

Tuba and Euphonium Equipment

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BEGINNING (MIDDLE SCHOOL) LEVEL INSTRUMENTS

TUBA

What you need:

- $\frac{3}{4}$ Size BB Flat Tuba.
- Upright bell, preferably front action valves.
- 3 piston valves, in good working order.
- Lacquer or silver plating is fine. Lacquer is less expensive.
- A horn built of a strong metal alloy with adequate braces and reinforcement with freely moving slides.
- An instrument free of leaks or dents larger than $\frac{1}{3}$ the diameter of the tubing.

EUPHONIUM

What you need:

- A moderately small sized euphonium, which may be labeled a baritone.
- Upright or front facing bell is acceptable.
- 3 piston valves, in good working order.
- An instrument ergonomically designed for proper posture. Ponder the question, “what will happen once the student is tall enough to have to hold the horn up rather than rest on the chair?”
- Lacquer or silver plating is fine. Lacquer is less expensive.
- A horn built of a strong metal alloy with adequate braces and reinforcement with freely moving slides.
- An instrument free of leaks or dents larger than $\frac{1}{3}$ the diameter of the tubing.

What you *don't* need:

- Avoid “convertible” tubas, you should preferably have separate sousaphones for outdoors. Likewise, marching euphoniums are less than ideal for indoor playing.
- Instruments wrapped too widely or awkwardly for the average size of a student who will play it.
- More expensive, even older used tubas are much better than cheaper instruments built poorly! You may save your program money this year, but what about next year when they need repaired or replaced?
- Avoid “generic” brands. **YOU GET WHAT YOU PAY FOR!**

Recommended brands:

- Yamaha, Conn, King.

INTERMEDIATE (HIGH SCHOOL) LEVEL INSTRUMENTS

TUBA

What you need:

- 4/4 Size BB Flat Tuba.
- Upright bell, preferably front action valves.
- 4 piston valves or rotary, in good working order.
 - The choice of piston or rotary valves is a matter of **preference**.
- Lacquer or silver plating is fine. Lacquer is less expensive.
- A horn built of a strong metal alloy with adequate braces and reinforcement with freely moving slides.
- An instrument free of leaks or dents larger than 1/3 the diameter of the tubing.

Recommended brands:

- Miraphone, Meinl-Weston, VMI, Yamaha, Conn, B&S Perantucci.

EUPHONIUM

What you need:

- A full sized euphonium.
- Upright bell with top action valves is most common.
- 4 piston valves, in good working order.
- Compensating or non-compensating.
- An instrument ergonomically designed for proper posture. Ponder the question, “what will happen once the student is tall enough to have to hold the horn up rather than rest on the chair?”
- Lacquer or silver plating is fine. Lacquer is less expensive.
- A horn built of a strong metal alloy with adequate braces and reinforcement with freely moving slides.
- An instrument free of leaks or dents larger than 1/3 the diameter of the tubing.

Recommended brands:

- Yamaha, Besson, Wilson, Meinl-Weston.

MOUTHPIECES

What you need:

- A mouthpiece must be free of dings, especially in the shank. It should be kept clean, and have minimal plating wear.
- Some people are allergic to silver plating and require gold plated mouthpieces. Even then, some people are allergic to the nickel alloy in many mouthpieces. They will need mouthpieces plated above 18 ct., or stainless steel or titanium mouthpieces.
- Most average sized mouthpieces that come with horns are acceptable for beginners. Most intermediate players will need something bigger, but avoid extremes in sizes for developing embouchures.
- Make sure the shank size on the euphonium matches the mouthpiece!

What you *don't* need:

- Avoid “trick” mouthpieces such as colored, clear, or plastic mouthpieces.

Recommended beginner tuba mouthpieces:

- Bach (Bach 18), Yamaha (Yamaha 66), Conn, Schilke.

Recommended beginner euphonium mouthpieces:

- Bach (Bach 6 1/2 or 7), Yamaha, Conn, Schilke.

For links to retailers visit www.georgepalton.com

Need consultation on a professional level tuba? Ask your local tuba expert or e-mail george@georgepalton.com!