



MLA's Response to the LC Series Authority Decision

The MLA Board of Directors met from 22-25 May at our business office in Middleton, Wisconsin. MLA, too, will convey concern over the LC decision on series authority records. The following statement, prepared by Amanda Maple and unanimously endorsed by the Board, has been sent to the appropriate parties.

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The Library of Congress recently announced that it will direct its librarians to stop providing their professional oversight of the terminology used in their library catalog to describe and access all types of works that are published in series. This decision to stop applying librarians' expertise to this terminology will have a negative impact on the ability of American citizens to find and use music in their local libraries. Much music, and music-related information, is published in series. These series commonly change publishers over time, and the titles of series can change over time. American libraries, including the Library of Congress, acquire for their patrons music published around the world, by many publishers in many languages, who frequently publish music in series. Music published in series requires professional attention to the terminology used to describe and access it in library catalogs to ensure that our users can accurately locate the music, even when a series title or publisher has changed.

Music librarians across the country, those who provide public and access services as well as those who provide our users with the descriptions and tags in our library catalogs for retrieving music, urge the Library of Congress to consider the alternative solution to reducing costs in its cataloging operations that was put forward by the Bibliographic Control Committee of the Music Library Association on 3 May 2006, in its letter to Beacher Wiggins, Director for Acquisitions and Bibliographic Access at the Library. That solution is to empower a cohort of American libraries to participate with the Library of Congress librarians to assign terminology used in library catalogs to describe and access works in series. This model already exists for the description and access of authors' names, for example. Decades of collaboration between the Library of Congress and libraries around the country has been a boon to library users, who benefit from the shared catalogs of American libraries that are made possible by the sharing of cataloging and metadata among all American libraries. We urge the Library of Congress to continue its history of collaboration with American libraries on behalf of all American citizens, and reconsider its decision to stop providing necessary information in its catalog about works published in series.