

WHAT TO PLAY (SELECTING YOUR INSTRUMENTS)

ACOUSTIC DRUMS

A drumset consists of four elements: drums, cymbals, hardware (stands, mounting devices and pedals) and a stool or “throne.” For your first set, you will need at least the following:

Drums

Snare—a relatively small drum, characterized by snares (almost always wire) stretched across the bottom head. A lever on the side of the drum releases or engages the snares. (Releasing them creates, in effect, a somewhat high-pitched tom.)

Tom-tom (or “tom”)—a mid-sized drum, pitched somewhere between the snare and bass. It is highly preferable, though not essential, to have at least two toms: one mounted on the bass drum and the other, larger one a “floor tom,” which usually has self-contained hardware. (Another practical arrangement for positioning tom-toms includes racks.)

Bass—the largest drum, which sits on the floor and is played with a pedal.

Cymbals

Ride—a large, relatively thick cymbal (19 to 22 inches in diameter).

Crash—a mid-sized cymbal (16 to 18 inches in diameter) with a quick response and often a rather quick decay when struck hard. If your budget does not allow for this cymbal, you may get by without it, but it will be *sorely* missed and should be added at the first opportunity.

Hi-Hat—a set of two rather small cymbals (13 to 15 inches in diameter) which can vary in weight/thickness, depending on



▲ Acoustic Set (front).

the desired sound. Sometimes the bottom cymbal is slightly thicker than the top.

Hardware

Snare Stand—obviously, to support the snare drum.

Cymbal Stands—one for the ride, the other for the crash. (On some older sets, hardware for a ride-cymbal stand is attached to the bass drum.) Wing nuts, with felt washers placed above and below the cymbal, keep them from flying off the stand. Small plastic sleeves, which fit around the threads at the top of the stand, keep bare metal from touching bare metal, preventing the cymbal from cracking (see page 86 on care and maintenance). Telescopic stands, or “boom” stands, are often used for larger, heavier

cymbals and allow greater flexibility when positioning them.

Hi-Hat Stand—a particular cymbal stand with a tension spring in its shaft (which is usually adjustable) and a foot pedal to lower the top cymbal onto the bottom one. A “clutch” and felt pads hold the top cymbal on a rod which moves with the pedal; the lower cymbal rests on another felt pad and holder. The stand includes an adjustment on the bottom cymbal holder to offset the angle of the lower cymbal. This prevents the two cymbals from locking together in a vacuum (airlock) when they are brought together with the pedal. The bottom cymbal is available with drilled holes to alleviate airlock.



▲ *Acoustic Set (back).*

Tom-Tom Mount—holds the tom in place and is generally connected to the bass drum shell. In the case of a floor tom, rods or “legs” elevate it off the floor.

Bass Drum Pedal—connects, via a clamp, to the rim of the bass drum.

Bass Drum Spurs—two rods which keep the drum from tilting side to side or creeping forward.

Miscellaneous

Stool or Throne—a small padded seat with height adjustment.

Rug or Mat—necessary for protecting the floor, as well as the bass drum bottom. It also keeps the bass drum from creep-

ing forward following each impact of the pedal’s beater, so choose something that will not slide on a smooth surface.

Sticks—a possible beginner size is “5A” or “5B,” but anything in that range is good. (Note: There is no standard system for classifying assorted stick types.) However, a stick bigger than “2B” is too clumsy. It is wise to resist selecting too small a stick because the muscles in the fingers, hands and wrist will better develop with a little weight. In addition, the slightly heavier stick will bounce higher (beneficial!) and last a little longer. Sticks with plastic nylon tips were created to give a more articulated sound on cymbals, and they also protect the wood

tip. Sticks with or without nylon tips are both fine, but realize that each one creates a different type of sound, particularly on cymbals. When purchasing sticks, check for warped wood by rolling them on a flat surface (which most reputable dealers should allow you to do).

Metronome—see page 24.

Cases (optional)—if you will be moving your drums around to gigs and rehearsals, these will greatly cut down on wear and tear, make storage easier, keep hardware organized and assist with transporting equipment.

Rack Stands (optional)—depending on the amount of additional equipment you have, this hardware can be substituted for several single stands as it is capable of holding several toms and sometimes cymbals too.

Drum Key or Lug Wrench (a must!)—the purpose of this small tool is to turn the lugs, pulling the drum hoop to tighten the drumhead or loosening it to remove one (see page 82). While it is a bit more expensive, the advantage of a wrench is that it’s easier on the hands and easier to use.

Gloves (optional)—some drummers, especially heavy metal players, sport athletic gloves (often the kind weight lifters use to protect their hands and give them a better grip when the hands perspire). Drummers whose hands perspire quite a bit may want to consider trying them out. Realize that gloves can also function as a fashion statement for the player (whether your hands get slippery or not). If you like the idea, use them while you practice in order to get used to playing with them.