

To: Joint Steering Committee for Development of RDA
From: John Attig, ALA Representative
Subject: Proposed revision of instruction 6.15.1.7, "Groups of Instruments"

ALA thanks CCC and CAML for their efforts to clarify this troublesome set of instructions.

ALA's response was guided by a recommendation from the Bibliographic Control Committee of the Music Library Association and its Descriptive Cataloging Subcommittee. Reaction from the Music Library Association was mixed. Those who were uncomfortable with 6JSC/CCC/3, because it posited no opportunity to telescope very long medium statements by using terms for groups of performers, don't support this proposal's limitation of such grouping to naming groups of instruments accompanying one or more soloists. Others took the argument in the other direction and questioned any consolidation in medium statements, whether for chamber groups or for an accompanying ensemble, below the level of the large ensembles named in 6.15.1.8.

Given this lack of consensus, ALA suggests that the proposal be tabled so that they can be considered along with the work of the RDA Music Revisions Facilitation Task Force (a joint effort of ALA/MLA, CCC/CAML, and LC) and further proposals from the Music Library Association (referred to in 6JSC/CCC/3/ALA response).

MLA reviewers offered these additional comments and concerns:

- There is a typo in the clean copy of the proposed wording; the 2nd phrase of the first sentence should read "... record the appropriate qualifying term ...".
- The terms in the list at 6.15.1.7 that would remain in the CCC proposal are not there explicitly presented as examples, which could give a misleading impression of being a closed list.
- "Appropriate qualifying term" seemed unhelpfully vague. One commentator proposed that it be more explicitly stated that such a term might be the name of the instrument or the name of an instrumental family. The proposed revision in the LC response to this proposal addresses that concern.
- Something that both the current text and the CCC proposal lack is guidance on what might constitute the "more specific term" whose absence dictates use of "instrumental ensemble." This is tricky, since some of those terms are not explicitly tied to medium of performance, but name genres of music, such as "jazz ensemble" or "gamelan ensemble," that set up broad expectations of medium of performance.