

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

**From:** Kevin Marsh, ACOC Representative

**Subject:** Treatment of Choreographic Works in RDA

ACOC thanks the LC Representative for initiating this discussion on the treatment of choreographic works in RDA, and on drawing out many of the issues and complexities surrounding choreographies. The paper posits three options (favouring the third), and invites the JSC to consider six questions about choreographic works.

After considering these questions in some detail ACOC is of the view that pursuing one or other of the proposed options needs to be informed by further discussion at the November meeting. It is to be noted that within ACOC there were differing views, and a lack of overall consensus, on some questions.

ACOC's responses follow:

**1. Is a choreographic work a "work" in the RDA sense?**

It is not clear that a choreographic work is a "work" in the RDA sense - and this is because it is not clear in FRBR. The FRBR definitions of entities at 3.2.1 Work and 3.2.2 Expression are not definitive when it comes to choreography, e.g., does it make sense to speak of an unexpressed choreography?

In many cases it makes sense to think of choreographies as works, but in other cases it does not. It is possible for a work to be conceived as comprising choreography plus other elements, e.g., music, verse), or as choreography alone. It is also possible to conceive of works constructed from pre-existing elements including choreographies (which may or may not have been part of another work). The situation is further complicated when the choreography is in some way "incidental" to another work, e.g., a musical (then it's then a bit like art vs. illustration).

The definition of a work in FRBR doesn't mention choreographies as an example, but they seem to fit there. But then choreographic notation is spelt out under expression so it seems to fit here too. There is conceptual clarification required in defining a choreographic "work" at the FRBR level, e.g., the "expression" vs. the "idea" of a choreography, and determining whether a choreography must be "fixed" in a medium.

**2. Should the choreographer be considered the creator of a choreographic work?**

Clarification of question 1 will assist in clarifying question 2. It seems legitimate to refer to the choreographer as the creator of the choreographic work, but there is not a shared sense of clarity around what this "work" is.

Is the choreography part of a larger work (the ballet, the opera, the martial arts movie, the performance art piece, the fashion show, the swimming event - both sporting and Ethel Merman

routines – the cheerleading routine, etc. - remembering that choreography is much broader than dance) - or is a choreographic work a stand alone thing (like a libretto)?

Assigning credit to a choreographer as a creative contributor of an "overall" work may be all that's required.

### **3. How should the preferred title of a choreographic work be chosen?**

Again, clarification of question 1 will assist in clarifying question 3. Not all choreographies have a title, e.g., not every Fred Astaire and Gene Kelly dance routine has a title.

It's arguable that choreographies should be assigned titles as per the instructions for choosing "title of a work". Though given the lack of conceptual clarity about whether choreographies are works, perhaps there's merit in giving them a separate set of instructions, or making it clear at the beginning of Chapter 6 that a choreography is considered a work. If choreographies are generally "parts" of something else, i.e., a component of a larger work, then maybe the question is not as demanding as it appears.

### **4. What is the relationship of a choreographic work to a musical work?**

Choreographies have relationships with many and various works, not just musical works (because choreography encompasses much more than dance), and even then they may have more than a single relationship to said work. There are variegated scenarios: music and choreography in collaboration; choreography created after music; choreography as part of a work, e.g., movies and musicals; choreography without music, e.g., martial arts scenes.

As indicated earlier, a singular answer to this question is dependent on conceptual clarification around where choreographies sit in relation to the medium that bears them out.

### **5. Should Chapter 6 include instructions on preferred titles for untitled works?**

Yes – but... RDA doesn't adequately address the question of untitled works, but this applies more generally than to just choreographies. This is a separate and broader issue, and it's important to keep these distinct in the context of the discussion. A separate proposal on this issue alone would be welcomed.

### **6. Is there a "superwork" that is a compilation of the music and the dance, or is there merely performance expressing these works simultaneously?**

The notion of a "superwork" is troublesome – is this like a "Gesamtkunstwerk" or total work of art? There are already names for these larger works, e.g., ballet, opera, etc.

If, in returning to question 1, choreographies only make sense when fixed in a medium, then it seems the performance expressing the choreography is the work (and it is this that warrants description, etc.).

## **Options**

Determining what course of action is most appropriate is best left until further discussion has provided for a shared conceptual understanding around choreographic works. It's recommended

that an understanding of choreography be treated separately from, and prior to, the revision of RDA, i.e., arrive at a shared understanding first, then look at how well RDA manages things in terms of this understanding).

6JSC/LC rep/4 may be premature in seeking to arrive at solutions prior to this clarification having been established.

However, ACOC would welcome a separate proposal along the lines of Option C, to add instructions in Chapter 6 for untitled works *in general*. As noted above under our response to Question 5, we believe that this can, and should be, addresses as a separate issue to the treatment of choreographies.