

In April 2008, the chair of the Music Library Association's Bibliographic Control Committee (MLA's BCC) appointed a short-term working group to investigate and make recommendations on work records for music. The seven members of the group, all currently serving on various BCC subcommittees, looked at the issues surrounding the question of what elements and attributes of musical works should be included in a work record.

The recommendations in the final report cannot be applied in a current, "real world" environment. Instead, the working group provided a conceptual document based on the *Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records* (FRBR) and *Functional Requirements for Authority Data* (FRAD) conceptual models that addresses what a work record for music should encompass.

Work records differ in concept from current name-title authority records created using AACR2 and MARC21. As part of a new descriptive model, work records would be stored in a relational or object-oriented database. In this scenario, entities in the work record are "inherited" by their expression, manifestation, and item records. These entities include not only the title of the work but also date of composition, instrumentation, language, genre, subject, related works, etc. Catalogers would no longer enter these elements in a bibliographic record for each manifestation, the way we work in flat MARC21 bibliographic and authority files today, but would enter them only once, in the work record, to which expression, manifestation, and item records would be linked.

The working group's recommendations serve several purposes:

- 1) As a resource for future discussions of music issues in FRBR and FRAD.
- 2) As guidance for MLA members reviewing the ever-evolving drafts of *RDA: Resource Description and Access*, which is based on FRBR and FRAD.
- 3) As an opportunity to share these recommendations with other specialist communities conducting similar work, such as OLAC's Cataloging Policy Committee.
- 4) As a foundational document for the proposed MLA task force to look at shaping the next generation of library catalogs (MLA Task Force on Committee Structure Revised Recommendations June 2008, p. 2-3).

The Bibliographic Control Committee expresses its thanks to the working group for their comprehensive study of the issues and their willingness to "think out of the box" in exploring the possibilities of work records for music.

Kathy Glennan  
Chair, MLA's Bibliographic Control Committee  
August 19, 2008

# The BCC Working Group on Work Records for Music

## Final Report

July 31, 2008

(minor update, Sept. 12, 2008)

**Membership:** Jean Harden, Chair; Joe Bartl, Linda Blair, Paul Cauthen, Ralph Hartsock, Damian Iseminger, Casey Mullin

### Charge:

To investigate and make recommendations on issues related to work records for music, using RDA vocabularies and FRBR relationships. Issues to be addressed include:

- 1) Identifying elements/attributes of musical works that should be included in a work record
- 2) Determining which of these elements/attributes should be required in a preferred access point for the work
- 3) Recommending additional elements/attributes for a work record beyond those contained in FRBR, FRAD, and RDA
- 4) Examining existing authority records to see how they conform to this analysis.
- 5) Proposing potential sources of information (including authority and bibliographic records) for these elements/attributes and recommending a priority for these potential sources.

### Methodology:

All work was carried out electronically, primarily through the use of a wiki divided into pages corresponding to various aspects of the charge. Jean Harden convened the group and developed a plan of work that consisted of a number of stages:

1. Establishing vocabulary. The Group examined AACR2 to cull vocabulary terms used in the discussion of headings, references and other authority-related elements. These were then correlated to terms employed in FRBR and FRAD.
2. Examination of existing authority records. A number of authority records for music works were placed on the wiki, from WorldCat as well as from international bibliographic sources. Elements in these records were mapped to corresponding entities and attributes in FRBR and FRAD. Elements were also identified that are found in current authority records that would not be appropriate for inclusion in work records.
3. Discussion of the elements and attributes that should be included in a work record, together with additional elements/attributes beyond those contained in FRBR, FRAD and RDA. The

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Group looked systematically at the attributes of a work as outlined in FRBR and FRAD to determine how these might be exemplified in a record for a musical work. Emphasis was on developing a highly detailed and inclusive list, fleshing out general attributes such as “Other distinguishing characteristics” with additional details that could aid in distinguishing or identifying musical works.

4. Examination of musical works by category to determine which elements were needed in specific cases and which were universal to most or all works. This included discussion of sources of information for each category and consideration of special cases--excerpts from larger works and related works. The following categories were examined:
  - A. Larger vocal works
  - B. Smaller choral works with text
  - C. Large-ensemble instrumental works
  - D. Chamber music (instrumental and vocal)
  - E. Works of whatever nature for which little information is available
  - F. Sources where information for work records may be found
5. Summary of requirements for a work record, culled from the specific category records, together with a list of sources where this information could be found. The resulting list of elements was divided into sections detailing elements that should be present in all records, present in most records, present for certain categories of musical works, and present when available.

