

TO: ALA/ALCTS/CaMMS Committee on Cataloging: Description and Access

FROM: Tracey Snyder, MLA Liaison to CC:DA

SUBJECT: Revision of RDA instructions relating to librettos and lyrics for musical works (RDA 6.2.2.10.2, 6.27.4.2, Appendix I.2.1, and Glossary)

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 RDA, the authorized access point for a libretto or other text of a musical work must be formed by using the access point for the author of the libretto or other text, followed by the preferred title for the libretto or other text. Whereas AACR2 provides an alternative for librettos and other texts to be entered under the composer's name, RDA does not provide this alternative. RDA 6.27.4.2 instructs the cataloger to create a variant access point for the libretto or other text 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*, *Librettos*, *Text*, or *Texts* as appropriate.

There have been some questions raised as to why the term *Lyrics* could not be used as part of this instruction. This question becomes particularly relevant when one looks at the examples in 6.27.4.2. The final example has a variant access point of *John, Elton. Songs. Texts. Selections*, followed by the authorized access point it is referring to of *Taupin, Bernie. Lyrics. Selections*. If *Lyrics* can be used as a conventional collective title in a preferred access point, it would make sense for the same term to be used in a variant access point.

This document proposes to revise 6.27.4.2 to allow for the use of the term *Lyrics*, in addition to the terms *Libretto*, *Librettos*, *Text*, and *Texts*. It also proposes to add glossary definitions for the terms *Libretto(s)*, *Lyrics*, and *Text(s)* that will aid the cataloger in deciding which of these terms to select and to revise the descriptions of "librettist" and "lyricist" in Appendix I to agree with the proposed glossary definitions of *Libretto(s)* and *Lyrics*. Finally, it proposes changed wording for the caption of 6.27.4.2 to reflect the inclusion of lyrics, libretto(s), and text(s).

Ancillary to the proposed changes outlined above, this document proposes adding the terms "Librettos" and "Lyrics" to the list of conventional collective titles provided in 6.2.2.10.2 ("Complete Works in a Single Form"), alongside "Novels," "Plays," "Poems," and the like. The instruction refers the cataloger to 6.14.2.8 for compilations of musical works, and the presence of "Librettos" and "Lyrics" on the list provided in 6.2.2.10.2

would make it absolutely clear to the cataloger that librettos and song lyrics are not considered musical works.

Although the main focus of this proposal is 6.27.4.2, the other proposed revisions are related to the core issue. However, the other proposed revisions can be deliberated separately from the proposed revision to 6.27.4.2, since they can potentially be fast-tracked without regard to the outcome of 6.27.4.2. This is especially true for the description of the relationship designator “lyricist” in Appendix I.2.1, which as it stands now is incorrect. In restricting the use of “lyricist” to the realm of non-dramatic musical works, it precludes the cataloger from using “lyricist” with respect to musicals. This means that the cataloger could not use “lyricist” as the relationship designator for Stephen Sondheim, for example, for his role as lyricist of *West Side Story*.

Rationale

In the example named above, using the term “lyrics” with respect to both Bernie Taupin in the authorized access point and Elton John in the variant access point would be a transparent and user-friendly approach that would aid the user in completing the FRBR user tasks of finding and identifying appropriate resources (in this case, collections of lyrics to Elton John songs). A survey of AACR2 name-title authority records using “Songs. Texts” under artists such as Cole Porter, Bob Marley, Tori Amos, Bob Dylan, Jimi Hendrix, and Elton John reveals that, in all cases, the work cited uses the word “lyrics” in the title. The New Harvard Dictionary of Music defines “lyrics” as “the words of a popular song or number from a musical comedy.” Likewise, the Oxford English Dictionary gives “the words of a popular song” as a definition of “lyric.” To replace the more generic term “texts” with the widely-used and widely-understood term “lyrics” in a variant access point under the popular music artist’s name surely would be a boon to catalog users.

This is not to say that the term “texts” does not have its place. On the contrary, “texts” is quite appropriate with reference to art songs and folk songs, whereas “lyrics” is less so, according to the definitions cited above. Therefore, it would be wise to retain the three separate categories in order to address the three different types of situations. The long-standing distinction between “Libretto(s)” and “Text(s)” is certainly warranted, and the proposed distinction between “Lyrics” and other types of texts appears equally valid.

