

The combinations of mode and tonal center most commonly encountered in Irish flute, tin whistle, and uilleann pipe music are shown below in Figure 1-3. The ones containing G-sharps (i.e. A Ionian and B Dorian) are encountered less often than the others.

Figure 1-3 displays 12 modes of music, each represented by a single staff of music. The modes are grouped into four sets of three. Each mode is labeled on the left and has its mode signature (sharps) indicated at the beginning of the staff. The modes are: D Ionian, G Ionian, A Ionian, D Mixolydian, G Mixolydian, A Mixolydian, E Dorian, A Dorian, B Dorian, E Aeolian, A Aeolian, and B Aeolian. Each mode is accompanied by a short melodic phrase consisting of several notes, some of which are beamed together or have slurs over them.

Figure 1-3. The modes most commonly encountered in Irish flute, tin whistle, and uilleann pipe music. Note well the mode signatures.

“MODE SIGNATURES” INSTEAD OF KEY SIGNATURES

Note that in Figure 1-3 I have used the appropriate “mode signature” for each mode, instead of using accidentals. *Take special note of these mode signatures.* Musicians who are used to operating on the assumption that every signature indicates a major key or its relative minor key will have to expand their thinking somewhat.