

from the many people with whom we have spent time, played music, and shared what we know. Early in the process of writing we realized that people teach themselves best by doing. So, to this end, we offer you these elements of dulcimer playing that are easily learned and put into practice by almost anyone.

We explain different techniques and styles that you can use in your playing, be it ever so simple in the beginning. And we offer information that we believe is vital to a real understanding of the dulcimer—a close examination of the various modal tunings, historical comments, and finger positions for playing chords.

When we started our search for how to play the dulcimer, we knew few songs and very little, if anything, about music. So all our explanations are in layman's terms, and any strange music terminologies are defined in context so you won't get hung-up. If a passage on technique (or anything else) is confusing at first, read it aloud, slowly. Think...use your imagination.

The songs we recommend for practicing techniques are ones all of us know. We believe that once you are familiar with the instrument, and what it can and cannot do, and once you are beginning to play it, you'll find that learning songs from musicians, records, or other dulcimer books will come easily.

As music is a process of sharing, so too is this book. If you discover new tunings, develop special techniques, find weird strings, picks, or anything at all in which you think other people would be interested, let us know what you've found or developed, and we'll pass the information on.

There is a certain magic about the dulcimer. It's hard to define, but if it's touched you, you know what it is. Keep this magic alive, and your music will take on form and substance, will grow and develop from within.

Shanti.

Bob Force and Al d'Ossché