

**TO:** Joint Steering Committee for Development of RDA

**FROM:** John Attig, ALA representative

**RE:** Proposed revision of RDA chap. 6, Additional instructions for musical works and expressions

ALA's response to the original *5JSC/LC/12* proposals was critical. There were a number of issues that seemed promising, and we worked with representatives from LC and CCC to develop the consensus proposals that are included in *5JSC/LC/12/LC follow-up*. Beyond those issues, we felt that the changes proposed in *5JSC/LC/12* and restated in *5JSC/LC/12/LC follow-up/2* did not improve on current practice for describing musical works and expressions. On the whole, ALA stands by this position, noting that the ALA/LC/CCC group discussed these proposed changes in May 2008 and could not reach agreement. With the exception of a few specific points noted below, ALA disagrees with the changes proposed in this document, which would substantially change current music cataloging practices, without improving them.

**Note:** This response was prepared in consultation with the Bibliographic Control Committee of the Music Library Association and its Descriptive Cataloging Subcommittee. I would particularly like to acknowledge the contributions of Kathy Glennan, chair of the Bibliographic Control Committee, and Mark Scharff, chair of the Descriptive Cataloging Subcommittee, for their contributions to this response.

### **#1: RDA 6.15.1 (choosing and recording the preferred title)**

ALA has no particular problem with LC's proposal to limit short titles to those found in reference sources, but we think that there needs to be provision for choosing and recording a preferred title for a work whose embodiment bears a cataloger-devised title (2.3.11.4); 6.15.1.2.1. and 6.15.1.2.2 are worded in such a way that it could be unclear as to whether they would encompass such a situation.

We note that LC's proposal for 6.15.1.3.4 has expanded somewhat the list of non-distinctive titles that are to be given in English when recording preferred titles and constructing preferred access points. We nonetheless would prefer a different approach. We reiterate points that were made in ALA's response to *5JSC/LC/12*:

In terms of *RDA* principles, *5JSC/LC/12* emphasizes *representation* over other principles for creating access points. Representation may be a more compelling consideration for descriptive data (or for manifestation/item records) than for access points. The principle of representation allows for the selection of one of the following types of preferred titles:

- a) commonly used title or form of title in the language and script preferred by the agency creating the data;
- b) original title of the work;

- c) title most commonly found in resources embodying the work (*RDA Objectives and Principles*, p. 5)

The principle of *language preference* states, “If there is a commonly used title for a work in the language and script of the catalogue, preference should be given to that title.” (*Ibid.*) ALA has already raised concerns about extending this too far in relation to uniform titles (in our response to IME ICC 5.2.4, Forms of Uniform Titles, in Sept. 2007). However, *5JSC/LC/12* goes quite far in preferring the composer’s original language when recording the preferred title (for types of composition/non-distinctive titles).

The principle of *common usage or practice* states, “The formulation of name-title and title access points representing works and expressions should reflect conventions used in the country and language of the agency creating the data.” (*Ibid.*) Again, ALA’s response to IME ICC 5.2.4 cautions about taking this too far; however, LC’s recommendations in this paper go to the other extreme, again preferring the composer’s original language for “generic” titles, for example, substituting *sonate a tre* for *trio sonata* or *Musik* for *Music* in preferred access points.

The three proposals mentioned above, along with related proposals to allow more ambiguity in ordering statements of medium of performance in preferred access points, jeopardize the ability to provide meaningful “backward compatibility” with access points constructed under AACR2, particularly since many of the proposed changes will require human intervention to implement. Finally, the LC proposals seem to devalue the collocation function that uniform titles have traditionally provided, and give more emphasis to identification; they seem to assume a “scenario 1” world where relationships can be made without resort to pre-coordinated character strings, while most of us will be living in a flat-file “scenario 3” world for some time to come. (*5JSC/LC/12/ALA response*, p. 1-2)

ALA notes that the Music Library Association expressed disappointment in LC’s denigration of the MLA Web document *Types of Composition for Use in Music Uniform Titles* (<http://www.library.yale.edu/cataloging/music/types.htm>) as a “separate, constantly-changing list.” We would offer these observations: (a) changes to the document almost always represent additions of new terms, rather than the sort of whimsical fluttering implied by the remark; (b) the document explicitly gives LC practice as one of its bases, so that agency has some responsibility for any ambiguities; (c) there are any number of lists to which RDA will refer that fit this description; and (d) we’ve heard time and again how cataloging “communities” need to take ownership of making RDA work in their areas. If this document is a fair reflection of the music community (and feedback to this LC proposal would suggest that this is so), disregarding it would seem an odd recommendation. ALA agrees that the document is useful in dealing with generic titles of musical compositions.

