

It's very important that your friend's guitar be in tune, so let him get it right. Then, if the song you want to play is going to be in the Mixolydian mode, it's a good rule of thumb to tune the dulcimer to the key of D. So have your guitarist friend give you a D, and tune your unisons to this note. If he wants to play in E, fine. Your unisons will tune to an E just as well as D.

Now explain to your friend what the Mixolydian mode is. Simply put, it is the scheme of the G-major scale without the F-sharp; or, expressed another way, the scale of the Mixolydian mode has a minor seventh tone. Now he can go ahead and figure out the modal scale in D, or whatever, and he'll know what notes you have on your fretboard when you are tuned to the Mixolydian mode.

Here is a chart that might help him. When we worked it out, it helped me a great deal, so I'll pass it on. It's based on the Mixolydian mode transposed to the key of D.

Mode	Trad. Modal Key	Transposed Chromatic Key
Mixolydian	G	D
Aeolian	A-minor	E-minor
Locrian	B	F#-minor
Ionian	C	G
Dorian	D-minor	A-minor
Phrygian	E-minor	B-minor
Lydian	F	C

With this chart he can transpose the mode into the correct key. However, another problem may arise: often a song must be played in a particular mode because of the limitations of the string tensions and the fret arrangement of the dulcimer. To the guitarist the twelve keys and their scales and patterns are all available without changing the standard guitar tuning. But let's say you want to play a particular song in the Mixolydian mode keyed to D, and he only knows it in the key of C, with all its particular runs and chordal patterns. If he tries to play the song in