

## GENERAL TIPS FOR BUYING A GUITAR

One of the most important things you'll ever do in your music career is buy a guitar. I'm often asked to give people advice about how to find a good guitar. The fact is that there is a LOT that goes into buying a guitar, way too much to put in one Newsletter, so I'll give you some basic tips in this issue and tell you about other things I think are important in coming editions.

When you're buying a guitar you have to do your homework. As a beginning guitar player it's easy to get confused with all the information and advice that is available. There are a lot of places you can get information and you should check them all. Guitar magazines are a good place to find prices and reviews on different models of guitars. You can also get information at your local music store. Another great tool is the internet - you can get information on the manufacturers, search for other guitarist's reviews and opinions and find the best prices online.

Remember that a lot of the information and opinions that you will find will be biased. A salesman in a music store wants you to buy the brand of guitar that HE SELLS, so make sure you read reviews and opinions from independent sources.

I am often asked about buying a guitar through an online auction site like eBay. You can find auctions where guitars sell for incredibly low prices; but I don't recommend that you buy this way because you really need to play a guitar before you buy it, particularly at this stage in your music career.

Once you've got the background knowledge that you need, you should make a short list of guitars that you are interested in and set budget for yourself. THEN STICK WITH YOUR BUDGET! Don't let salespeople talk you into spending more money than you planned.

Trying out the guitars you have short listed can be intimidating for beginners. It is important to remember that you are not in a guitar store to show everyone how good a guitar player you are - you are there to decide whether the guitar on your list is a right for you.

One of the most important things about a guitar is how it "feels" when you play it. There are also mechanical things to check. Check the frets for buzzing by playing each one. Make sure that the neck is not warped by looking down it as if you were sighting a gun. Check that all of the volume and tone controls work.

It is also a good idea to take an experienced guitarist along with you when you are looking at guitars. Not only will they be able to offer helpful advice, they will be good moral support when it's time to pick up the guitar and play it in public.

I'll give you more advice in later issues. Good luck with buying a guitar!

Ben Edwards