

To: Joint Steering Committee for Development of RDA

From: Barbara B. Tillett, LC Representative

Subject: Musical arrangements: discussion paper

LC thanks EURIG for its exploration of how RDA might better provide for arrangements of musical works in authorized access points. We recognize this as a worthy topic, and offer the comments that follow.

Many of the attributes addressed are important, and recording them can be meaningful in fulfilling user tasks. But we don't feel the attributes discussed should necessarily be brought out in access points as recommended. Further, the linear method that adding elements to access points represents can easily lead to cumbersome constructions that at the same time present information in cryptic ways. We feel the user's convenience can be better served by other means of presenting these elements.

1.1 Arrangements by composers

Proposal:

We see no difference here between musical works revised by their original creator and authors' revisions of their literary works. In both cases, there is the possibility that the revision could be extensive enough to be regarded as a new work (for example, an author's revision of a novel into a screenplay or a composer's revision of a movement of a symphony as a separate and complete brass fanfare), but we don't agree that any revision by an author or composer of his or her pre-existing work must, by definition, be regarded as a new work.

1.2 Specific case: works arranged by their own creator

We believe that with the aid of reference works, publishers' catalogs, and historical information discovered through other means, it is generally not particularly difficult to ascertain which of a composer's publically available versions of a work is the original. So we don't feel such a consideration provides solid support for regarding every version of such a work as a new work.

Proposal:

In creating authorized access points for expressions, we note again that among other distinguishing features, medium of performance, while absent as an option now, could reasonably be recommended. That is something that could be added to the instructions. Regarding the Liszt example, we find that treating the two versions shown as entirely separate works fails to provide for the relationship between them, and is therefore misleading to users. We believe the proposal's analogy to 6.28.1.10 for differentiating by means of using medium of performance doesn't apply here because 6.28.1.10 is meant to cover works – not expressions -- that have no relationship to each other though they have

the same title for the work. Distinguishing between expressions of the same work should not use the same additions as used to distinguish separate works, as the user would not be able to understand which characteristic goes with what in a text string.

Finally, this discussion relies on a context of Western art music, which we see as a bias in the music instructions throughout RDA. We believe this bias, inherited from AACR2, should be reduced and eventually eliminated from RDA. In the course of achieving that, we expect the RDA Music Joint Working Group will be examining how, if at all, the idea of a work's being modified by its creator is significant outside of Western music, and how RDA could provide for such modifications when more than one musical tradition must be accommodated.

1.3 Arrangements by non-composers

We feel the distinction the discussion makes between composers and “non-composers”, the latter being defined as arrangers who have not written music on their own, to be, at best, likely to require more research than ought reasonably be expected of catalogers, and, at worst, wading into the treacherous waters of judging what earns a musician the title “composer”. Furthermore, we feel that the difference, once made, would be opaque to end users. Insofar as arrangements made for pedagogical purposes are concerned, we don't feel that particular attribute of an expression, or indeed of a work, is relevant when creating an authorized access point. However, the audience to which a work or an expression is directed can already be recorded elsewhere.

2. Arrangements and performances: inexplicit relationships

We disagree that RDA “does not make it possible to establish a clear, direct relationship between an arrangement and its various recorded performances.” We should perhaps note first, that often the resource itself doesn't make those relationships clear, so even the means RDA might already have to record such information cannot be invoked. At the same time, we welcome the fact that EURIG includes in its discussion not only the different occasions of a work's performance as manifested in recordings (whether by different performers or by the same performer) but also the matter of what to do about the underlying text performed (for example, the 4-act or the 5-act version of an opera, or the original work for orchestra or its arrangement for piano, 4 hands). Music shares these concerns, by the way, with other performed works. However, it is certainly possible to bring these differences and attributes out in various other access points, such as for a related work or a contributor to an expression.

At the same time, we would welcome more relationship designators that could render a relationship explicit. We think such designators provide a more user-friendly means of identifying an expression manifested. Suppose, for example, Appendix J.3 contained a relationship designator “performed as” that could introduce a name/title authorized access point for an expression that included a medium of performance as an “other distinguishing characteristic”? We suggest that an expansion of the types of relationships

represented in Appendix J would offer more meaningful ways to bring specific musical relationships RDA now overlooks to the service of user tasks.