

## Guide to the Vassili Sulich Papers

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## Summary Information

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<b>Repository:</b>	University of Nevada, Las Vegas. University Libraries. Special Collections and Archives.
<b>Creator:</b>	Sulich, Vassili
<b>Title:</b>	Vassili Sulich Papers
<b>ID:</b>	MS-00469
<b>Date [inclusive]:</b>	1951 to 2005
<b>Physical Description:</b>	8.26 Cubic Feet (11 boxes, 4 oversized boxes, and 2 flat files)
<b>Physical Description:</b>	13.67 Linear Feet
<b>Language of the Material:</b>	English
<b>Abstract:</b>	The Vassili Sulich Papers (1951-2005) document the life of Vassili Sulich: ballet dancer, choreographer, and co-founder of the Nevada Dance Theatre, the first professional dance company in Nevada. Included are correspondence, newspaper clippings, newsletters, photographs, posters, and scrapbooks.

### Preferred Citation

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

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## Biographical Note

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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, France 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, Brazil and he continues to choreograph ballet for companies in Europe and Brazil. In September 2008, Sulich was inducted into the UNLV 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

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The Vassili Sulich Papers (1951-2005) contain 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. Included are correspondence, newspaper clippings, newsletters, photographs, posters, and 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

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Materials are organized into four series:

Series I. Personal papers, 1967-2006;

Series II. Dance career in Europe and America, 1957-2005;

Series III. Nevada Dance Theatre records, 1970-1998;

Series IV. Other choreography papers, 1982-2005.

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## Administrative Information

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### Access Note

Collection is open for research.

### Publication Rights

Materials in this collection may be protected by copyrights and other rights. See [Reproductions and Use](#) on the UNLV Special Collections and Archives 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 from 2004 to 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. In 2021, Sarah Jones revised the collection description and updated the finding aid in ArchivesSpace.

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## Related Materials

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### Related Collections

The following resources may provide additional information related the materials in this collection:

Vassili Sulich Photographs, 1950-2011. PH-00353. Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada.

Nancy Houssels Collection on the Nevada Dance Theatre, 1972-1997. MS-00392. Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada.

Nancy Houssels oral history interviews, 1998 November 18, 1998 December 07, 1998 December 14. OH-02688. Oral History Research Center, Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada.

Nancy Houssels oral history interview, 2014 March 19. OH-00896. Oral History Research Center, Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada.

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## Names and Subjects

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- Ballet dancers
- Las Vegas (Nev.)
- Choreography
- Dancers
- Nevada Dance Theatre
- Nevada Ballet Theatre
- Folies-Bergère

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## Collection Inventory

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Title/Description	Containers	
Personal papers		
Artwork and art shows newspaper clippings and ephemera, 1967 to 1971	box 01	folder 01
Awards		

Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce Community Achievement Awards, 1996 to 1997	box 01	folder 02
Distinguished Nevadan, 1987	box 01	folder 03
Nevada Opera Theatre: Friendship International Arts Award, 1997	box 01	folder 04
Certificates of Recognition: United States Congress and Senate, 1992 to 2001	box 01	folder 05
City of Las Vegas and State of Nevada proclamation certificates, 2001	box 01	folder 06
Miscellaneous awards, approximately 1990 to 1999	box 01	folder 07
Newspaper clippings, 1973 to 2006	box 01	folder 08
Biographical profiles		
Magazine articles, 1967 to 1999	box 01	folder 09
Newspaper clippings and magazine articles, 1997 to 2003	box 01	folder 10
Typescript unpublished, 1986 to 1998	box 01	folder 11
Oral history transcript by Jerry Villa, 2002	box 01	folder 12
<i>Hillsway's Who's Who in Las Vegas</i> by Roland Hill featuring Sulich profile, 1970	box 01	folder 13
Choreography repertoire of Sulich (various lists), 1972 to 1991	box 01	folder 14
Correspondence, 1981 to 2004	box 01	folder 15
Dance instructor work for Dance Masters of America and Nico Charisse: newspaper clippings, correspondence, and notes, 1966 to 1972	box 01	folder 16
Ephemera featuring Vassili Sulich, 1968 to 2003	box 01	folder 17
Golden Rainbow performance, 2003	box 01	folder 18
Magazine covers and layouts, 1967	box 01	folder 19
<i>Mrs. Polifax Spy</i> newspaper clippings, 1969	box 01	folder 20
Personal notes, handwritten and typescript, in Croatian (no translation), 1994	box 01	folder 21

