



History of GloPAC

The Global Performing Arts Consortium (GloPAC) was conceived in the fall of 1997 by Karen Brazell when she recognized the tremendous possibilities offered by Internet technology for the study of the performing arts. Brazell sought out like-minded individuals and institutions to help shape an organization that would exploit new technologies to provide broad and innovative access to the diversity and depth of the world's performing arts. In the summer of 1998, Brazell invited Peter Hirtle, then co-director of the Cornell Institute for Digital Collections; the Gertrude Stein Repertory Theatre (GSRT) of New York City; Ann Ferguson, then curator of Cornell's Theatre Collections; and Cornell's East Asia Program to join forces in forming a group that ultimately evolved into GloPAC.



Trip to Russia
Photo: Karen Brazell

In 1999, relying on student assistants funded by Cornell University Library and the East Asia Program, these original partners created a prototype performing arts database. In addition, Brazell, Monica Bethe, and student assistants developed GloPAC's first Performing Arts Resource Center (PARC), an interactive Web-based learning module focused on the performing arts of Japan (www.glopac.org/jparc). At the same time, the Gertrude Stein Repertory Theatre began developing new PARC tools and design elements through their implementation of a website devoted to the life and work of Vsevolod Meyerhold (www.meyerhold.org).

Broadening GloPAC's reach, Brazell traveled to Singapore, Japan, and Vietnam in 2000, recruiting performing arts groups to GloPAC and collecting more images for what is now called the Global Performing Arts Database (GloPAD), with special assistance from Lim Beng Choo (National University of Singapore). In July 2000, a group of GloPAC representatives—led by Cheryl Faver (GSRT) and Nikolai Pesochinsky (GloPAC Russia Regional Director)—met in Russia for discussions with museum staff at the St. Petersburg State Museum of Theatre and Music and the A.A. Bakhrushin State Central Theatre Museum in Moscow. This trip, supported by the Trust for Mutual Understanding, initiated valuable cross-cultural discussions about the direction and development of GloPAC's projects. That same year, GloPAC welcomed two new institutional members, the Max Reinhardt Archives at Binghamton University and the C.V. Starr East Asian Library at Columbia University. During 2000 and 2001, GloPAC also made important advances in the development of GloPAD, as evidenced by a move to a new database platform and the addition of significant content by GloPAC members.

In October 2002 Cornell University Library, on behalf of GloPAC, was awarded a \$470,000 three-year grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services to develop and test metadata standards for the performing arts. The San Francisco Performing Arts Library and Museum, the Museum of the City of New York, the St. Petersburg State Museum of Theatre and Music, and the University of Washington Libraries joined with GloPAC as partners in this project. The grant also funded the digitization of 2,000 new items from the performing arts collections of the grant partners and other participants, the creation of descriptive records based on the new metadata structure, and the design of a series of tools that can be readily adaptable by museums, libraries, and scholarly associations for use in developing their own digital performing arts resources.

GloPAC's membership continues to grow as more people learn about the organization and its projects. National University of Singapore's Department of Japanese Studies became an active partner in 2004. During the following year, the Department of Theatre and Dance at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa joined the consortium, as did the Nogami Memorial Noh Research Institute at Hosei University in Tokyo, which sent Professors Reiko Yamanaka and Steven Nelson to Cornell for a week-long working session with GloPAC staff.

In 2005 GloPAC began planning for the development of its Performing Arts Resource Centers (PARCs). A conference entitled *Developing an On-line Japanese Performing Arts Resource Center*, funded by the Japan Foundation, was held at the National University of Singapore in June. Scholars from Singapore, Japan, Russia, Malaysia, and the United States met to share ideas for a more robust and sophisticated Japan PARC. A workshop for K-12 educators, held at Cornell University in September, brought together teachers, librarians, and outreach coordinators from throughout the United States to discuss how the performing arts could be more effectively used in education and how to employ GloPAD and other tools developed by GloPAC to create a PARC designed for teens and their educators.

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JPARC conference participants and supporters in front of the Merlion in Singapore

Photo: Joshua Young

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