**RDA phase 3: Medium of performance for music**

Gary L. Strawn

December 6, 2014

**Background**

Subfield $m of access fields in both the MARC21 authority and bibliographic formats contains an expression that describes in conventionalized terms the forces needed for the performance of a musical work. Different standards can be used for the construction of this subfield; within a given standard, requirements for the contents of this element can change over time.

RDA 6.15 as originally issued (in continuation of AACR2 practice) provided names for frequently-occurring chamber music combinations:

piano quartet

piano quintet

piano trio

string quartet

string trio

wind quintet

woodwind quartet

*Example:*

$a Schubert, Franz, $d 1797-1828. $t Satz, $m string quartet, $n D. 103, $r C minor

If the supplied title for a musical work was the same as the name of the form used in the medium of performance, the designation in subfield $m consisted solely of the instrumentation:

*Example:*

$a Beach, H. H. A., $c Mrs., $d 1867-1944. $t Quartet, $m strings, $n op. 89

The revisions to RDA issued in April 2014 eliminated these conventional groupings of instruments; from this point forward, access fields will use an enumerated list of instruments (prepared according to instructions contained in the revised RDA 6.15) for all musical works, whether intended for a conventional group or otherwise. The revised RDA instructions contain an exception (6.29.1.9.1, exception b) that preserved to some degree the notion of conventional groupings; after some discussion, it was decided that LC/PCC practice should be to apply all of the exceptions in 6.29.1.9.1 except for exception b.)

*Example:*

$a Beach, H. H. A., $c Mrs., $d 1867-1944. $t Quartet, $m violins (2), viola, cello, $n op. 89

**Conversion to be performed**

Because there is a one-for-one correspondence between the conventional groupings originally used in subfield $m and the new designations, the modification of existing records to use the new designations can be done by a program.

In authority records, the changes described here may be applied to subfield $m of X00, X10, X11 and X30 access fields (the 1XX, 4XX and 5XX fields). In bibliographic records, the changes described here may be applied to subfield $m of X00, X10, X11 and X30 access fields (the 1XX, 4XX, 6XX, 7XX and 8XX fields), as well as the 240 and 243 fields.