### Rationale:

Although FRBR defines a work as “a distinct intellectual or artistic creation”, in the Western art music tradition the commonly understood definition of a musical work as evidenced in music reference works is more specific. That is, a musical work is usually the work of a single composer, intended for performance as a whole, or a group of compositions with a unifying element, such as a collective title or single opus number.

For the purposes of this report we are excluding discussion of the following:

- Expression level attributes, including arrangements and incomplete works (selections)
- Aggregate works, including collections by a single composer and collections assembled by a compiler

This report concentrates on works in the tradition with which its writers are most familiar, Western art music. We are aware that works in other traditions, including non-Western music, jazz, folk, and popular music, will need different information in their work records and, consequently, in preferred access points for these works. FRBR and FRAD say that a work is the underlying intellectual content, something not material, that is then expressed as something material. In traditions with systems of thorough musical notation that first complete expression

of a work is usually in written format. In traditions not as heavily reliant on notation, however, the first (and maybe only) expression is as performance, for instance in the case of works that are largely improvised. The work record elements that would be appropriate for these works should be determined by appropriate groups of persons conversant with this music but might well include such elements as time and place of performance and names of performers.

### The Work Record:

We do not assume any particular encoding scheme but are concerned purely with the content of work records. Nevertheless, we would suggest that work records will be most useful if all elements are made searchable.

The following is the recommended content for work records for Western art music:

*All records should have:*

1. At least 1 controlled access point with indication of status and usage
2. Source or sources
3. One or more work identifiers (uniquely identified with the work and internationally understood )
  - o A standard work identifier, such as the ISWC (International Standard Musical Work Code), would be included in every record, if a mechanism for assigning such becomes readily available and the work records associated with these numbers on the ISWC website become full enough to be useful for identification.
  - o Thematic index numbers are work identifiers and, when available, would be entered as such in a work record.
4. Record identifier (database-specific, such as an OCLC number or an ARN)

*Most records should have:*

1. Medium, stated in a form usable in a controlled access point
2. Key, if applicable
3. Musical incipit
4. Detailed instrumentation (including voices and voice ranges)
5. Topical and/or form/genre subject access terms, selected from an appropriate thesaurus or subject access scheme

*Work records for a particular category of musical compositions should have:*

For all texted works:

1. Original language of the text

We agree with the reasoning presented in the report "Definition of a FRBR-based metadata model for the Indiana University Variations3 Project," footnote 3, p. 4: "Language does not appear at the Work level in the FRBR report, assuming that a textual work only achieves a specific language once it is fixed in an Expression. For

musical works, however, any text present is a re-use of an existing text, even if written for use specifically in the musical Work. With this in mind, we consider the language of the text to be a part of the abstract Work, but also to record language at the Expression level, to accommodate translations." This interpretation squares with the inclusion in FRAD of "original language of the work" as a work attribute and "language of expression" as an expression attribute.<sup>1</sup>

2. Source of the text:

In music, texts may have as their basis one or more different sources. In order to accommodate all scenarios, record the following in the work record:

- All persons responsible in some way for the text, and, if possible, links to the name records.
- All works which were used in or as a basis for the text used, and, if possible, links to the work records.

3. Movement titles: if movements have no title, first line of text may be used

4. Program or topical subject of work: link to authorized heading for person, non-musical work, place, object, event or topic

For large vocal works:

1. Name of characters or roles where appropriate

For small choral works and chamber vocal works:

1. First line of text, if different from title

For multi-movement/multi-section works or multi-piece sets:

1. Number of movements, discrete sections, or constituent pieces
2. Titles of movements, sections, or individual pieces
  - If individual movements/sections/pieces are not titled, initial tempo markings may be substituted for the title
3. Key of each movement, section, or piece
4. Musical incipit of each movement, section, or piece

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<sup>1</sup> Per Glenn Patton, Chair, IFLA Working Group on Functional Requirements and Numbering of Authority Records, in an e-mail message received by K. Glennan and J. Harden, Sept. 12, 2008: This was true in the 2007 draft of FRAD. However, several comments received during the subsequent FRAD worldwide review questioned how the Work entity could have a language aspect, believing that if "language-ness" were involved, it would be expressed as the language attribute of the first Expression of that Work. After discussion, the IFLA Working Group concurred and decided to remove the "Original language of the work" as an attribute in the next version of FRAD.

