

sides contain “color,” and amplify the sound while pushing it out through the sound holes. If your sound holes are too small, you lose volume. If they are too large, you end up with a brash tone.

Are all the notes on the fretboard true? It’s quite important that all the notes, even the ones way up the fretboard toward the bridge, be true and not sharp or flat due to incorrect fret placement.

Equidistant between the “nut” and the bridge (see the illustration on nomenclature on p.10) is one fret (usually the seventh) which when lightly touched will produce a harmonic tone. To make the harmonic, a clear, bell-like sound, touch the string with a finger of the left hand without depressing it to the fret. Quickly pluck the string with your right hand while simultaneously lifting your left finger off the string from over the fret.

Okay. Try this on the first string, or first two (unison) strings if you are dealing with a four-string dulcimer. It may take you a few times to get the bell-like note, but when you depress the string to the fret over which you found the bell-tone, the note you get off the fret should be exactly the same sound as the bell-tone harmonic. If the note you get upon depressing and plucking the string is not the same as the harmonic tone, carefully move the bridge a little forward or backward until the two notes match closely, if not exactly.

Experiment. Next try the harmonic on the eleventh fret from the nut. Do the same thing to find the bell-tone. And when you’ve gotten the bridge adjusted, depress the first string(s) onto the third fret from the nut and, moving up the fretboard, play the scale, do-re-me-fa-sol-la-ti-do. Do the notes now follow true?

Also, a strap-peg at both ends of the instrument is good for attaching a shoulder strap. If your instrument does not have strap-pegs, you can put them in yourself. Both metal and wooden pegs usually can be purchased at a good music store. If you get wooden pegs, you will have to bore a hole (or holes)