

**TO:** Joint Steering Committee for Development of RDA  
**FROM:** John Attig, ALA Representative  
**SUBJECT:** Revision of RDA 6.15.1.3 (Recording Medium of Performance)

ALA proposes the following revision to the instructions on recording Medium of Performance (6.15.1.3). This issue was identified as a high priority by the Canadian Association of Music Libraries/Library of Congress/Music Library Association's RDA Music Revisions Facilitation Task Force. The proposal was developed by the Bibliographic Control Committee of the Music Library Association, and has been endorsed by ALA.

## **Background**

Music catalogers have traditionally provided access to musical works by constructing uniform titles according to AACR2 rules 25.25-25.35. Uniform titles brought together all resources which contained the work, identified the work contained in a resource when the title by which it was known differed in the resource described, differentiated between two works which were similar in their titles, and provided a method for alphabetically organizing the file by title.

For titles of musical works, it was recognized that title alone would hardly be sufficient because of the number of musical works that use generic titles like "Sonata" or "Quartet". Because of this, AACR2 25.30 instructed the cataloger to include medium of performance, numeric designations and key when constructing a uniform title that had an initial title element that was only a type of composition. These additions served to identify and differentiate between works with generic titles.

While music catalogers still find great utility in creating uniform titles, we are increasingly moving toward a future where computer-generated URIs can serve the function of uniquely identifying a work. Therefore the utility of recording medium of performance, numeric designations, and key in RDA will shift from identification and differentiation to one of providing access to musical works and expressions. Using medium of performance to facilitate access and retrieval is a subject of great interest to the music library community, as is evidenced by the recent announcement that the Library of Congress, in cooperation with the Music Library Association, has begun to develop a new thesaurus for medium of performance terms [LCMPT].

## **Rationale**

The instructions as written at RDA 6.15 serve the purpose of identifying and differentiating between works, but they do not currently allow for the creation of medium of performance statements that would also be ideal for computer access and retrieval. To solve this dilemma, MLA proposes that an Alternative be added to RDA 6.15.1.3 to allow for the recording of medium using a controlled vocabulary outside of RDA. MLA also recognizes that the current instructions in RDA 6.15 and the Alternative proposed may not be adequate when it comes to describing medium of performance fully. To address that concern, a statement has also been added to 6.15.1.3 to record those details in a note.

## Proposed Revision:

### 6.15.1.3 Recording Medium of Performance

Record the medium of performance specifically, applying the instructions given under [6.15.1.4–6.15.1.13](#). Record the elements in the following order:

Record the elements in the following order:

- a) voices
- b) keyboard instrument if there is more than one non-keyboard instrument
- c) the other instruments in score order
- d) continuo.

[examples omitted; no change]

If there is more than one part for a particular instrument or voice, add the appropriate numeral in parentheses after the name of that instrument or voice unless the number is otherwise implicit.

[examples omitted; no change]

Use *continuo* for a thorough bass part whether it is named as *basso continuo*, *figured bass*, *thorough bass*, or *continuo*.

#### Alternative

Record the medium of performance using an external controlled list instead of or in addition to applying the instructions given under [6.15.1.4–6.15.1.13](#).

Record details of medium of performance if considered to be important for selection in a note (see [7.21](#)).

## Clean copy:

### 6.15.1.3 Recording Medium of Performance

Record the medium of performance specifically, applying the instructions given under [6.15.1.4–6.15.1.13](#). Record the elements in the following order:

Record the elements in the following order:

- a) voices
- b) keyboard instrument if there is more than one non-keyboard instrument
- c) the other instruments in score order
- d) continuo.

[examples omitted; no change]

If there is more than one part for a particular instrument or voice, add the appropriate numeral in parentheses after the name of that instrument or voice unless the number is otherwise implicit.

[examples omitted; no change]

Use *continuo* for a thorough bass part whether it is named as *basso continuo*, *figured bass*, *thorough bass*, or *continuo*.

**Alternative**

Record the medium of performance using an external controlled list instead of or in addition to applying the instructions given under [6.15.1.4](#)–[6.15.1.13](#).

Record details of medium of performance if considered to be important for selection in a note (see [7.21](#)).