

To: ALA/ALCTS/CaMMS Committee on Cataloging: Description and Access
FROM: Tracey Snyder, MLA Liaison to CC:DA
SUBJECT: Revision of RDA instructions for librettos (RDA 6.27.1.2, 6.27.4.2, and 6.28.1.2.)

The Bibliographic Control Committee of the Music Library Association proposes the following revision identified as a high priority by the RDA Music Revisions Facilitation Task Force. We ask for CC:DA's consideration and endorsement so that the proposal may be considered by the Joint Steering Committee for Development of RDA at their November meeting.

Background

In AACR2 21.28B1, related works are to be entered under the heading for the person etc. responsible for the related work. 21.28A1 states that librettos and other texts set to music fall into this category. For example, the libretto to *Marriage of Figaro* would be entered under Da Ponte, not Mozart. However, 21.28A1 footnote 7 allows for librettos and other texts to be entered under the heading for the composer, a practice that American libraries have followed. The construction of the uniform title for a libretto or other musical text entered under composer is governed by 25.35E1, which instructs that *Libretto* be added to the uniform title for an “opera, operetta, oratorio, or the like.”

In RDA, the authorized access point for a libretto etc. must be formed by using the access point for the author of the libretto etc., followed by the preferred title for the libretto, etc. There is no alternative as there is in AACR2. Instead RDA 6.27.4.2 instructs the cataloger to create a variant access point for the libretto etc. by combining the access point for the composer of the musical work with the preferred title of the musical work. This is to be followed by the term *Libretto* or *Librettos*, or *Text* or *Texts*, as appropriate.

However, the instruction fails to take into account those situations where the author of the words and the composer of the music are the same person, as is the case with the operas of Richard Wagner. Application of the instruction as written would result in a variant access point for the libretto of a Wagner opera that would be identical, save for punctuation, to the authorized access point for the libretto. This is best demonstrated by example:

The preferred title for the opera *Lohengrin* by Richard Wagner would be *Lohengrin*. This is also the preferred title for the libretto. Because they are identical, one would need to apply 6.3.1 and supply the form for each work. In this case it would be “Opera” and “Libretto”.

In forming the authorized access points for these two works, one would apply RDA 6.28.1.2 to create the authorized access point for the opera, which would be:

Wagner, Richard, 1813-1883. *Lohengrin*

One would follow 6.27.1.2 to create the authorized access point for the libretto, which would be:

Wagner, Richard, 1813-1883. *Lohengrin*

Because these two access points are identical, one would need to add a term indicating form of work, according to RDA 6.27.1.9. The access points would now be:

Wagner, Richard, 1813-1883. *Lohengrin* (Opera)

Wagner, Richard, 1813-1883. *Lohengrin* (Libretto)

Now according to RDA 6.27.4.2, one needs to create a variant access point for the libretto. Because the instruction says to combine the authorized access point for the composer with the preferred title of the musical work, and then to add *Libretto* etc., the variant access point for the libretto would appear as:

Wagner, Richard, 1813-1883. *Lohengrin*. Libretto

This would be practically identical to the authorized access point for the libretto, which is:

Wagner, Richard, 1813-1883. *Lohengrin* (Libretto)

The above example assumes that we are dealing with two distinct works: the musical work *Lohengrin* and the libretto *Lohengrin*, even when both are by the same person. This interpretation is certainly supported by the FRBR conceptual model. If one supports this interpretation, then the fix to this problem is fairly straightforward and can be easily solved by adding an instruction to RDA 6.27.4.2 to not apply the instruction when the author of the words and the composer of the music is the same person. However, MLA feels that an equally valid interpretation is that these special types of works, where one person is responsible for the music and the words, should be treated conceptually as a single work. If the libretto etc. for this type of work were to be manifested without the music, the libretto etc. in this instance could be considered as a kind of extract of the entire work. In this scenario, the words *Libretto*, *Librettos*, *Text*, or *Texts* would just be appended to the access point and not used as a qualifier. This interpretation also has the advantage of minimizing changes to existing access points on bibliographic and authority records. In the current interpretation, nearly every access point for a Wagner opera would have to be modified to include the parenthetical qualifier (Opera). Access points for Wagner librettos would also need to be modified. Adopting the MLA interpretation would alleviate the need for this manipulation.

Rationale

In order to convey this interpretation, MLA proposes that instructions should be added to RDA 6.27.1.2 (Works Created by One Person, Family, or Corporate Body), 6.27.4.2 (Variant Access Point Representing One or More Librettos or Other Texts for Musical Works), and 6.28.1.2 (Musical Works with Lyrics, Libretto, text, etc.). The proposed instruction at 6.27.1.2 would instruct users of RDA to apply the instructions at 6.28.1.2 for musical works with words by the same person, family, or corporate body. The proposed instruction at 6.28.1.2 would instruct users to add the term *Libretto*, *Librettos*, *Text*, or *Texts** to the authorized access point of a musical work, if an access point is needed to represent only the words and the words and the music are by the same person, family, or corporate body. An example demonstrating this situation is also provided. Finally, an instruction is added to 6.27.4.2 to not apply the instruction when the author of the words and the composer of the music are the same person, referring back to the proposed addition in 6.28.1.2.

Note: A separate MLA proposal for 6.27.4.2 suggests that the word *Lyrics* should also be able to be added to variant access points representing the text of a musical work. If that proposal is accepted, the term *Lyrics* should also be added to the proposed additions in 6.28.1.2.

