



Dear Parents,

In the past few years, I have seen a significant increase in students and their families purchasing instruments online or at discount department stores. While it's true that good deals can be found online, it's also true- and increasingly alarming to band directors nationwide- that there are many instruments of inferior quality being sold to unsuspecting buyers. These instruments are referred to by people in the music profession as ISO's- Instrument Shaped Objects! The instruments- often new- may look good when they arrive, but due to substandard craftsmanship and materials, they soon develop problems. Instruments with metals that are too soft to hold an adjustment cause woodwind players great frustration and valves that don't fit correctly can make brass instruments virtually unplayable. An instrument that does not work properly can be tremendously discouraging to a student. I, and many of my colleagues, have seen this lead directly to students quitting band out of frustration. A quality instrument that plays in tune, stays in alignment, and has a life expectancy of twenty five years or more is a crucial factor in the success of students at all levels of the band program.

If you are considering buying an instrument, you need to follow one simple rule- buy an established name brand. For example, it has been my experience that instruments made by Yamaha are well made and are long lasting. Other established name brands are: Conn, Selmer, Bundy, King and Holton.

Any of the instrumental music teachers in MSAD 75 would be happy to advise you regarding instrument purchases- online or otherwise. We also have several reputable local music stores in Maine. With a local dealer, you save shipping costs (often a substantial savings) and you have service if needed after the sale. Both **Music & Arts** in West Falmouth (formerly Eastern Musical Supply) and **Northern Kingdom Music** in Rockland and Bangor, carry a complete line of high quality instruments from beginner to professional models. I have no ulterior motive in recommending either company- there are other fine music stores in Maine, but these two are in our area and specialize in instruments and service to school music programs.

I want to assure you that I have absolutely no business or financial motive in recommending a particular brand of instrument or company. The opinions stated here are based on my experiences from more than thirty years of teaching. My motive is to prevent students from getting stuck with an inferior instrument. While it may save a few dollars in the short term, it almost always results in failure over the long term.

Please feel free to contact me if I can assist anyone or answer any questions with regard to instrument purchases.

From,
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