



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### WHAT INSTRUMENT TO BUY FOR A BEGINNER STUDENT?

In general, at the beginning, it is better to invest more into the lessons and the building of skills than in an instrument. Once the student shows commitment to practicing and the lessons, the investment into a solid instrument would be an excellent next step and great motivation.

**Piano.** It is sometimes a good idea to start with a smaller keyboard: 61-key keyboard would be sufficient for a student who is just starting and is not sure about the lessons. There are many excellent affordable smaller keyboards on the market, which are durable and have good resale value. For students interested in taking higher level Illinois State exams in piano, or participating in competitions, minimum requirement is a regular piano or a full digital keyboard (88 keys) with graduated weighted keys. You can often purchase regular pianos at affordable rates from private sellers, but there is an expense of moving them and tuning them 1-2 per year. Good digital keyboards can be anywhere from \$500-\$4000. The high-quality digital keyboard is easy to move, does not need tuning or any maintenance, has great tone quality and key action, and can last for decades. The regular upright or console piano would be an ideal instrument, in the traditional view, but they can be impractical because they are difficult to move and need regular tuning and general maintenance.

**Violin and Viola.** Initially, we suggest renting from a good rental company which provides good violins. Low end violins go out of tune almost immediately and the teacher spends more time in the lesson tuning the instrument than teaching the student. We believe that a few extra dollars invested in good rental instruments would allow for faster learning and stronger interest. Also, the instrument should be of the adequate size to fit the height of the student. Stores that rent violins would be able to provide best guidance about the size of the instrument.

**Drums.** It is a good idea to start with a drum pad, a stand, and a pair of drum sticks. If the student becomes really interested and practices at home regularly, the investment into a drum set would be a great idea. Both second hand and new sets would be adequate.

**Guitar and Ukulele.** The student should have the instrument that fits their size. For very young students, there are affordable small size guitars and ukuleles, and they would be a very good starting instrument and a low investment. For students who are a bit older, a junior size guitar or full-size ukulele would be the right fit. Your local guitar store will help you find the right size instrument for your child.

**Acoustic or Electric Guitar?** For young students, it is important to start with the instrument that they like and which will keep them interested. Keep in mind, though, that the investment doubles when it comes to electric guitar since you would need to purchase the instrument, an amp (amplifier) and the cables. For adults, if you have both instruments, there is no need to limit yourself to just one choice: there are songs that sound better on one guitar than the other, and having different expressive options can be a great motivation and reward.

*Please feel free to call us or e-mail if we can offer additional clarifications.*

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