 - o Triangle (6" or 8") & clips
 - o Tambourine (10" double row with wood shell, skin head) (Grover, Black Swamp)
 - o Temple Blocks - wood (Grover, Black Swamp, Vaughn/Asonesprit) or synthetic (LP Granite Blocks – LP1210)

HIGH SCHOOL

- Snare Drum: 5x14" metal or wood shell, and 6.5x14" metal or wood shell
- Bass Drum: 36" diameter & stand (tilting or suspended) (Pearl, Yamaha, Ludwig)
- Bass Drum Mallets: one General, one pair rolling, pair solid felt or chamois (Grover, Innovative, Vic Firth)
- Crash Cymbals: 18" pair, medium-heavy (Viennese or Germanic); 20" medium-heavy, additional 16" lighter pair if possible (French)
- Suspended Cymbal & stand: 18" medium-thin, and 16" thin
- Bells: 2.5 octave, steel bars (Musser M-645, Deagan DG-1590A, Yamaha YG1210)
- Xylophone: 3.5 octave, wood or synthetic bars (Musser M51, Adams XSHV35, Yamaha YX500RC)
- Vibraphone: 3 octave (Yamaha YV-2700, Musser M-55, Adams CV1)
- Chimes: brass = brighter, chrome = darker (Adams, Musser, Yamaha)
- Marimba: 4.3 octave to 5 octave, wood (preferred/INDOOR ONLY) or synthetic bar (Adams, Marimba One, Musser, Yamaha)
- Crotales: one or two octaves (Sabian, Zildjian, Paiste)
- Gong (Tam Tam): 32" or larger with stand and mallet (Wuhan, Paiste)
- Bongos (pair) & stand (LP, Toca)
- Congas (pair) & stand (LP, Toca) Timbales (LP)
- Timpani: Set of four – 23", 26", 29", 32" (Yamaha 6200, Adams ADM-P2KG, Ludwig Professional LUD-LKP504PG)
- Drum Set: standard 5 piece set with 14" hi-hat, 16" Medium Thin Crash, and 20" Medium Ride cymbals; option of additional cymbals (splash, china, crash), double-bass
- Accessory Instruments - same as Elementary & Middle School lists above, plus:
 - o Finger Cymbals (Zildjian heavy)
 - o Afuche/Cabasa (LP234A)
 - o Wind Chimes (TreeWorks, LP, Pearl)
 - o Bell Tree (LP, Pearl)
 - o Shekere (LP483)

III. MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR POINTERS

SNARE

- strainer, throw off: how to adjust, set, if sticky; replacement

TIMPANI

- range for each drum, pedal, tension screw knob, pedal slipping
- head clearing
- drum dial
- TAP gauge

KEYBOARDS

- rubber grommets on bells, bar cord (parachute line) on vibe, marimba, xylo,
- broken bars, dead notes
- chime hangars broken off;

GONGS

- Coated cable

BASS DRUM, TOMS (concert, set), BONGOS, CONGAS

- internal hardware loose
- broken or missing parts/replace

DRUM HEAD REPLACEMENT

- Heads go false, pull loose from collar/rare to actually break a head
- Lack of resonance, dead tone
- 2-3 years maximum life, less if used frequently

SUSPENDED CYMBALS

- Felt, washers, sleeves on stand, keyholing, cracking

CRASH CYMBALS

- straps

IV. QUESTIONS