

Purchasing Sticks and Mallets

Keith Lienert

Purchasing the right sticks and mallets can make a real difference in the sound that one produces. Below is a list of typical implements that I recommend at various stages of development:

	Drum sticks	Keyboard Mallets	Other Sticks or Mallets	Other Equipment and things to consider
Elementary School	Concert Snare Drum Sticks Drumset Sticks	1 pair Med Hard Cord (Marimba/Vibes) 1 pair – Med. Hard plastic (Xylophone/Bells)	1 pair of General Timpani sticks	Metronome Stick Bag (or a stick bag package) Drum Pad Bell and/or Snare Drum kit
Middle School	2 nd pair of Drumset sticks (ensemble use) Marching Snare Drum Sticks	1 set of Hard yarn (Marimba) 1 set of Med. Hard Cord (Vibraphone)	Brushes (Drumset)	Drumset (A typical 5 piece with Ride cymbal, crash cymbal, high-hats, and a throne)
High School	Concert Snare Drum Sticks	1 Set of Med. Soft Yarn Marimba 1 pair of Med. Hard Rubber (marimba) 1 pair Med. Hard Plastic (Xylophone/Bells) 1 Set Med. Soft Cord (Vibraphone)	1 pair of Staccato Timpani 1 pair Ultra-Staccato Timpani	Black towel Larger Stick Bag Tambourine Triangle w/ clip Triangle Beaters Tuning fork Recording device MP3 player *Larger instruments as needed or are applicable
Early College	Additional sticks as needed for study/ensembles	1 pair of metal mallets (Bells)	1 pair of multi-sticks	Music majors should have their own Triangle (w/ beaters) and tambourine

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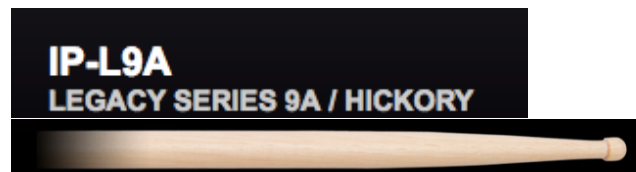
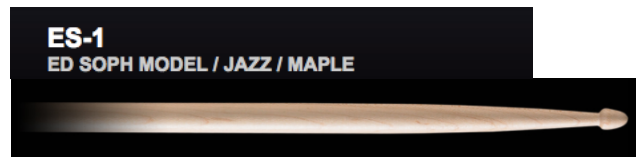
Drumsticks

Concert Snare Sticks have a somewhat distinct bead (round ball at the tip of the stick) and are thicker in diameter than drumset sticks.

I recommend the **IP-LD** (Innovative Percussion Lalo Davila Model) or the **IP-KW** (Innovative Kennan Wylie Model) for beginners. Vic Firth also makes a nice general stick, the SD-1 General.

Drumset Sticks have a variety of styles depending on the musical situation. For clarity on cymbals I prefer using a stick with either a barrelhead shape or an acorn shape to the bead (pending on the style of music I'm playing). I suggest either the **IP-L9A** or the **IP-ES1** (Ed Soph Signature).

Marching Snare Drum Sticks are normally provided by a school's drumline, but it is worth owning a pair to become familiar to the change in weight and diameter. I suggest the **FS-PR** from Innovative Percussion (Paul Rennick Model).



Keyboard Mallets

Different mallets should be used for different keyboards. Using an incorrect mallet might not only sound bad, but has the potential to damage the instrument. Mallets usually come with either rattan or birch handles as well as a variety of mallet heads (i.e. yarn, cord, unwrapped, etc.). Mallets are usually sold in pairs; however, in order to play 4-mallet material, you will need two pairs to form a 'set'.

For *Medium-Soft Plastic Mallets* for Bells and Xylophone, I recommend the **IP F12**. For a *Medium-Hard Cord Mallet* (for marimba, xylophone, or vibraphone), I suggest the **IP-F3.5**.

For four-mallet playing, I recommend a set of *Medium-Hard Yarn Mallets* like the **IP-240**. For some *Medium-Soft Mallets*, go with the **IP-100**.

For *Vibraphone* mallets, I recommend the Dan Moore series **IP-DM26**.

A brighter sound on the *bells* and *xylophone* may be needed; the **IP905** James Ross series is a good mallet to have.

Lastly, **Medium-Hard Rubber** mallets may be useful for more 'attack' on marimba (as well as other instruments). I recommend the **IP-ENS25** Medium Hard Series.



Timpani Mallets

A pair of General timpani mallets will work for most playing situations throughout high school. However, as students enter college, I recommend expanding the inventory to include a pair of Staccato Timpani mallets and a pair of Ultra-Staccato Timpani mallets. I recommend the **IP-CT3** for General, **IP-CT5** for staccato, and the **IP-CT6** for Ultra-Staccato.

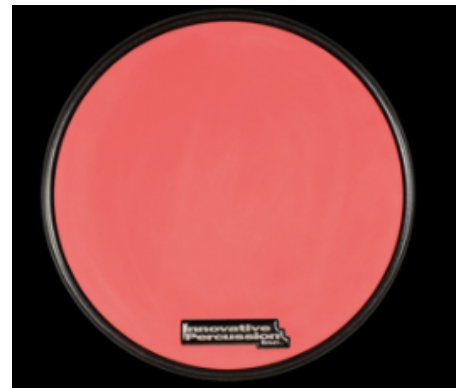


Brushes are a very common implement used for drumset in jazz and some concert settings. I highly recommend the steel wire brushes (over the plastic variety), in particular the **IP-WBR1** model works very well.



Other Equipment and Purchases to Consider:

Practice Pad – this is a very important tool that allows students to play for a long period of time without taxing their ears (or the people around them!). I highly recommend getting a gum rubber pad that is large enough to fit on a snare drum (about 10-12"). Try to avoid the 6" pads, as they tend to slip while playing. Innovative Percussion makes a good practice pad as well as Evans HQ Real Feel pads.



Stick Bag – Also a very important component in a percussionists' arsenal! This is great for keeping all of the mallets and sticks in one place and hopefully from being damaged (much better than a backpack). I recommend a smaller stick bag at first; however, if a student is acquiring a lot of mallets, a larger bag may be needed. For smaller bags, I recommend the IP-SB-3; and for larger bags, the MB-1.



Metronomes – this is probably the most important learning tool for any musician! There are a wide variety of styles and prices of metronomes available (anything from \$5 to \$150!). Features that I recommend to look for include a headphone jack, meter settings, subdivision controls and easy-to-use tempo controls. BOSS Dr. Beat metronomes are fantastic; however, they are a bit pricey. One thing to consider is the various cell phone applications that are available for Android and iOS – I personally like [*Tempo Advance*](#).



Tempo Advance



Other Items:

Recording Device – Zoom makes a fair amount of recording devices that are used by professionals. The ZOOM H2N is a very nice audio recorder, while the ZOOM Q2N is a fantastic video recorder.

Recommended Vendors:

Steve Weiss Music

<http://www.steveweissmusic.com/>

Percussion Source

<http://www.percussionsource.com/>

Lonestar Percussion

<http://www.lonestarpercussion.com/>

Sweetwater (for Pro-Audio)

<https://www.sweetwater.com/>

Best of luck on your purchases, please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

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