



BASSOON PURCHASING

Plastic or Wood?

Student or beginner bassoons are typically made of plastic or maple. These bassoons do not have all of the key work a professional would require and may or may not have a high D key. "Short reach" instruments are available for younger students with smaller hands that want to get started on the bassoon right away. Plastic is the better choice for most public school music programs: They are most affordable and better able to withstand the inconsistent swabbing and servicing they will likely endure. The Fox model 51 is a good option for most middle schools and the Fox Model IV is a good option for high schools.

Used or New?

Used bassoons can be a great option for purchasing an instrument on a limited budget, provided they have been examined and serviced by an experienced professional. Because bassoons are made from maple, advanced age is not a cause for concern. Many reputable double reed companies have used and reworked instruments available. I recommend Midwest Musical Imports. For any instrument purchase, make sure to take advantage of the trial period available to you. During this trial, have a trusted bassoon professional examine the instrument.

Care

Bassoons should be serviced annually to check for leaks and service keys/springs. While local music stores are often sufficient for basic repairs like pad replacement, servicing should be done by a bassoon specialist. Bassoons must be swabbed after each use to prevent wood rot. This is especially important for the boot joint. Tenons must be carefully greased to prevent damage to the instrument during assembly. Bassoons should always be stored in a sturdy case and kept in a temperate environment such as an instrument storage room or a home. Bassoons must never be left in a car as they are very susceptible to damage from humidity and temperature changes (in addition to theft).