

Guide to the Vassili Sulich Papers

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Summary Information

Repository:	University of Nevada, Las Vegas. University Libraries. Special Collections and Archives.
Creator:	Sulich, Vassili
Title:	Vassili Sulich Papers
ID:	MS-00469
Date [inclusive]:	1951-2005
Physical Description:	8.3 Linear Feet (11 boxes and 3 oversize boxes)
Language of the Material:	English
Abstract:	The Vassili Sulich Papers (1951-2005) are comprised of materials documenting the life of Vassili Sulich: ballet dancer, choreographer, and co-founder of the Nevada Dance Theatre, the first professional dance company in Nevada. The papers include correspondence, newspaper clippings, newsletters, photographs, posters, scrapbooks, and other ephemera. The papers also document his work as principal dancer with the Lido de Paris in Paris, France, the Folies Begère in New York, and at the Tropicana Hotel in Las Vegas, and as a choreographer for the San Francisco and Seattle opera companies.

Preferred Citation

Vassili Sulich Papers, 1951-2005. MS-00469. Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada.

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Biographical Note

Vassili Sulich, dancer, choreographer, and co-founder of Nevada's first professional dance company, was born in 1929 on the island of Brac in the former Yugoslavia. Sulich performed in a children's theatre group for American soldiers during World War II in Egypt. Returning to Yugoslavia after the war, Sulich continued to dance with this group until he was discovered by the directors of the Zagreb Opera Ballet and began his classical ballet training. In 1952, he received a scholarship to study ballet in London, England. A year later, he moved to Paris to join the Ballet de France de Janine Charrat. Sulich remained in Paris for eleven years where he had an active career dancing in numerous companies and opera houses, first in small roles, and then later as the principal dancer and soloist in a variety of ballets. He danced with: the Ballets de Paris de Roland Petit, Ballet des Etoiles de Paris, Ballet Miskovitch de Paris, and Ballet Ludmilla

Tcherina. He often partnered with famous ballerinas such as Colette Marchand, Ludmilla Tcherina, and Zizi Jeanmaire.

In 1960, he became principal dancer in the world-famous Parisian nightclub show Lido de Paris. During his years in Paris he began his choreographic career with work on Suite Lyrique, The Wall, and Oedipe-Roi. In 1964, after a turn in the Folies Bergère on Broadway in New York City (during which he also studied with Martha Graham), Sulich was hired by the Folies Bergère show at the Tropicana Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas, Nevada, and he spent nine years as principal dancer and ballet master.

In addition to conducting ballet classes, Sulich also found an outlet for his creativity in art. He could often be found sketching and drawing elaborate ballpoint pen landscapes and portraits in his dressing room. His ballet instruction soon evolved into teaching ballet classes for the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) Dance Department. In exchange for teaching classes, Sulich had use of the stage at the Judy Bayley Theatre on campus. In 1972, he presented a dance concert at the Judy Bayley Theatre using show dancers from the Las Vegas Strip who volunteered their services for free. It was the inaugural concert of what became the Nevada Dance Theatre – the state's first professional dance company.

With the aid of co-founder Nancy Houssels, Sulich transformed the original volunteer troupe into a professional company of resident dancers with a regular season of performances. A school was added to the company in 1979. Sulich spent twenty-five years as artistic director of Nevada Dance Theatre, choreographing fifty-one ballets, many of which have since been staged with other companies outside the United States. During this time, he also choreographed for both the San Francisco Opera and Seattle Opera. Sulich retired from Nevada Dance Theatre (later renamed Nevada Ballet Theatre) in 1997. Following his retirement Sulich continued to work as a choreographer in Europe and South America. He also took time out to write his autobiography *Vision in the Desert*, which was published in 2001. Sulich currently resides in Rio de Janeiro and he continues to choreograph ballet for companies in Europe and Brazil. In September 2008, Sulich was inducted into UNLV's Nevada Entertainer/Artist Hall of Fame.

Source: UNLV College of Fine Arts Hall of Fame 2008 Inductees, <http://www.unlv.edu/finearts/2008-inductees>.

