To: RDA Steering Committee

From: Linda Barnhart, Secretary-Elect, RSC

Subject: Revision of RDA 6.15 Medium of Performance

The text below reflects the decisions made by the RDA Steering Committee during its November 2016 meeting and via email after the meeting. This was a “Phoenix” revision, meaning that the entire instruction at 6.15 was replaced. A mapping follows at the end of the document between the “old” 6.15 and the “new” 6.15.

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6.15 Medium of Performance

**CORE ELEMENT**

Medium of performance is a core element when needed to differentiate a musical work from another work with the same title. It may also be a core element when identifying a musical work with a title that is not distinctive.

6.15.1 Basic Instructions on Recording Medium of Performance

6.15.1.1 **Scope**

medium of performance▼: An instrument, voice, and/or ensemble for which a musical work was originally conceived.

For guidelines on recording a medium of performance of musical content, see 7.21.

6.15.1.2 **Sources of Information**

Take information on a medium of performance from any source.

6.15.1.3 **Recording Medium of Performance**

Record a medium of performance using a term from a standard list, if available. If such a list is not available, see the listing of medium of performance terms on the Tools tab of the RDA Toolkit: Medium of Performance. Record as many terms as are applicable to the resource being described, such as:

a) a term for a specific instrument, voice, or ensemble

EXAMPLE
sitar
soprano voice
tin can ensemble

b) a term for an unspecified instrument, voice, or ensemble

EXAMPLE
instrument

c) a term for an instrument or voice for which only the family is known

EXAMPLE
plucked instrument
female voice

d) a term for an ensemble consisting of the same family of instruments or voices

EXAMPLE
string ensemble
women’s chorus

e) a term for the range or general type of instrument or voice

EXAMPLE
bass instrument
mechanical instrument

and/or

f) a collective term for other media, etc.

EXAMPLE
electronics

Apply these additional instructions, as applicable:

alternative instruments and voices (see 6.15.1.4)
doubling instruments and voices (see 6.15.1.5)
number of parts, performers, etc. (see 6.15.1.6).
Record a medium of performance as a separate element, as part of an access point, or as both. For instructions on recording a medium of performance as part of an authorized access point, see 6.28.1.9.

6.15.1.4 Alternative Instruments and Voices

Record terms for alternative instruments and voices.

**EXAMPLE**

viola
*Alternative instrument for clarinet in a sonata for clarinet (or viola) and piano*

6.15.1.5 Doubling Instruments and Voices

Record terms for doubling instruments and voices.

**EXAMPLE**

English horn
*Doubling instrument for oboe in a quintet for flute, oboe (doubling English horn), clarinet, French horn, and bassoon*

**Optional Omission**

Omit doubling instruments and voices.

6.15.1.6 Number of Parts, Performers, Etc.

Record the number of parts, performers, hands, and ensembles by applying these instructions, as applicable:

- number of parts or performers for each instrument or voice (see 6.15.1.6.1)
- number of hands for each instrument (see 6.15.1.6.2)
- number of ensembles (see 6.15.1.6.3)
- total number of performers (see 6.15.1.6.4)
- total number of ensembles (see 6.15.1.6.5).

6.15.1.6.1 Number of Parts or Performers for Each Instrument or Voice

Record the number of parts or performers for each instrument or voice, if it is readily ascertainable.

**EXAMPLE**

2 parts
*Medium of performance term: clarinet*
5 performers
Medium of performance term: plucked instrument

**Exception**

Record the number of performers for a group of percussion instruments, if it is readily ascertainable.

EXAMPLE

3 performers
Medium of performance term: percussion

1 performer
Medium of performance term: sound effects

**Optional Omission**

Omit the number of parts or performers for an instrument or voice if there is only one part or performer for that instrument or voice.

6.15.1.6.2 Number of Hands for Each Instrument

Record the number of hands for each instrument if other than two.

EXAMPLE

1 hand
Medium of performance term: piano

4 hands
Medium of performance term: viola

For two or more keyboard or mallet (marimba, vibraphone, xylophone, etc.) instruments, specify the number of hands if other than two per instrument.

EXAMPLE

6 hands
Medium of performance term: piano. Three performers on 2 pianos

8 hands
Medium of performance term: piano. Four performers on 2 pianos

8 hands
Medium of performance term: marimba. Four performers on 2 marimbas
6.15.1.6.3 Number of Ensembles

Record the number of ensembles for each type of ensemble, if it is readily ascertainable.

Optional Omission
Omit the number of ensembles for a type of ensemble if there is only one ensemble of that type.

6.15.1.6.4 Total Number of Parts or Performers

Record the total number of parts or performers, if it is readily ascertainable.

EXAMPLE

2 performers
Clarinet with vibraphone (doubling harpsichord)

10 performers
Tuba, 3 trumpets, 2 horns, 2 trombones, 1 timpani, and 1 percussion performer

6.15.1.6.5 Total Number of Ensembles

Record the total number of ensembles, if it is readily ascertainable.

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Mapping from old to new numbers

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**For the Tools tab of RDA Toolkit:**

**Medium of Performance**

Instruments, Voices, and Ensembles: for use with 6.15.1.3

**Instruments**

Use the following list of terms as a guide:

- cello or violoncello
- cor anglais or English horn
- double bass (*not* bass viol or contrabass)
- double bassoon or contrabassoon
harpsichord (not cembalo or virginal)
horn (not French horn)
kettle drums or timpani
piano (not fortepiano or pianoforte)
viola da gamba (not bass viol or gamba)

When alternatives are given, choose a term and use it consistently.

If considered important for identification or access, record the designation of key in which an instrument is pitched and/or terms indicating the range of an instrument.

If there is more than one percussion instrument, and the names of the individual instruments are not specified by the composer in the original title, use percussion.

Continuo
Use continuo to identify a continuo part.

Solo Voices
Record an appropriate term from the following list:

soprano
mezzo-soprano
alto
tenor
baritone
bass

Record other terms as appropriate.

Large Instrumental Ensembles

Record an appropriate term from the following list:

orchestra
string orchestra
band

Record orchestra for full or reduced orchestra.

Instrumental Ensembles with One Performer to a Part

Record an appropriate term for an instrumental ensemble with one performer to a part using the appropriate term for the instrument or family of instruments followed by the word ensemble.

Record instrumental ensemble for an instrumental ensemble with one player to a part consisting of instruments from two or more families of instruments when a more specific term is not available.
Choruses

Record an appropriate term from the following list:

- mixed voices
- men’s voices
- women’s voices
- unison voices

Record other terms as appropriate.

Vocal Ensembles with One Voice to a Part

Record an appropriate term from the following list:

- mixed solo voices
- men’s solo voices
- women’s solo voices

Record other terms as appropriate.