Our objection to 6.15.1.3.4a notwithstanding, we wonder whether it is conceptually accurate to characterize the process there (or any other process more acceptable to us!) as “choosing” a preferred title. In the two previous exceptions, the title that is to be chosen is a pre-existing one. In this instruction, by contrast, what is “chosen” may be

manipulated before it is recorded. The proposed instruction is also oddly placed in that, in some cases, the act of translation would occur only if a term in the list was chosen as the preferred title following the procedure for recording the title (“omissions testing”) in the next instruction.

The clause “if there is one” in 6.15.1.3.4a doesn’t have a clear antecedent (“cataloging agency?” “language of the cataloging agency?” “term in the language of the cataloging agency?”). Though we don’t support this instruction, if it is to be retained, this language needs to be clarified.

In summary, we prefer the provisions of 6.15.1.3 in *5JSC/LC/12/LC follow-up*, with the qualifications offered in our response to that document.

6.15.1.3.4b i) – in contrast to the preceding section – looks familiar to us. We wonder, however, about its relationship to 6.28.1.6.2a in *5JSC/LC/12/LC follow-up*, the “If, however ...” clause. These instructions seem to be at odds. Instruction ii) would seem to render titles such as “Orchesterlieder” and “Trio sonata” to be distinctive by our reading, since each “incorporates a type of composition.” Was that the intent? If so, then 6.15.1.4.3 is problematic, and there is a conflict with the Glossary definition of Type of Composition, which explicitly offers “trio sonata” as the name of a type.

The new “Concerto à cinque” example in 6.15.1.4.3 raises the question of how “à cinque” fits the definition of “medium of performance” as found in 6.16.0.1.1 of *5JSC/LC/12/LC follow-up*.

The reference to 6.15.0 in 6.15.1.5.1 should presumably be to 6.15.1.4.2.

We agree to eliminate 6.15.1.5.2. We are ambivalent about eliminating 6.15.1.6 and 6.15.1.7; as noted above, the discrepancy between *5JSC/LC/12/LC follow-up/2* instructions and the Glossary as to whether “Trio sonata” is distinctive or non-distinctive needs to be resolved.

## **#2: RDA 6.16.0.8 (instrumental music for large ensembles)**

ALA has substantial issues with the proposal to expand the allowable terms for large ensembles in 6.16.0.8. This is the sort of situation where we wouldn’t object to these terms being recorded in a work record, but find them problematic in preferred access points.

First, the instruction here is inconsistent with the practice for recording other mediums of performance in that it does not direct the ensemble to be recorded in the language preferred by the cataloging agency when possible (cf. *5JSC/LC/12/LC follow-up* 6.16.0.6.1). Not translating terms like “Kammerorchester” is problematic, but translating has its own hazards; as we noted in our original response to *5JSC/LC/12*, “The frequency with which terms would need to be translated to English from what is found on the resource invites confusion when the same term is rendered in different ways for the same musical work (e.g., the large ensemble in Béla Bartók’s *Musik für Saiteninstrumente, Schlagzeug und Celesta*, as it was called in its first edition, has been translated as ‘string instruments’, ‘strings’, and ‘string orchestra’ in various manifestations).” Translating these terms also waters down the representation principle on which this proposal is based.

Second, there is potential confusion in assuming that because a symphony is performed by some sort of “chamber orchestra,” that term would be appropriate (many of the Beethoven symphonies get played by groups so named).

Third, there are potential problems with numbered sequences of compositions with the same title, but with what, under this proposal, would be different instrumentation. Within the numbered sequence of Vagn Holmboe’s symphonies that are not for string orchestra, some are for full orchestra and some are for chamber orchestra. There are probably other composers whose numbered sequences would be dissected.

Finally, “wind ensemble” is particularly problematic, since it is commonly used for ensembles that are not one to a part – especially since *5JSC/LC/12/LC follow-up* removed any definition for “instrumental (string, wind, etc.) ensemble” beyond that of being one to a part (6.16.0.7.1).

In calling for singled-out instruments that aren’t functioning in a solo capacity to follow the name of the large ensemble, 6.16.0.8.2 would appear to a casual observer to conflict with 6.16.0.3; there is nothing above it that excludes large ensembles from its scope.

### **#3: RDA 6.16.0.10 (solo voices)**

ALA agrees to the combination of 6.16.0.10.3 and 6.16.0.10.4. However, see our comment on this instruction in our response to *5JSC/LC/12/LC follow-up*.

### **#4: former RDA 6.28.1.2 (writer’s works set by several composers)**

We find it difficult to assess the impact of removing 6.28.1.2 in favor of the general rule (6.27.1.4), since it is not yet clear to us how RDA will sort out “creator” from “non-creator” compilers. We would want the outcome that was implicit in the examples.