The following table shows former expressions for music medium of performance, and their current equivalents. In all cases, the comparison of terms in this list to terms appearing in bibliographic and authority records should be a normalized comparison. When replacing terms, existing punctuation at the end of a subfield should be retained.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Title ($t or $a)**[[1]](#footnote-1) | **Original $m term** | **Replacement $m term** | **Equivalent authority 382 field[[2]](#footnote-2)** |
| Trio *or* Trios | strings | violin, viola, cello | $a piano $n 1$a violin $n 1$a cello $n 1$ s 3 |
| Trio *or* Trios | piano, strings | piano, violin, cello | $a piano $n 1 $a violin $n 1 $a cello $n 1 $s 3 |
| Quartet *or* Quartets | strings | violins (2), viola, cello | $a violin $n 2 $a viola $n 1 $a cello $n 1 $s 4 |
| Quartet *or* Quartets | violins, viola, cello[[3]](#footnote-3) | violins (2), viola, cello | $a violin $n 2 $a viola $n 1 $a cello $n 1 $s 4 |
| Quartet *or* Quartets | woodwinds | flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon | $a flute $n 1 $a oboe $n 1 $a clarinet $n 1 $a bassoon $n 1 $s 4 |
| Quartet *or* Quartets | piano, strings | piano, violin, viola, cello | $a piano $n 1 $a violin $n 1 $a viola $n 1 $a cello $n 1 $s 4 |
| Quintet *or* Quintets | winds | flute, oboe, clarinet, horn, bassoon | $a flute $n 1 $a oboe $n 1 $a clarinet $n 1 $a horn $n 1 $a bassoon $n 1 $s 5 |
| Quintet *or* Quintets | piano, strings | piano, violins (2), viola, cello | $a piano $n 1 $a violin $n 2 $a viola $n 1 $a cello $n 1 $s 5 |
| Quintet *or* Quintets | piano, violins, viola, cello[[4]](#footnote-4) | piano, violins (2), viola, cello | $a piano $n 1 $a violin $n 2 $a viola $n 1 $a cello $n 1 $s 5 |
| *none of the above* | string trio | violin, viola, cello | $a piano $n 1$a violin $n 1$a cello $n 1$ s 3 |
| *none of the above* | string quartet | violins (2), viola, cello | $a violin $n 2 $a viola $n 1 $a cello $n 1 $s 4 |
| *none of the above* | woodwind quartet | flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon | $a flute $n 1 $a oboe $n 1 $a clarinet $n 1 $a bassoon $n 1 $s 4 |
| *none of the above* | wind quintet | flute, oboe, clarinet, horn, bassoon | $a flute $n 1 $a oboe $n 1 $a clarinet $n 1 $a horn $n 1 $a bassoon $n 1 $s 5 |
| *none of the above* | piano trio | piano, violin, cello | $a piano $n 1 $a violin $n 1 $a cello $n 1 $s 3 |
| *none of the above* | piano quartet | piano, violin, viola, cello | $a piano $n 1 $a violin $n 1 $a viola $n 1 $a cello $n 1 $s 4 |
| *none of the above* | piano quintet | piano, violins (2), viola, cello | $a piano $n 1 $a violin $n 2 $a viola $n 1 $a cello $n 1 $s 5 |
| *none of the above* | string trio accompaniment[[5]](#footnote-5) | violin, viola, cello accompaniment | $a singer $n 1 $a violin $n 1 $a viola $n 1 $a cello $n 1 $s 4 |
| *none of the above* | string quartet accompaniment | violins (2), viola, cello accompaniment | $a singer $n 1 $a violin $n 2 $a viola $n 1 $a cello $n 1 $s 5 |
| *none of the above* | woodwind quartet accompaniment | flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon accompaniment | $a singer $n 1 $a flute $n 1 $a oboe $n 1 $a clarinet $n 1 $a bassoon $n 1 $s 5 |
| *none of the above* | wind quintet accompaniment | flute, oboe, clarinet, horn, bassoon accompaniment | $a singer $n 1 $a flute $n 1 $a oboe $n 1 $a clarinet $n 1 $a horn $n 1 $a bassoon $n 1 $s 6 |
| *none of the above* | piano trio accompaniment | piano, violin, cello accompaniment | $a singer $n 1 $a piano $n 1 $a violin $n 1 $a cello $n 1 $s 4 |
| *none of the above* | piano quartet accompaniment | piano, violin, viola, cello accompaniment | $a singer $n 1 $a piano $n 1 $a violin $n 1 $a viola $n 1 $a cello $n 1 $s 5 |
| *none of the above* | piano quintet accompaniment | piano, violins (2), viola, cello accompaniment | $a singer $n 1 $a piano $n 1 $a violin $n 2 $a viola $n 1 $a cello $n 1 $s 5 |

*Before:*

100 1# $a Cilenšek, Johann, $d 1913-1998. $t Quintets, $m winds  
*After:*

100 1# $a Cilenšek, Johann, $d 1913-1998. $t Quintets, $m flute, oboe, clarinet, horn, bassoon

382 0# $a flute $n 1 $a oboe $n 1 $a clarinet $n 1 $a horn $n 1 $a bassoon $n 1 $s 5 $2 lcmpt

400 1# $w nnoa $a Cilenšek, Johann, $d 1913-1998. $t Quintets, $m winds

*Before:*

100 1# $a Donizetti, Gaetano, $d 1797-1848. $t Largos, $m piano trio, $n In. 626, $r D minor

400 1# $a Donizetti, Gaetano, $d 1797-1848. $t Trios, $m piano, strings, $n In. 626, $r D major  
*After:*

100 1# $a Donizetti, Gaetano, $d 1797-1848. $t Largos, $m piano, violin, cello, $n In. 626, $r D minor

382 0# $a piano $n 1 $a violin $n 1 $a cello $s 3 $2 lcmpt

400 1# $w nnoa $a Donizetti, Gaetano, $d 1797-1848. $t Largos, $m piano trio, $n In. 626, $r D minor

