

To: Joint Steering Committee for Development of RDA  
From: John Attig, ALA Representative  
Subject: Proposed revision of instruction 6.15.1.4, “Instrumental Music Intended for One Performer to a Part”

ALA has a number of concerns with the revision:

1. The original CCC proposal treated continuo as an exception to RDA 6.15.1.4. One of the reasons for this is that the continuo part was often performed by more than one instrument, for example a harpsichord and a cello. The continuo part therefore does not really belong under an instruction on “instrumental music intended for one performer to a part”; treating it as an exception at 6.15.1.4 — as RDA currently does — is a pragmatic solution. Another possibility would be to give the instruction at 6.15.1.3 (the general instruction for recording Medium of performance), which would avoid having to classify continuo as either a single instrument or a group of instruments.

However, moving the instruction on recording *continuo* to 6.15.1.6 is a serious distortion. The continuo may be a single *part* but it is **not** an individual *instrument*. The part might be performed by a single instrument or by a group of instruments.

ALA does not agree to this change to the original CCC proposal, and urges that the instruction for recording *continuo* be given as an exception at 6.15.1.4 or moved to 6.15.1.3.

2. The wording of the exception for continuo at 6.15.1.4 now emphasizes the term “thorough bass” rather than “continuo”. We would argue that the latter is by far the more commonly-used term. Given that *continuo* is the preferred RDA term, that term should be used in the instruction. The original CCC wording, which uses “thorough bass” as part of the definition of the term and begins with the instruction to record *continuo*, does not raise this problem. Again, ALA does not agree to this change from the original CCC proposal.