



## **An Online Japanese Performing Arts Resource Center (JPARC): New Resources for Learning in the Humanities**

### **Abstract**

This proposal is an outgrowth of the Cornell University East Asia Program's active participation in the Global Performing Arts Consortium (GloPAC), an international consortium of individuals and institutions committed to using innovative digital technologies to create substantive multimedia resources for the study of the performing arts and its history. With Cornell as the lead university, this group has created the Web-based Global Performing Arts Database (GloPAD), a database of images, texts, video clips, sound recordings, and complex media objects, each accompanied by elaborate technical and descriptive information structured through a metadata schema specifically created to accommodate the particular descriptive needs of performance materials. The database, available through a public interface ([www.glopac.org](http://www.glopac.org)), is designed to grow and GloPAC continues to populate it with new objects and associated information, providing a rich resource for students and scholars in many humanities fields.

We are now ready to embark on the second stage of our long-term plan and begin developing Performing Arts Resource Centers (PARCs): Web-based interactive and interpretive learning environments that express the contents of the database, combining scholarly content with technological innovation. Each PARC will have a specific focus, which may be cultural (Japanese), temporal (the 18<sup>th</sup> century), genre or thematically oriented (puppetry, gender in theatre), or audience oriented (teens).

The database provides the raw materials, while the PARCs will offer means for mining these materials and exploring their complex relationships in research sites and learning modules aimed at scholars and university level students. Users of the PARCs will find numerous paths back to the database for further research and exploration.

Our first PARC, which we will build with the support of NEH funding, will focus on Japan, a culture with a long history of archiving its performing arts. With the advent of digital technology these archived materials are becoming more accessible, yet they are also often divorced from their historical contexts and available only in specialized sites requiring advanced training to use. In contrast, our PARC will provide an easily accessible, multimedia portal that will connect scholars and students with these materials in a contextualized learning environment. We have already created a prototype for a Japanese Performing Arts Resource Center (JPARC), a site that we will restructure and expand by developing its features more fully, adding new topical sections and further exploiting new software and tools to promote contextualization and interactive learning.

We have selected 12 topical units to develop for JPARC. Six Research Sites will focus on the history of noh and kyōgen performance, three specific playwrights, the Bunraku puppet theater, extra-repertory noh plays, and kabuki and noh theatre prints. Six Learning Modules will explore topics from the popular theatre experience in Japan in the 18th and 19th centuries to the Japanese influence on modern Russian and contemporary American theatre. A key element of the PARC concept is the creation of tools and templates to enable scholars to easily develop their own modules. For example, we will produce a Timeline Builder and a multilingual site template for use in these and future modules. To develop these JPARC modules and tools, a group of over thirty leading scholars and experts has come together to participate in this project.

By the completion of this project, the Japanese Performing Arts Resource Center will not only provide an exciting new resource for the study of Japanese performing arts and culture, but will also serve as a model for future Performing Arts Resource Centers.