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Scope and Contents

The Vassili Sulich Papers (1951-2005) are comprised of material documenting the life of Vassili Sulich: ballet dancer, choreographer, and co-founder of the Nevada Dance Theatre, the first professional dance company in Nevada. The papers included correspondence, newspaper clippings, newsletters, photographs, posters, scrapbooks, and other ephemera. The papers also document his work as principal dancer with the Lido de Paris in Paris, France, the Folies Begère in New York, and at the Tropicana Hotel in Las Vegas, and as a choreographer for the San Francisco and Seattle opera companies.

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Arrangement

The materials are arranged into four series.

Series I. Personal papers (1967-2006);

Series II. Dance Career: in Europe and America papers (1957-2005);

Series III. Nevada Dance Theatre records (1970-1998);

Series IV. Other choreography papers (1982-2005).

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Administrative Information

Publication Rights

Materials in this collection may be protected by copyrights and other rights. See [Reproductions and Use](#) on the UNLV Special Collections website for more information about reproductions and permissions to publish.

Acquisition Note

Materials were donated by Vassili Sulich in 2003; accession number 2003-011.

Processing Note

Material was processed by Su Kim Chung, 2004-2008. In 2015, as part of a legacy finding aid conversion project, Dallas Reiber and Lindsay Oden revised and enhanced the collection description to bring it into compliance with current professional standards.

Revision Description

The finding aid was revised by Dallas Reiber and Lindsay Oden to bring it into compliance with DACS. July 2015

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Names and Subjects

- Ballet dancers
- Las Vegas (Nev.)
- Choreography

- Dancers
- Nevada Dance Theatre
- Nevada Ballet Theatre
- Folies-Bergère

Collection Inventory

Personal papers, 1967-2006

Physical Description: 0.9 Linear Feet (3 boxes)

Scope and Contents Note: Material includes awards, news clippings, handwritten notes, art work, books, correspondence, and recipes of Vassili Sulich from 1967 to 2006.

Arrangement Note: Materials remain in original order.

Title/Description	Containers	
Awards		
Biographical profiles		
Hillsway's Who's Who in Las Vegas, 1970	box 01	folder 13
Vision in the Desert		
Books		

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Dance career: Europe and America papers, 1957-2005

Physical Description: 4.2 Linear Feet (2 Boxes and 3 oversize boxes)

Scope and Contents Note: Materials include news clippings, correspondence, programs and scrapbook clippings from 1957 to 2005 of Vassili Sulich's dance career in Europe and the United States.

Arrangement Note: Materials remain in original order.

Title/Description	Containers	
Scrapbook: News clippings, photographs and magazine articles of various ballets in Europe and work with Folies Bergere in Las Vegas, 1962-1968	oversized box 12	folder 01
Sheet music: Carmina Burana (with handwritten choreography notes), undated	oversized box 12	folder 02
Magazine articles: Folies Bergere: Tropicana Hotel, Las Vegas, 1966-1999	oversized box 12	folder 03
News clippings: Folies Bergere: Tropicana Hotel, Las Vegas, 1969	oversized box 12	folder 04
Programs: Folies Bergere: Tropicana Hotel, Las Vegas, 1966-1969		

oversized folder 05
box 12

Scrapbook: Folies Bergere: Tropicana Hotel, Las Vegas (includes black and white and color photographs, news clippings and programs), undated

oversized
box 13

Scrapbook: news clippings and personal photographs, 1960s-1970s

oversized
box 14

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Nevada Ballet Theatre records, 1970-1998

Physical Description: 0.7 Linear Feet (3 boxes)

Scope and contents: Materials contain meeting minutes, correspondence, articles, brochures, and newsletters from 1970 to 1998 pertaining to the Nevada Dance Theatre (NDT) and the Nevada Ballet Theatre, two organizations in which Vassili Sulich participated.

Arrangement Note: Materials remain in original order.

Title/Description	Containers
Correspondence	
Programs	

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Other choreography papers, 1982-2005

Physical Description: 0.6 Linear Feet (2 Boxes)

Scope and Content Note: Materials contain reviews and programs of shows choreographed by Vassili Sulich outside of the Nevada Dance Theatre from 1982 to 2005, including operas in Seattle, Washington and San Francisco, California.

Arrangement Note: Materials are arranged by topic. Contents within folders remain in original order.

Title/Description	Containers
Ballet	
Opera	

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