1. RDA 6.2.2.10.2

Proposed Revision:

6.2.2.10.2

Complete Works in Single Form

Record one of the following conventional collective titles as the preferred title for a compilation of works (other than music, see [6.14.2.8](#)) that consists of, or purports to be, the complete works of a person, family, or corporate body, in one particular form.

Correspondence

Essays

Librettos

Lyrics

Novels

Plays

Poems

Prose works

Short stories

Speeches

If none of the above is appropriate, record an appropriate specific collective title (e.g., *Posters, Fragments, Encyclicals*).

If the compilation consists of two or more but not all the works of one person, family, or corporate body in a particular form, apply the instructions given under [6.2.2.10.3](#).

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6.2.2.10.2

Complete Works in Single Form

Record one of the following conventional collective titles as the preferred title for a compilation of works (other than music, see [6.14.2.8](#)) that consists of, or purports to be, the complete works of a person, family, or corporate body, in one particular form.

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2. RDA 6.27.4.2

Proposed Revision:

6.27.4.2 Variant Access Point Representing One or More Lyrics, Librettos, or Other Texts of Musical Works

Construct a variant access point representing one or more lyrics, 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 Lyrics, Libretto, Librettos, Text, or Texts, as appropriate
- d) another distinguishing term, if needed.

EXAMPLE

[First four examples omitted; no change]

John, Elton, Songs. ~~Texts~~ Lyrics. Selections

Authorized access point for the compilation:

Taupin, Bernie. Lyrics. Selections

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6.27.4.2 Variant Access Point Representing One or More Lyrics, Librettos, or Other Texts of Musical Works

Construct a variant access point representing one or more lyrics, 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 *Lyrics*, *Libretto*, *Librettos*, *Text*, or *Texts*, as appropriate
- d) another distinguishing term, if needed.

EXAMPLE

[First four examples omitted; no change]

John, Elton, Songs. Lyrics. Selections

Authorized access point for the compilation:

Taupin, Bernie. Lyrics. Selections

3. RDA Appendix I.2.1

Proposed Revision:

librettist An author of a ~~libretto~~ the words of an opera or other musical stage work, or an oratorio. For an author of the words of just the songs from a musical, see *lyricist*.

lyricist An author of the words of a ~~non-dramatic musical work, except for oratorios~~ popular song, including a song or songs from a musical. For an author of just the dialogue from a musical, see *librettist*.

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librettist An author of the words of an opera or other musical stage work, or an oratorio. For an author of the words of just the songs from a musical, see *lyricist*.

lyricist An author of the words of a popular song, including a song or songs from a musical. For an author of just the dialogue from a musical, see *librettist*.

4. RDA Glossary

Proposed Revision:

<u>Libretto</u>	<u>The words of an opera or other musical stage work, or an oratorio. For the words of just the songs from a musical.</u> <u>Lyrics</u> ▼
<u>Lyrics</u>	<u>The words of a popular song, including a song or songs from a musical. For just the dialogue from a musical,</u> <u>Libretto</u> ▼
<u>Text</u>	<p>1) Content expressed through a form of notation for language intended to be perceived visually. Includes all forms of language notation other than those intended to be perceived through touch. <u>Tactile Text</u>▼</p> <p>2) <u>The words of a musical work other than an opera or other musical stage work, oratorio, or popular song. For just the dialogue from a musical,</u> <u>Libretto</u>▼ <u>For the words of just the songs from a musical,</u> <u>Lyrics</u>▼</p>

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<u>Libretto</u>	The words of an opera or other musical stage work, or an oratorio. For the words of just the songs from a musical. <u>Lyrics</u> ▼
<u>Lyrics</u>	The words of a popular song, including a song or songs from a musical. For just the dialogue from a musical, <u>Libretto</u> ▼
<u>Text</u>	<p>1) Content expressed through a form of notation for language intended to be perceived visually. Includes all forms of language notation other than those intended to be perceived through touch. <u>Tactile Text</u>▼</p> <p>2) The words of a musical work other than an opera or other musical stage work, oratorio, or popular song. For just the dialogue from a musical, <u>Libretto</u>▼ For the words of just the songs from a musical, <u>Lyrics</u>▼</p>