1. 6.27.1.2

Proposed Revision:

6.27.1.2 Works Created by One Person, Family, or Corporate Body

If one person, family, or corporate body is responsible for creating the work (see [19.2.1.1](#)), construct the authorized access point representing the work by combining (in this order):

- a) the authorized access point representing that person, family, or corporate body, formulated according to the guidelines and instructions given under [9.19.1](#) for persons, [10.10.1](#) for families, or [11.13.1](#) for corporate bodies, as applicable
- b) the preferred title for the work, formulated according to the instructions given under [6.2.2](#).

For musical works with lyrics, libretto, text, etc. where the creator of the music and the words are the same person, family, or corporate body, create the authorized access point for the work by applying the instruction at [6.28.1.2](#).

Clean Copy:**6.27.1.2****Works Created by One Person, Family, or Corporate Body**

If one person, family, or corporate body is responsible for creating the work (see [19.2.1.1](#)), construct the authorized access point representing the work by combining (in this order):

- a) the authorized access point representing that person, family, or corporate body, formulated according to the guidelines and instructions given under [9.19.1](#) for persons, [10.10.1](#) for families, or [11.13.1](#) for corporate bodies, as applicable
- b) the preferred title for the work, formulated according to the instructions given under [6.2.2](#).

For musical works with lyrics, libretto, text, etc. where the creator of the music and the words are the same person, family, or corporate body, create the authorized access point for the work by applying the instruction at [6.28.1.2](#).

2. 6.27.4.2**Proposed Revision:****6.27.4.2****Variant Access Point Representing One or More Librettos or Other Texts for Musical Works**

Construct a variant access point representing one or more librettos or other texts that have been used in specific musical works by combining in this order:

- a) the authorized access point representing the composer of the musical work or musical works, formulated according to the guidelines and instructions given under [9.19.1](#) for persons, [10.10.1](#) for families, or [11.13.1](#) for corporate bodies, as applicable
- b) the preferred title for the musical work or musical works, formulated according to the instructions given under [6.14.2](#)
- c) the term *Libretto*, *Librettos*, *Text*, or *Texts*, as appropriate
- d) another distinguishing term, if needed.

[examples omitted; no change]

Do not apply this instruction to musical works where the creator of the music and the words are the same person, family, or corporate body (see [6.28.1.2](#)).

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6.27.4.2

Variant Access Point Representing One or More Librettos or Other Texts for Musical Works

Construct a variant access point representing one or more librettos or other texts that have been used in specific musical works by combining in this order:

- a) the authorized access point representing the composer of the musical work or musical works, formulated according to the guidelines and instructions given under [9.19.1](#) for persons, [10.10.1](#) for families, or [11.13.1](#) for corporate bodies, as applicable
- b) the preferred title for the musical work or musical works, formulated according to the instructions given under [6.14.2](#)
- c) the term *Libretto*, *Librettos*, *Text*, or *Texts*, as appropriate
- d) another distinguishing term, if needed.

[examples omitted; no change]

Do not apply this instruction to musical works where the creator of the music and the words are the same person, family, or corporate body (see [6.28.1.2](#)).

3. 6.28.1.2

Proposed Revision:

6.28.1.2

Musical Works with Lyrics, Libretto, Text, Etc.

For a musical work that includes words in the form of lyrics, a libretto, text, etc. (e.g., a song, opera, musical comedy), construct the authorized access point representing the work by combining (in this order):

- a) the authorized access point representing the composer of the music, formulated according to the guidelines and instructions given under [9.19.1](#) for persons, [10.10.1](#) for families, or [11.13.1](#) for corporate bodies, as applicable

- b) the preferred title for the work, formulated according to the instructions given under [6.14.2](#).

[examples omitted; no change]

If the words and music are by the same person, family, or corporate body, and an authorized access point is needed to represent a work that consists of only the words, create an authorized access point for the text by adding to the authorized access point for the musical work the term *Libretto*, *Librettos*, *Text*, or *Texts*, as appropriate.

EXAMPLE

Wagner, Richard, 1813–1883. *Lohengrin*. Libretto
Authorized access point for: *Lohengrin* : Textbuch /
 Richard Wagner

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6.28.1.2

Musical Works with Lyrics, Libretto, Text, Etc.

For a musical work that includes words in the form of lyrics, a libretto, text, etc. (e.g., a song, opera, musical comedy), construct the authorized access point representing the work by combining (in this order):

- a) the authorized access point representing the composer of the music, formulated according to the guidelines and instructions given under [9.19.1](#) for persons, [10.10.1](#) for families, or [11.13.1](#) for corporate bodies, as applicable
- b) the preferred title for the work, formulated according to the instructions given under [6.14.2](#).

[examples omitted; no change]

If the words and music are by the same person, family, or corporate body, and an authorized access point is needed to represent a work that consists of only the words, create an authorized access point for the text by adding to the authorized access point for the musical work the term *Libretto*, *Librettos*, *Text*, or *Texts*, as appropriate.

EXAMPLE

Wagner, Richard, 1813–1883. *Lohengrin*. Libretto
Authorized access point for: *Lohengrin* : Textbuch /
 Richard Wagner

Alternative Action

MLA recognizes that the approach taken in the proposal is no more or less valid than the current approach. If CC:DA is not in favor of the MLA proposal, the instruction at 6.27.4.2 will still need to be modified so that a variant access point for a libretto, etc. is not created that is practically identical to the authorized access point for the libretto, which will happen in cases where the author of the words and the composer of the music are the same person.