

Using D as our keytone, the letter values for each note going up the scale when tuned into the Mixolydian mode are:



Now we're ready for melody, and you may even have learned a little history, some music theory, and a few terms in getting here.

Okay...Music gotta' have feet. But before beginning this section on melody, sit and drum the fingers of your left hand on something. Drum... drum...drum...That's just the motion you want to use to fret the unisons. For playing melodies on the dulcimer, your forefinger and middle finger will become your most valuable tools. Later, we'll use additional fingers to add effects and flourishes, and to make chords. Also, we'll discuss techniques for fretting with other objects.

For now, we are going to fret with the tip of the middle finger of the left hand on both of the two melody or unison strings. Unlike the position used in playing a guitar or banjo, your left hand should come over the top of the instrument, not up onto the strings from the bottom.

As we go along, you will find that certain notes on our scale link into patterns. The first pattern is a four-note sequence: Octave (open)-third-fifth-mid-octave. Another way to describe this is: Open strum-second fret-fourth fret-seventh fret. To make things even easier, let's number the notes of the first octave on the fretboard. The open note will be one, the first fretted note will be two, and so on up to eight. The first sequence will now read 1-3-5-8. (There are three notes between 1 and 3, hence the term third; and five notes between 1 and 5, hence fifth.) This 1-3-5 pattern is basic to a major chordal structure; that is, the third and fifth tones complement or har-