

# GARAGE SALES

## Buying and Selling Instruments

Let's say you're starting a new hobby, taking a class or have a child who's interested in music.

Or maybe you've finally said goodbye to your attempted hobby or upgraded to new gear or that child is leaving for college and you don't have an immediate need for a tuba.

The good news is that because of the former group of people, you don't have to stay a member of the latter for long.

Here's the skinny on buying and selling used musical instruments.

### IF YOU'RE BUYING

The first thing you want to do is research. Learn everything you can about the type of instrument you want to play, then start learning about brands and accessories. You want to make sure to get a quality instrument that you can learn on but will also stand up to the test of time. Research parts availability and ease of repair, too, espe-



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cially if you're thinking of buying an older instrument.

Start out looking at the usual haunts: pawn shops and music stores. You can also hit up online sites like Craigslist or social media

marketplaces, but where you might find the best deals are at garage sales, where you can meet the sellers face-to-face and negotiate. A private seller may be able to make you a package deal with accessories

and so forth that stores won't be able to do.

Once you've found an instrument you like, inspect it for flaws or issues. You also want to ask the seller about a thorough history, including

maintenance, if the piece traveled or was in storage, or if major repairs have been done. Finally, you want to play the instrument yourself or have the seller send videos of it being played.

### IF YOU'RE SELLING

Start by digging up the receipt for your instruments and gear. Having the purchase price and date can go a long way toward helping a buyer feel confident in their purchase. Also look for receipts for any travel, storage or repairs.

Those receipts can also help you set a price. But don't automatically think you're going to get back what you paid. Check the market rates by searching for your same equipment and accessories on sites like Craigslist and eBay. Keep in mind the condition of your equipment, too, and clean it up and make any simple repairs to fetch the best price.

Clean gear looks great in the photos, too, and you want to make sure you take well-lit, sharp photos from multiple angles. If you can, include the serial number and model number. Make sure you include any nicks, damage or flaws in the photos as well. You should be completely honest about these and also factor them into your price.



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### BUYER'S TIP

#### Bring an Instructor Along

If you're a beginner, ask a knowledgeable friend or perhaps your instructor to come along with you to try instruments. They can help you make sure you're getting the best deal.

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