### **#5: new 6.28.1.2 (former RDA 6.28.1.3, adaptations of musical works)**

The proposed rewriting of this instruction aims to create a closed list of circumstances under which an adaptation is to be considered a new work. We believe that this should be an area where “cataloger’s judgment” should be allowed. We would also mention RDA draft 6.27.1.5, which has not been modified in the LC proposals, where the sorts of situations described here are characterized as “an adaptation or revision of a previously existing work that substantially changes the nature and content of that work.” We think that similar language would be appropriate here. While LC is correct that subinstruction c) in former 6.28.1.3 would describe many situations in Western popular music, we also wonder whether this would be a justification for considering J.S. Bach to be part of the preferred access point for the 371 four-part chorales; after all, many are no more than harmonizations of pre-existing melodies. We question the need for subinstruction c) in the new 6.28.1.2. “Based on” in subinstruction a) seems to have served adequately in the past; if there is some special category not covered there (and the choice of the phrase “Musical works” to open the instruction raises the question), we would appreciate an example. Subinstruction d) has a far broader scope than what ALA proposed in the response to *5JSC/LC/12*, where this provision was limited to compilations of musical works by more than one composer. The prospect of dozens of preferred access points

like “Davis, Miles. My funny valentine” is a sobering one. On the other hand, the proposed language refers specifically to “performances.” Can this be extended to published transcriptions of such performances? We think that changing the language of the opening of 6.28.1.2.2b from “the preferred title for the adaptation” to “the preferred title for the new work” would reinforce catalogers’ understanding of the outcome of the instruction. The examples given should “track” the conditions they illustrate. While it uses the term “arranged,” we think this additional example would represent an improvement in how adaptations of folk music are handled, and would illustrate that a lot of changes to the nature and content of a work can lie behind the term “arranged”:

Bennett, David. Swing low, sweet chariot  
*(Preferred access point for: Swing low, sweet chariot (spiritual) :*  
 quartet for B♭ clarinets / arranged by David Bennett)

Presumably, the “Ur-work” is a simple melodic line. This version is at least a harmonization of that melodic line (with substantial addition of material), probably with alterations in the rhythm and contour of that line (though that begs the question of whether an “original version” can be determined), and a change from a vocal to an instrumental medium. It could be considered to be based on subinstruction a), or from subinstruction c) in the former 6.28.1.3 if subinstruction c) is retained to address situations such as the Bach chorales.

#### **#6: RDA 6.28.1.3 (operas, etc., with new text and title)**

We fail to see how the proposed change to the caption of 6.28.1.3 clarifies anything. The instruction itself encompasses **any** musical work with words. We are inclined to endorse this scope. We presume that LC proposes to change the scope; given that, how is “Operas, etc.” more clear than “musico-dramatic?” If being a “made-up term” were an inherent liability, we would point to “concerto-like work” (*q.v.*) as being of the same ilk. The inclusion of “etc.” works against any attempt to limit the scope of the instruction. We prefer the caption “Alterations or omissions of the text, plot, setting, or other verbal element of a musical work” (as we proposed in our response to 5JSC/LC/12). We would also re-submit these examples:

Arcadelt, Jacob, approximately 1505-1568. Nous voyons que les hommes  
 Arcadelt, Jacob, approximately 1505-1568. Nous voyons que les hommes  
 (Ave Maria)

*(Preferred access point for: Ave Maria : for mixed chorus, a cappella /*  
 Arcadelt ; text adapted and music arranged by Pierre-Louis-Philippe Dietsch)

Greensleeves (What Child is this?)

*(Preferred access point for: What child is this : for full chorus of mixed voices,*  
 a cappella : English tune Greensleeves, before 1642 / arr. by Alice Parker and  
 Robert Shaw ; words by W.C. Dix.)

While we earlier characterized these as “new expressions,” we accept their placement here.

**#7: RDA 6.28.3.2 (added performance parts)**

ALA does not support this modification of the language proposed for 6.28.3.2.1 in *5JSC/LC/12/LC follow-up/2*. By adding conditions for text, the instruction causes a confusing overlap with 6.28.1.3.1, and the puzzling notion of a “substitute text” being an “addition.” The underlying rationale for this instruction has been that the original work is wholly present, unaltered.

**#8: RDA 6.28.3.3 (arranged accompaniment)**

We support the clarity of the presentation, but, we have already expressed our strong dislike for the term “concerto-like work.” Using similes in place of clearly-stated delineations is not advisable in a code that will be used by non-specialists. We would re-submit the language from our response to *5JSC/LC/12* for the points under 6.28.3.3.1, and use the same expressions elsewhere as appropriate:

- a) a work or part(s) of a work for solo instrument(s) with ensemble accompaniment;
- b) an accompanied vocal work or part(s) of such a work.