*Whenever available, also include:*

1. Variant title(s)
2. Numeric designator(s) (opus numbers, serial numbers, thematic index numbers); a single work may contain multiple numeric designators. Note that thematic index numbers may also be used as work identifiers (see above)
3. Genre
4. Related works (ideally expressed as links):
  - a. Type of relationship: derivation, succession, whole/part, other versions, etc.
  - b. Explanatory text (only if links not possible)
5. History
  - a. Date of composition
  - b. Place of composition
  - c. Date of first performance
  - d. Place of first performance
  - e. Date of first publication
  - f. Place of first publication
  - g. First publisher
  - h. Title changes, especially those between manuscript and first edition or performance
  - i. Dedicatee (expressed by a link to the person/corporate body to whom the work is dedicated)
  - j. Any change in attribution

#### **Sources of information for work records:**

- Manifestation itself
- Authoritative score (Urtext editions, parts of monuments)
- Standard reference works (Grove, Baker's, Pazdřík, MGG, CPM, RISM); many of these are listed in the "Handbook of Examples for use in authority records created by the NACO-Music Project" (available through the MOUG website and directly on the Yale website).
- Individual composer thematic catalogs
- Bibliographic databases and authority files, including non-English and non-Anglo-American files
- Web resources (American Memory, and similar sources for 19<sup>th</sup> century music; composer websites; publisher websites)
- Currently relevant, specific reference tools that cover chronological period of creation or type of music catalogued

Recommendations concerning best practices for constructing preferred access points for musical works:

We assume that whatever cataloging code is in force at a given time will prescribe the construction of preferred access points. We did not think it a fruitful exercise to try to come up

with "rules" that would cover every possible case. Instead, we concentrated on the content of work records, as any preferred access point in a bibliographic record will be constructed out of information in the work record, perhaps in conjunction with information in the expression record (such as Selections; Arranged; statements of translation; Vocal score or Chorus score).

### Discussion:

As most musical works in the Western canon contain an internal structure (movements, arias, etc.), it is desirable, and indeed necessary, to describe this structure in the work record. Current authority record practice sanctions the creation of separate records for parts of larger works, when necessary for creating access points. The user then infers the whole/part relationship based on the syntax of these access points (e.g. "Zauberflöte. Hölle Rache" is a part of "Zauberflöte").

In a relational database environment, such whole/part relationships can better be represented by dynamic relationships (expressed as links) between larger works and their parts. This is especially desirable when the parts have discrete attributes of their own (e.g. Variant titles, Keys). On the other hand, not all parts of all larger works have warranted their own authority records in the past. The same will be true for work records. For many works, describing their internal structure within the parent work record is sufficient.

It is our finding that these two practices can coexist in a work record environment. When information about the part warrants its own record (and when including these details within the context of the parent work would result in an unwieldy record), then a work record for the part should be created, along with the appropriate link to the work record for the whole. However, in many cases (e.g. movements of symphonies) a brief listing in the parent work record is all that is needed.

We wish to make clear the distinction between controlled access points within a work record and preferred access points within a manifestation record. The former are formulated using salient details about the work according to a prescribed set of rules (e. g., AACR2R); the latter are formulated according to the same rules, with notable exceptions. Whereas the controlled access point identifies the abstract work, the preferred access point identifies attributes of both the work *and* the expression; components such as "arr.", "Vocal score" and "English & Italian" refer to modifications to the work occurring within a particular expression. Accordingly, these components do *not* belong in the work record, nor do they warrant the creation of separate work records.

Certain other preferred access points (e.g., collective titles) do not identify discrete works. Such entries in the manifestation record as "Piano music. Selections" do not warrant the creation of a work record. This is a deviation from current authority record practice. Such collective titles are designed to identify *any* permutation of works in one specific form or for one specific medium; as such, they do not describe the works themselves. Therefore, we do not recommend the creation of work records for them, although we do not object to their continued use in manifestation records.

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Aside from these two exceptions, we advocate the creation of work records in all other cases. Though it will not always be possible or practical to include all recommended information, a “core-level” record can be created with basic information about the work, and can be enhanced at a later date. The implications for cooperative cataloging suggested by this practice are perhaps out of scope of this report; nonetheless, the use of work records, however robust, will be necessary in future cataloging environments.

### Areas for further study:

- Development of work records for non-Western music, jazz, folk, and popular music
- Discussion of aggregate works, including composer's complete works and subsets
- Implications for cooperative cataloging into the future (will these new standards be the province of the NACO Music Project? Or another body?)

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