Finding the Songs You Want to Play by Ear and Eye
Steve Eulberg
www.steveeulberg.com
www.owlmountainmusic.com

SOME HELPFUL OBSERVATIONS ABOUT SONGS & TUNES
to help de-code them for playing:

1. Most tunes end at Home (on Do, or the name of the key).

2. The vast majority of western folk & traditional tunes are played in a Major Key.

3. Melodies can go up or down in pitch. Some do this by steps, some by jumps.

4. The space between two pitches is called an interval.

Intervals: Octave   "Somewhere Over the Rainbow"
             Seventh   "Bali Hai" (South Pacific)
             flatted seventh   "There's A Place for us" (West Side Story)
             Sixth   "My Bonnie Lies over the ocean"
             Fifth   "God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen"
             Fourth   "Here Comes the Bride"
             Third   "nyeah, nyeah"
              minor third   "And many <u>more</u>" (from Happy Birthday)
             Second   "and <u>many</u> more" (from Happy Birthday

6. Questions to ask for playing by ear:
        A. Does the melody stay the same?
        B. Does it go up or down?
        C. Does the melody you want to play **step** up or down as the notes change?
        D. Does it **jump** up or down?
        E. Is the jump big or little?

7. Questions to ask for playing by eye:
        A. Which chords are the guitar player playing?
        B. Which chords are the mountain dulcimer playing?
        C. Which box is the hammered dulcimer playing in?
        D. What are the "boundaries" of the tune?
        E. See question re: ear above.

SOME HELPFUL OBSERVATIONS ABOUT THE DULCIMER
to help de-code how to play the songs we want to play.

1. The Dulcimer is a "Modal" instrument: if you start at any fret and add 7, then play all the frets (skipping 6+), you'll play the 7 different "Modes" or scales that were used in creating much of traditional music.

2. A Mode is a scale with a combination of whole and half steps.

3. On the mountain dulcimer all the modes are available to you all the time, if you play single string melodies. However, the drones may not line up well.

4. Re-tuning is to make the drones match the mode you want to play

5. (Reminder: a mode it NOT a tuning).

Some common tunings (where the drones line up to match the mode)

DAd= Mixolydian
DAC= Aeolian
DAA= Ionian
DAG= Dorian