400 1# $a Donizetti, Gaetano, $d 1797-1848. $t Trios, $m piano, violin, cello, $n In. 626, $r D major

*Before:*

100 1# $a Thoma, Xaver, $d 1953- $t Gesänge, $m string quartet accompaniment, $n op. 165

*After:*

100 1# $a Thoma, Xaver, $d 1953- $t Gesänge, $m violins (2), viola, cello accompaniment, $n op. 165

382 0# $a singer $n 1 $a violin $n 2 $a viola $n 1 $a cello $n 1 $s 5 $2 lcmpt

400 1# $wnnoa $a Thoma, Xaver, $d 1953- $t Gesänge, $m string quartet accompaniment, $n op. 165

In all cases, the original $m term may be followed by a parenthesized expression. The information to the left of the parenthesized expression is modified as described above, and the parenthesized expression is tacked on to the end. For such fields, a 382 field may be constructed as described above.

*Before:*

100 1# $a Haydn, Joseph, $d 1732-1809. $t Quartets, $m strings (Doblinger)

*After:*

100 1# $a Haydn, Joseph, $d 1732-1809. $t Quartets, $m violins (2), viola, cello (Doblinger)

382 0# $a violin $n 2 $a viola $n 1 $a cello $s 4 $2 lcmpt

400 1# $wnnoa $a Haydn, Joseph, $d 1732-1809. $t Quartets, $m strings (Doblinger)

If the title (subfield $a or $t) is *not* Trio(s), Quartet(s) or Quintet(s), and if subfield $m does not contain a parenthesized expression, and if subfield $m contains "piano quintet", "string trio", "string quartet", "woodwind quartet", "wind quintet" or "piano trio" followed by a comma plus additional text, make the substitution to subfield $m as indicated above, retaining the comma and additional text in subfield $m. In these cases, however, do not construct a 382 field.

*Before:*

100 1# $a Geminiani, Francesco, $d 1687-1762. $t Concerti grossi, $m string quartet, string orchestra $n (1726). $n No. 5

400 1# $a Geminiani, Francesco, $d 1687-1762. $t Concerti grossi, $m string quartet, string orchestra, $n no. 5, $r G minor

*After:*

100 1# $a Geminiani, Francesco, $d 1687-1762. $t Concerti grossi, $m violins (2), viola, cello, string orchestra $n (1726). $n No. 5

400 1# $w nnoa $a Geminiani, Francesco, $d 1687-1762. $t Concerti grossi, $m string quartet, string orchestra $n (1726). $n No. 5

400 1# $a Geminiani, Francesco, $d 1687-1762. $t Concerti grossi, $m violins (2), viola, cello, string orchestra, $n no. 5, $r G minor

Any instances of the terms "piano quartet", "piano quintet", "piano trio", "string quartet", "string trio", "wind quintet" or "woodwind quartet" that remain at any point in subfield $m of a candidate field after this work has been performed should be reported for resolution by an appropriate operator.

700 12 $a Levitch, Leon. $t Fantasia, $m oboe, string quartet, $n op. 12.

700 12 $a Cherney, Brian. $t Nocturne, $m piano, wind quintet.

**Associated report file**

In addition to the changes described above, the RDA conversion program also inspects certain music uniform titles in bibliographic and authority records for other problems, and for additional adjustments that might be called for. It is important to note that **none of this work results in any change to a bibliographic or authority record,** but at most results in the generation of a report. (The name of this report file ends "MusicMedium.txt."

