

Tab Validation Checklist

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INTRODUCTION

This document describes the validation process used to check tabs submitted to the www.mysongbook.com archive. You can use it as an auto-validation tool.

Just go through all described points before sending in your tabs, correct what is needed and you should avoid a frustrating rejection of the tab you spend hours to transcribe!

And if your tab still gets rejected, read carefully the rejection email and make the required modification before uploading it again. If you don't understand or disagree with the decision, don't upload your tab again but use the Contact MSB Team forum. If you didn't receive any email check your spam settings/folder and add @mysongbook.com to your safe list.

1. Do we already have tabs for this song / piece?

There are a lot of tabs on MSB. This means that for many well-known songs there are usually already an existing tab. To keep things simple and easy for the users, we limit the number of tabs for the same song to a maximum of 2 or 3. If this limit is already reached but you think that the tabs we have for a given song are not perfect, you may want to send a correction for one of them.

And if you decide to make a new tab of this song anyway, your tab must be of a significantly higher quality in order for it to be accepted as a new tab and we decide to overwrite an older version.

Writing a note to the validator as to why your tab is better might help your case, but be specific (something like "My tab is the best one – all others suck" is the first step to rejection!). Before you submit your tab you can also post in the "Contact MSB" forum to ask for an advice. Please provide links to the tabs concerned by your request.

2. Correction or new tab?

Please be honest. If you used an existing tab to write yours, that's OK but don't send it as it is brand new and tabbed from scratch. Upload it as a correction. If a tab is submitted as a new tab and we already have a tab for this song, they are compared. If it appears that the submitted one is based on an existing one, it is rejected and required to be submitted as a correction.

If the tab is submitted as a correction it is compared to the original. In any cases:

- Be sure to keep the credit to the original tabber in the "Score Information" Window of the file (F5).
- Give details in the "What have you modified?" submission field about your correction, i.e. add a new track, correction for the solo (bar 42 to 57...)

The more details you give the easier it will be for the validator to review and accept your correction.

You can also detail your corrections in the "Score Information" (F5). It will help people find out what you corrected so they can relearn the tab, and show the original tabber what they did wrong. To be accepted the correction should be significantly important (making some cosmetic changes is not enough!).

3. Score Information in the Tab (hit F5 in Guitar-Pro)

This might be quite obvious but it's still one of the major reasons for rejection.

So please make sure you have properly filled the information window for the tab.

At least song title and the artist name have to be filled out and those have to be the same as the artist name and song name you submitted the tab under (Capitalized first letters...). Otherwise the tab will automatically be rejected.

Unless the tab is one of your own compositions, your name comes in the "Tab" field, not in the "author" field (or "Word" & "Music" in GP5)

4. Incomplete bars (hit F4 or F8 in Guitar-Pro)

Every bar must be completed. That means it should not be shorter or longer than the time signature (ex: 2.5 beats only in a 4/4 bar). GP displays incomplete bars in red. Using the F8 (in GP4) or F4 (in GP5) shortcut helps you easily find incomplete bars.

5. Quality not good enough or the tab is too short

A tab uploaded to MSB must be a tab of the whole song, not just an intro or a solo (that doesn't mean you have to transcribe all tracks, including keyboards, voice, drums...). Sometimes a tab containing only the intro or a solo can be accepted if they are interesting enough and if there is not already a tab for the song on MSB. If there is already a tab for the song you should consider making a correction of that existing tab. If the song or piece you are tabbing is very short, give details to the validator.

6.Unwanted or excessive rests

A tab (or a score) with lots of rests tends to be difficult to read.

The next few examples show an incorrect tab on the upper staff (“Wrong”) and the same few bars properly written in the lower staff (“Right”)

Excessive rests are most often the signs of a bad Midi import. However, sometimes tabbers themselves use too many short rests to fill in a bar when this could be rationalized as shown below:

[Ex 1]

Excessive rests

The image shows two staves of guitar notation. The top staff is labeled 'Wrong' and the bottom staff is labeled 'Right'. Both staves have a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The 'Wrong' staff contains a sequence of notes with many short rests (indicated by small vertical lines) between them. The 'Right' staff shows the same sequence of notes but with fewer, more rationalized rests. The notes are: 6, 5, 6, 7, 6, 5, 7, 5, 6, 5, 7, 5, 6, 5, 8. The rests in the 'Wrong' staff are placed between every note, while in the 'Right' staff, rests are only used where necessary to indicate a change in rhythm or phrasing.

The following example is taken from an actual file we received. It was a typical uncleaned Midi import. In Example 2 you can see what we call unwanted rests and how difficult it is to read and how it should be corrected:

Unwanted rests

The image shows two staves of guitar notation. The top staff is labeled 'Wrong' and the bottom staff is labeled 'Right'. Both staves have a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The 'Wrong' staff contains a sequence of notes with many unwanted rests (indicated by small vertical lines) between them. The 'Right' staff shows the same sequence of notes but with fewer, more rationalized rests. The notes are: 10, 14, 14, 12, 12, 10, 11, 10, 12, 12, 14, 12. The rests in the 'Wrong' staff are placed between every note, while in the 'Right' staff, rests are only used where necessary to indicate a change in rhythm or phrasing.

[Ex 2]

Basically, concerning rests, if one has to count on their fingers to be sure on what beat comes a note, then you can consider the score to be really poorly written!

