

BCC2010/GFTF/1**MLA-BCC Genre/Form Task Force
Conference Report
San Diego -- March 22, 2010**

Members Present: Beth Iseminger (Chair), Caitlin Hunter, Marty Jenkins, Nancy Lorimer, Mark McKnight, Casey Mullin, Thomas Pease, Karen Peters, Sheila Torres-Blank, Hermine Vermeij

Members Not Present: Ralph Hartsock, Brooke Lippy

Guests Present: 27

Sacred Music

The group discussed and approved LC's favored option for sacred music: to keep several genre/form terms which are currently pre-coordinated with the terms "Sacred" and "Secular". Headings that will be retained are: Sacred cantatas, Sacred dialogues (Music), Sacred dramatic music, Sacred music, Sacred musicals, Sacred songs, Secular cantatas, and Secular oratorios. Headings that will be considered further, due to their manner of combining "Sacred" with possible medium of performance terms: Sacred choruses, Sacred monologues with music, Sacred pantomimes with music, Sacred part songs, Sacred solo cantatas, Sacred vocal music, Secular choruses, and Secular solo cantatas.

As noted, the term "Sacred music" will be retained and available for post-coordinated use.

Is the sacred or secular aspect an attribute of a work record? Is text the primary thing that defines a work as sacred or secular? One thing to be careful of, especially in terms of establishing hierarchy, is having sacred/secular become a binary construct. The line between sacred and secular is not always clear in western classical music, and in traditional music the line between sacred/secular can be blurred even more.

Subdivisions

At the most basic, the direction it seems we will go with subdivisions is to turn them into genre/form headings which can be post-coordinated with other headings. The idea has come up of incorporating additional terminology used in RDA for format of notated music and for type of musical notation into the thesaurus, in addition to the more lengthy list of subdivision terms already being considered for inclusion. In doing this, the genre/form thesaurus could be positioned as a source of additional vocabulary for RDA.

Things to consider when determining which subdivisions should become genre/form headings: Do these subdivision terms apply to expressions or manifestations? If the genre/form thesaurus is meant for terms for works, where does this leave expression/manifestation terms? Do some subdivisions still need to remain for contextual clarity, or are there other parts of the record that take care of the concept? Subdivisions that include medium ("Solo with piano", etc.) imply something that could be made more explicit. By itself, there is no literary warrant for "Solo with piano"; the terms "Orchestral reduction" or "Arranged accompaniment" might be better. "Solo..." implies one instrument with or without something else. This concept could be conveyed in a medium statement.

Next Steps

The group discussed timeline issues, and a question arose about when the task force's work ends. If there are ongoing tasks, who will take them over? Should this become a separate BCC subcommittee, or would the Subject Access Subcommittee continue the work? The conclusion was that project will have a definite end with a tangible product – the completed music part of the genre/form thesaurus and the list of medium terms (probably in LCSH), both ready for use. Introduction of new terminology will follow LC's procedures for new vocabulary in the genre/form thesaurus and LCSH. It is hoped that the task force's work will be finished within the next 2 years.

The medium list in particular is very large, and there are issues with different ethnic terminology for the same medium. The list needs some clean-up. Perhaps the group can start with the unique terms, while setting aside terms for the same thing in different languages to be examined later. Another technique might be moving away from the medium lists for

the time being, in order to focus more on genre/form terms and issues.

Both lists are still huge, and they will be hard to work through. The group needs a technology more robust than the wiki currently being used. Thesaurus software would probably be ideal, but which software, and who would pay for it? The group will brainstorm more on this issue. Investigating what is used for the Ethnographic Thesaurus and what the Prints and Photographs Division of LC are using would also be helpful.

Joint Meeting Report

The MLA-BCC Genre Form Task Force and the LC Music Genre/Form Project Group held a closed working meeting Monday evening, March 22, 2010 during the MLA annual conference. Present for MLA: Beth Iseminger (Chair), Caitlin Hunter, Marty Jenkins, Nancy Lorimer, Mark McKnight, Casey Mullin, Thomas Pease, Karen Peters, Sheila Torres-Blank, and Hermine Vermeij. Present for LC: Geraldine Ostrove, Stephen Yusko, and Caitlin Hunter. Observers: Kathy Glennan and Joe Bartl.

There is now enough agreed-upon thesaurus vocabulary to start creating hierarchies. Starting with the first 1000 terms agreed on by the two groups will give both groups a sense of what we need to do next. If terms are too granular, they might be included as cross-references instead of established headings and scope notes may be transformed. Working on the hierarchy will help illuminate where the holes are and which terms are too specific. A benefit of establishing hierarchy is that there will be no more orphan terms in the thesaurus. How geographic relationships are included in the thesaurus is not so much the issue, but including those relationships in some way is very important.

While LC is not presently adding terminology that does not have literary warrant (in other words, terms that do not apply to some library-owned object), it is part of the MLA task force's charge to create a list of new vocabulary. The MLA task force needs to know where this work fits into the project. The MLA task force could possibly search our list of terms for literary warrant in OCLC and submit them to PSD through some type of expedited SACO process. The MLA task force feels there would simply be too many terms to go through the SACO process as it stands now. Another option might be for the MLA task force to put the new terms into some kind of organized list, possibly with references and/or scope notes, and to present this list to LC as a whole, similar to the way in which the MLA Working Group on 20th Century Music Terminology went about their recommendations.

This thesaurus represents a great opportunity. It is the time to ask what we want our terms, especially medium, to do for us. What do we want our catalogs to do in relation to medium? What are the principles of providing medium of performance through the catalog?

The next steps for the MLA task force will be: working on hierarchy for the first 1000 agreed-upon terms, looking at hierarchy issues as they arise, finishing the process of searching Garland and Grove for new terms, searching any other pertinent sources, and examining MARC issues and doing the groundwork for MARBI proposals to support medium terms in particular. The next discussion paper from LC might be about classes of persons subdivided by \$v Music.

Submitted by Beth Iseminger

Last updated April 15, 2010