



World Music Drumming

Transforming Lives . . . Building Community

Drum Choices: Priorities and Prices

by Will Schmid, Ph.D.

Got a limited budget (who doesn't) and want to purchase some drums? Here are some thoughts on *what to buy first and why* as well as *how to get support*.

Tunable or Pretuned?

Although pretuned tubanos and other drums seem like a good deal at a cheaper price, teachers often regret their purchase later because: 1) the heads will not hold their pitch; 2) pretuned drums in each size will not have the same pitch — some 14" low drums may be higher than some 12" mediums; 3) the quality of tone is not as good as a tunable. You can replace pretuned tubano heads, but you can't turn them into tunables. All of this said, it is still better to have pretuned drums than no drums.

Tunable tubanos and other drums are an advantage because: 1) you can tune the highs (10"), mediums (12") and lows (14") to a clear pitch for each section, and that will make your World Music Drumming ensembles sound much better; 2) the tone quality of each drum is far superior to a pretuned drum; 3) you can replace damaged heads as fast as a NASCAR pit crew changes a tire using a reversible electric drill and the socket from the tuning mechanism. I like to tune the medium (12") drums first by finding out where most of them are; then I tune the high (10") drums a perfect 4th higher and the low (14") drums a 4th lower — this avoids tuning to a simple major or minor triad and establishing a tonality.

Setting Priorities

If you can't afford a complete Remo A (class of 30), B (class of 26), or C (class of 22) World Music Drumming Set, start building your drums with a plan that will produce a balanced ensemble later. Keep in mind that medium (12") tubanos will be your most flexible drums — the Remo sets have more mediums than either highs or lows.

If you have about \$500, start by buying 1 high, 1 medium, and 1 low. If you can find more money, buy drums in some version of the following order:

<u>High</u>	<u>Medium</u>	<u>Low</u>
1	1	1
1	2	1
2	2	2
2	4	2
3	5	3

Getting Stakeholder Support

Remember the movie quote, "If you build it, they will come."? Well, the equivalent for World Music Drumming is "If you demonstrate, they will support." Thousands of teachers all over the world have reported that once administrators, parents, and other members of the community see how engaging and valuable a World Music Drumming experience is for students, they will provide the support. If you want to read hundreds of stories about this, go to www.worldmusicdrumming.com and click on "Local News and Concert Programs" in the navigation bar. One enterprising teacher even started an "Adopt-a-Drum" program where families, businesses, and fraternal organizations can support the purchase of instruments with a contribution of something like \$100, \$150, or \$200. Keep talking to stakeholders about the benefits to kids — stronger community, improved focus and listening, and a reason for "at risk" students to come to school. There will never be enough money in your own budget, so look elsewhere.