7.Bad or unplayable fingerings

Make sure that what you write is playable by a standard guitar player (one with only 5 fingers for each hand!)
This is valid when you write chords:

[Ex 3]

Chords

The image shows two guitar chord diagrams side-by-side, labeled 'Wrong' and 'Right'. Both diagrams cover measures 19 through 25. Measure 19: Wrong (6, 1, 8, 4), Right (6, 4, 5, 4). Measure 20: Wrong (5, 5), Right (5, 5). Measure 21: Wrong (10, 18, 15, 10), Right (4, 6, 5, 5). Measure 22: Wrong (6, 12, 9, 10), Right (8, 10, 9, 10). Measure 23: Wrong (6, 13, 8, 6), Right (9, 10, 8, 6). Measure 24: Wrong (4, 12, 8, 6), Right (8, 8, 8, 8). Measure 25: Wrong (4, 12, 8, 6), Right (8, 8, 8, 8). The 'Wrong' diagram has a black square at the end of measure 25, indicating it is invalid.

But also when you write a simple phrase:

[Ex 4]

Solo

The image shows two guitar solo diagrams side-by-side, labeled 'Wrong' and 'Right'. Both diagrams cover measures 26 through 28. Measure 26: Wrong (3, 3, 10), Right (3, 3, 5, 7, 6). Measure 27: Wrong (1, 6, 13), Right (6, 6, 8, 10, 8, 6, 8). Measure 28: Wrong (8, 6, 13, 3), Right (8). The 'Wrong' diagram has a black square at the end of measure 28, indicating it is invalid.

At least ALL guitar & bass tracks should be playable (see also point 9).

8. Uncleaned Midi Import

Guitar Pro gives the opportunity to import MIDI files. While this is good for getting a structure to base your tab on (i.e. drums, synthesizers, voice etc.) pure MIDI imports are worth nothing in terms of being a constructive tab. Therefore if you want to upload a tab based on a MIDI import all tracks should be corrected 100%. That means you have to polish the midi import to get a tab that can actually be played (remove unwanted rests, correct impossible fingerings...) See above for details on rests and fingerings.

The following example is also from an actual file we received. In the following bars we have unwanted rests but also weird rhythm. An average guitarist would have trouble to play the upper staff, but if you try the corrected bars on your guitar and you know your classic, this should ring your bell!

[Ex 5]

Rests and Rhythm

The image displays two musical staves side-by-side, labeled 'Wrong' and 'Right'. Both staves cover measures 16, 17, and 18. The 'Wrong' staff shows a guitar tab with several problematic elements: a 3-measure rest in bar 16, notes with impossible fingerings (e.g., 3-0, 3-0, 0-0, 0-0), and a 3-measure rest in bar 17. The 'Right' staff shows the same music corrected: the 3-measure rest in bar 16 is replaced by a sequence of notes with fingerings (3, 4, 4, 2), the impossible fingerings are corrected to playable ones (3, 4, 4, 2), and the 3-measure rest in bar 17 is replaced by a sequence of notes with fingerings (3, 4, 4, 2).

9. Non guitar tracks

Since MSB is a guitar-orientated site, tabs must be arranged for guitar (or related instruments like Bass, Banjo...) and the fret fingering must be optimised so that they are playable (see above about rests & fingerings). **THAT MEANS THAT ALL TABS MUST CONTAIN AT LEAST ONE TRACK THAT CAN BE PLAYED ON THE GUITAR OR THE TAB WILL BE REJECTED.**

Therefore even if your tab is based on a song or piece that was not written for guitars, at least one of the main tracks must be specially arranged for guitar.

You can of course, add other instruments besides the guitar tracks (vocals, keyboard, brass...)

When using monophonic instruments, always try to write with a fingering adapted for the guitar so the track can be played on guitar whenever possible. See Ex 4 above. It is in fact a Sax solo that could be inspiring for a guitarist.

For all non-guitar tracks you should at least have used Guitar-Pro's "Automatic Fingering Tool" to make the track as playable as possible.

For piano or keyboard score, it should be split into two tracks, Left Hand and Right hand.

Using a bass tuning for the left hand will give a better result for the standard notation (bass clef).

Of course, this is not required in the case of a key track that can be played with a single-hand. Just remember that common people have only five fingers that can't stretch over 2 octaves.

Take a look at the following example:

[Ex 6]

Wrong

These few bars are useless for a guitarist (impossible fingerings) but also for a piano or keyboard player using the standard notation staff.

Here is the same example but split into two tracks for Left Hand and Right Hand:

[Ex 7]

Right Hand

Left Hand

With GP5 you can now display and print in standard notation, but remember that Guitar-Pro is based on guitar notation. That means that since guitar is a transposed instrument, every note in the standard notation is one octave higher than the actual pitch.

So if you want to have something that is useful to a keyboard player, apply 8va to the complete track, the standard notation will be transposed to actual pitch (a piano player would just have to know that he shouldn't consider the 8va sign.)

In the following example you have the result printed out for a piano player:

[Ex 8]

Right Hand

Left Hand

10.Lyrics

Even though Guitar-Pro offers a lyric feature, WE DO NOT ACCEPT TABS WITH LYRICS ON MSB because of copyright issues. This rule also applies to compositions because it's not possible to check if lyrics are really original or not.

11.Overall quality

These are not issues that would lead automatically to a rejection, but you can improve the quality of your tabs in several ways:

- Use markers (Intro, Verse, Chorus, Solo, Bridge...) especially if it's a long tab
- Name the tracks (Rhythm Guitar, Lead Guitar...) Tracks with empty names are not accepted
- Reduce to as few track as possible. i.e. don't use separate tracks when a guitar switches from clean to overdrive, use the same track and a mix table event instead. Don't use separate tracks for the drums (one track with the drums and one with the cymbals is something we see too often)
- Remove empty tracks
- Adjust the mix table (pan & volume for each track)

If you use GP5 and RSE, there's an interesting FAQ about how to set it properly on the Guitar-Pro home page ([RSE FAQ](#))