To: RDA Steering Committee

From: Renate Behrens, RSC Chair

Subject: Music Working Group

At the April 2025 RSC Meeting, the RSC discussed the formation of a Music Working Group (RSC/Minutes/508-520 Item 515).

1   Background

The RSC has always recognised Music cataloguing as a specialism that is actively involved in the development of RDA. The Music Library Association (MLA) - https://www.musiclibraryassoc.org – which is the U.S. Branch of the International Association of Music Libraries, Archives, and Documentation Centres (IAML) - Ihttps://www.iaml.info – maintains its Best Practices documentation (MLA BP) within the RDA Toolkit. Situated within the Policies dropdown menu, all Toolkit members can access the MLA BP Entities ; MLA BP Guidance ; and MLA BP Community Resources. This means that cataloguers who do not create metadata for music regularly are able to access guidance from a leading group of music metadata specialists. Representatives from the MLA who maintain the MLA BP are active members of the RDA Policy Statement (PS) Writers Group, and attend the regular online meetings of the PS Writers. This means that they are also available to answer questions arising in the PS Writers Group about Music. The MLA has also been active in making proposals to RDA when they see the need.

Not all music collections are documented according to the MLA Best Practice documentation, and the RSC is keen that this Working Group be constituted of members from the widest range of music documentation specialists possible.

The RSC and contacts from music cataloguing communities have expressed a desire for a Working Group on Music Cataloguing that will ensure that RDA development continues to incorporate perspectives from around the world. Keeping in mind the work that MLA has already undertaken voluntarily, an RSC Music Working Group would provide a forum and structure that encourages international representation of music cataloguing matters.

One stumbling block has been that under RSC structures, Working Groups were conceived as either permanent (Standing Working Groups) or strictly time-limited

(Task and Finish Working Groups), neither of which seemed a good fit for Music Cataloguing as a topic. The creation of a third category of Working Group – Advisory Working Group – provides the ideal structure for this important international topic, and so the RSC seeks, with the help of MLA and IAML more widely, to establish a Music Working Group as an Advisory Working Group consisting of experts in Music Librarianship and Documentation who can give due consideration to the development of RDA with regard to Music.

2   Membership

[To be established through a call for participants and direct invitations to identified experts]

James Hennelly, ALA Digital Reference *ex officio*
Chris Holden, RSC Technical Team Liaison Officer, *ex officio*

3   Terms of Reference

The Working Group operates within RSC/Operations/3/2025, the general terms of reference for RSC Working Groups. As an Advisory Working Group, the Working Group is expected to serve for as long as needed, with individual members expected to serve for two years in the first instance (see RSC/Operations/3/2025 Section 10).

4   Tasks

[Group to discuss if these are the best questions to ask, and the order in which they should be tackled]

1. Research the following questions:

    - Does, or can, RDA provide sufficient instructions or tools for the documentation of music?
    - Are there other cataloguing rules / guidelines / standards that organizations are using to document music?
    - Are there any implications from the proposed *RDA Collections Model* on Music Cataloguing, and if so, what are they?
    - Given that the MLA BP are already established within the RDA Toolkit, identify how a protocol between the RSC and IAML might work. Are separate protocols needed between the RSC and MLA *and* between the RSC and IAML, or might it be possible to establish a

protocol between the RSC and IAML which includes MLA? (For comparison, see in Section 5 below the RSC's protocol with the IFLA Advisory Committee on Standards, which was able to subsume several older protocols between the RSC and other IFLA Groups that report into the Advisory Committee on Standards).

- Are there other standards bodies with which it would be useful for the RSC to establish (a) protocol(s)?

2. Prepare a Discussion Paper for the RSC. Guidelines for Discussion Papers are set out in RSC/Operations/5/2025.

3. Provide brief progress reports to the RDA Board and the RSC for each meeting. The RSC Secretary will prompt the Working Group Chair before each RSC meeting.

4. Provide an interim report to the RSC in December 2025. The RSC Secretary will prompt the Working Group Chair for this.

5. Provide a final report to the RDA Board and the RSC in December 2026. The RSC Secretary will prompt the Working Group Chair for this.

5   Reference sources

RSC Protocols and Liaisons Between the RSC and Other Information Standards Groups – These may provide Working Group members with an overview of the types of arrangements already in place between the RSC and other specialists. In particular, Working Group members may be interested in RSC/Chair/2023/3/rev - Protocol between the RSC and the IFLA Committee on Standards (CoS) which subsumed several older protocols between the RSC and several groups that report into the IFLA CoS.

RSC/Papers/2024/1 – *The Collections Model in RDA*, prepared by Damian Iseminger, former Technical Team Liaison Officer, to provide a summary overview for the benefit of this working group and others interested in this topic.