

GSNC Official Disclaimer Directory

Performers at the Guitar Society of Northern Colorado often begin with a background story about their song. Students of human behavior have uncovered an interesting phenomenon in these introductions. Some players claim that the brief talk helps them relax, while others claim that the delay just makes them more nervous. Although that discrepancy would make a fascinating topic for future research, this article addresses a different issue: the *content* of these introductions. With surprising regularity, these informative chats contain disclaimers concerning the performance about to be presented.

The high number of disclaimers per evening at GSNC has prompted various proposals from the membership. Some people suggested that the disclaimers should be eliminated in the interest of a more professional and sophisticated performance. Although that suggestion was difficult to attack openly, the inner reaction of most members was, “What planet are you from?” This led to another proposal. In the interest of efficiency, and to create a smoother flow in the program, the disclaimers could be cataloged and simply referenced by number. This suggestion made a lot more sense than trying to increase the professionalism of the group, so the staff has been eagerly working on its implementation.

After many tireless hours of research, we are pleased to present the ***Official Disclaimer Directory*** (a.k.a. ODD). As is often the case in high-level academic research, this is a “living document.” As our collective understanding of disclaimers deepens, this list might change and grow. In a way, it is simply another indicator of the boundless reaches of the human imagination.

By the way, if you are thinking of pairing certain disclaimers with certain GSNC members, don’t go there. This list is not intended as an affront to any specific individuals. Rather, it highlights the inner child in all of us. If you are honest with yourself, you will be able to relate to a surprising number of these feelings.

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1: The Music Stand

- 1a. This music stand is too high (or too low).
- 1b. This music stand is at the wrong angle.
- 1c. This music stand is too close (or too far) for my glasses (and I can’t move it??).
- 1d. Since I can’t read music, this music stand is an ominous, looming reminder of my many shortcomings.

2: The Sheet Music

- 2a. This Nth generation illegal Xerox is too light (or too blurry, or too dark).
- 2b. This book has page turns in really bad places.
- 2c. I have this music *almost* memorized. By the time I need to look up at the music, I have no idea where I am.
- 2d. Someone put the music on the music stand upside down.
- 2e. I pulled the first part of this piece from one source and the second from another. When I get them both on the music stand I become confused.

3: The Chair and Footstool

- 3a. This chair is too high (or too low).
- 3b. This chair is too hard (or too soft).
- 3c. This cushion is too slippery. (Note: This has potential entertainment value for the audience.)
- 3d. The footstool is too high (too low). (Footstools are adjustable, so what is the *real* problem here??)

4: The Room

- 4a. The lights are too bright (or too dim).
- 4b. The room is too cold (or too hot).
- 4c. The marching band, coffee grinder, refrigerator, blender, and ice machine are so noisy that nobody can hear what I’m playing. (In some cases, this might be a good thing.)

5: The Guitar

- 5a. My strings are too new. They are stretching out of tune.
- 5b. My strings are too old. They have lost their tone.
- 5c. Oops, I forgot to retune my 6th string.
- 5d. I broke a string in the last movement, but hopefully you didn't notice.
- 5e. Sorry, I can't play this guitar – it doesn't have any dots (it has too many dots).
- 5f. Sorry, I can't play this guitar – the action is too high (low).
- 5g. Tuning????
- 5h. My classical guitar has old dead strings so I brought my steel string guitar instead.

6: The Fingernails

- 6a. I forgot to trim (or smooth, or grow) my nails.
- 6b. I recently broke a nail because I wasn't careful.
- 6c. I recently broke a nail because I was maiming an opponent in karate class.
- 6d. My nails are thin, brittle, and useless. I'm sick of hearing all this whining from people lucky enough to have fingernails.

7: The Preparation

- 7a. Because of (fill in the blank) , I didn't have enough time to practice the past few weeks.
- 7b. I recently changed the right hand (or left hand) fingering for this song.
- 7c. I was planning to work on this song for another week/month/year and get it right, but I'll play it tonight anyway.
- 7d. I have a better chance of becoming Pope than of ever learning a song this difficult, but I'll play it tonight anyway.

8: It's Someone Else's Fault

- 8a. I wasn't going to play this song, but my spouse made me do it.
- 8b. I wasn't going to play this song, but (fill in CGSNC member name) made me do it.
- 8c. My guitar instructor made me do it.
- 8d. The devil made me do it. (In some cases, this may be a duplicate of #8c.)

9: Personal Problems

- 9a. I can't play very well tonight because I have a runny nose.
- 9b. I don't feel like playing tonight because I have a headache. :)
- 9c. I was brave and confident when I practiced by myself, but now all you people are making me really nervous.
- 9d. I wore cowboy boots tonight because it snowed, and they feel odd.
- 9e. I forgot to bring my reading glasses so I can't see the music.
- 9f. I'm distracted by a sexual problem. (We don't know what this means, but it was mentioned once.)
- 9g. Please don't hate me for being a mediocre guitar player. (Refer to the closing scene in the movie *Amadeus*: "Mediocrities of the world, I absolve you!")