The program inspects every field that contains subfield $m and whose "title" is one that simply indicates the number of performers, in singular and plural: "Duo", "Trios", "Quartet", "Septets" and so on up to "Nonets."[[6]](#footnote-6) If the associated subfield $m does not already contain a parenthesis, the program inspects the contents of subfield $m to see if it might be possible to insert one or more parenthesized indications of the number of performers. The program does this work by assuming the number of performers indicated by the title, and attempting to account for them all by noting the numbers of performers implied by the various statements in subfield $m in singular and plural.[[7]](#footnote-7)

Here are some typical examples of the program's recommendations for changes to subfield $m:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Title** | **Original $m** | **Suggested replacement** |
| Trios | piano, saxophones | piano, saxophones (2) |
| Quartets | double basses | double basses (4) |
| Quintet | horn, violin, violas, cello | horn, violin, violas (2), cello |
| Octet | flute, clarinet, bassoons, trumpets, trombones | flute, clarinet, bassoons (2), trumpets (2), trombones (2) |

There are many reasons that the program will consider an access field to be a candidate, but not be able to propose a change. The various types of problems are indicated in the report file by a more-or-less cryptic message.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Message** | **Explanation** | **Examples**[[8]](#footnote-8) |
| Special handling | One or more of the terms in subfield $m is designated within the program as requiring special handling. | organ (4 hands)  pianos (6 hands) |
| Explicitly excluded | The program contains a rule indicating that one or more of the terms in subfield $m is excluded categorically, because it represents an ambiguity or some other difficulty.[[9]](#footnote-9) | unspecified instruments  alto  mixed voices  strings |
| Unrecognized instrument | One or more of the terms in subfield $m is not in the program's list of recognized instruments. | continuo  violins & continuo[[10]](#footnote-10) |
| Unknown problem | This message exists in the program at a particular point just to make sure that provision is made for all logical possibilities. If this message appears, there is some major structural problem with subfield $m. |  |
| Percussion A  Percussion B | These messages appear when the program can't account for the number of performers, and one or more of the terms in subfield $m is recognized as representing percussion. The letter designations represent the particular point in the program code where the problem with percussion arises, but except for debugging purpose they are probably not informative. | $t Duet, $m percussion  $t Quintet, $m violins, piano, percussion |
| Not provided for A  Not provided for B  Not provided for C  Not provided for D | All of these messages mean that the program has encountered a situation for which no provision has been made. The letter designations represent the particular point in the program code where a condition arises, but except for debugging purposes they are probably not informative. | $t Duet, $m organ |
| Negative performers | The program arrived at a negative number when attempting to apportion the implied number of performers amongst the instruments indicated in subfield $m. The appearance of this message indicates a serious problem with the structure of the access field. |  |

1. In title fields (X30, and bibliographic 240 and 243) the title appears in subfield $a; in other fields, the title appears in subfield $t. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Field 382 is constructed by the conversion program only for authority records, and only based on information derived from the 1XX field. There is no 382 field if the 1XX field contains subfield $o, or if the 1XX field contains "(Sketches" at any point. (If the work has been arranged, then the original instrumentation is not applicable.) If the program can generate a 382 field based on changes to 1XX subfield $m, the program replaces any existing 382 field with the new information. There is no 382 field if the 1XX field contains subfield $p. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. This form was used under RDA until late 2014. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. This form was used under RDA until late 2014. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Where the term "accompaniment" is present, it may appear in subfield $m text as the abbreviation "acc."; it is always spelled out in the replacement term. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. It would be tempting to include the designations "Trio sonata" and "Trio sonatas" in this list, but practice has demonstrated that in the few cases where the program is able to suggest a replacement (which is only when "continuo" is not one of the medium designations) the results are very mixed. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. A few moments of reflection will reveal that this will only be possible when the program can assign the same number of instruments to each plural designation. For example, the program will be able to suggest a replacement for "$t Quartets, $m violins, recorders" and for "$t Quintets, $m violins, cello, recorders" but not for "$t Quintets, $m violins, recorders." In the last example, there must be either three violins or three recorders, but it is not possible for the program to determine which is correct. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Examples for some conditions are (happily!) not readily available, and no attempt has been made to fabricate one. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. This message can also appear when the access field is improperly constructed. For example, the program will produce this message when it encounters "$t Quartet, $n op. 3. $m strings," because of the intervening opus number. In this example the punctuation gives a further indication that the subfields are out of order. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. The improper use of the ampersand instead of a comma causes the program to treat this as a single "instrument" which is not, happily enough, in the list of recognized instruments. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)