Sketch, ballpoint, of Sulich as a young man (artist unknown), approximately 1940 to 1960	box 01	folder 22
Maps and guidebooks of Zagreb, 2003	box 01	folder 23
Hand-painted plate with deer scene by Sulich, approximately 2000 to 2003	oversized box 17	
Vision in the Desert		
Congressional record proceedings, 2001	box 02	folder 01
Correspondence: business, 2000	box 02	folder 02
Correspondence: personal, 2001 to 2002	box 02	folder 03-04
Newspaper clippings, 2000 to 2002	box 02	folder 05
<i>Las Vegas Image</i> article, 2000	box 02	folder 06
Newspaper clippings and magazine articles, 2005	box 02	folder 07
Press release and promotional material, 2001	box 02	folder 08
Proof sheets for photographs used in book, approximately 1999 to 2001	box 02	folder 09
Reviews (Croatian and English), 2002	box 02	folder 10
Books		
<i>40e Gala de L'Union des Artists</i> , 1973	box 03	
<i>Celebration: Dance as a Photographic Art, Vol. II</i> , 1972	box 03	
<i>Nureyev</i> , 1973	box 03	
<i>The Essence of Bejart</i> , 1972	box 03	
<i>The Ballet Annual</i> , 1961	box 03	
<i>La Danse</i> , 1958	box 03	
<i>The Private World of Ballet</i> , 1975	box 03	
<i>Hillsway's Who's Who: Favorite Recipes of Famous People and Personalities</i> , 1978	box 03	
<i>Anatomy for the Dancer with Exercises to Improve Technique and Prevent Injuries</i> by Raoul Gelebart, 1964	box 03	



<i>Anatomy for the Dancer with Exercises to Improve Technique and Prevent Injuries Vol. 2</i> by Raoul Gelebart, autographed to Sulich by the editor, William Como, 1966	box 03	
<i>Le Ballet Contemporain, California</i> , 1940	box 03	
Dance career in Europe and America papers		
Publicity and reviews (dance)		
Publicity: newspaper clippings, approximately 1960 to 1970	box 04	folder 01
Various ballets: newspaper clippings, 1960 to 1961	box 04	folder 02
Les Ballets de Paques: newspaper clippings, 1957	box 04	folder 03
Ballet 1957 des Etoiles de Paris: newspaper clippings, 1957	box 04	folder 04
Ballet 1958 des Etoiles de Paris (English, German and French): newspaper clippings, 1958	box 04	folder 05
Cyrano de Bergerac: newspaper clippings, 1959	box 04	folder 06
Le Combat (with Colette Marchand): newspaper clippings, 1959	box 04	folder 07
Ludmilla Tcherina's Theatre Ballet: newspaper clippings, 1959	box 04	folder 08
Les Ballets Ho! de George Reich: newspaper clippings, 1960	box 04	folder 09
Ballet des Etoiles de Paris: newspaper clippings, 1961	box 04	folder 10
Ballet de Milorad Miskovitch: newspaper clippings, 1961	box 04	folder 11
5th International Festival of Ballet (Nervi): newspaper clippings, 1961	box 04	folder 12
Ballet de la Opera de Marsella: newspaper clippings, 1963	box 04	folder 13
Publicity and reviews (choreography)		
Oedipus Rex: newspaper clippings, 1962	box 04	folder 14
Le Mur: newspaper clippings, 1963	box 04	folder 15
Faust and Idomenee: newspaper clippings, 1964	box 04	folder 16
Samson and Delilah: newspaper clippings, 1964		

	box 04	folder 17
Reviews of Sulich choreography: typescript and handwritten transcriptions, 1962-1964	box 04	folder 40
Programs (dance)		
Hvratsko Narodono Kazaliste (various ballets): programs, 1951	box 04	folder 18
Ballets 1956 des Etoiles de Paris: programs, 1956	box 04	folder 19
Opera de Monte Carlo, in honor of Prince Ranier and Princess Grace: programs, 1956	box 04	folder 20
Les Ballets de Paques: programs, 1957	box 04	folder 21
Ballets 1958 des Etoiles de Paris: programs, 1958	box 04	folder 22
Ballet Ludmilla Tcherina: programs, 1959	box 04	folder 23
Les Ballets de Paris de Roland Petit: programs, 1959	box 04	folder 24
Ballet Etoiles de Paris, Gibraltar Arts Festival: programs, 1961	box 04	folder 25
Ballet des Etoiles de Paris de Milorad Miskovitch: programs, approximately 1960 to 1965	box 04	folder 26
Ballet Miskovitch de Paris: programs, 1961	box 04	folder 27
Ballet de l'Opera de Marseille: programs, 1963	box 04	folder 28
Ballets Janine Charrat: programs, approximately 1960 to 1965	box 04	folder 29
V Festival Internazionale del Balletto: programs, 1960	box 04	folder 30
Les Ballets Ho! De George Reich: programs, 1960	box 04	folder 31
L'Ensemble de Ballet Juan Corelli de la Television Francaise: programs, 1961	box 04	folder 32
French ballets: programs, 1961 to 1963	box 04	folder 33
Lido de Paris - Pour Vous: programs, 1961	box 04	folder 34
Folies Bergere Tropicana Hotel, Las Vegas: programs, 1966-1969		

box 05 folder  
05

oversized folder  
box 12 05

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Programs (choreography)

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Oedipus Rex: programs, 1962

box 04 folder  
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Le Mur: programs, 1963

box 04 folder  
36

Faust: programs, 1963

box 04 folder  
37

Samson and Delilah: programs, 1964

box 04 folder  
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Idomenee: programs, 1964

box 04 folder  
39

Scrapbook: Newspaper clippings of various ballets, 1955-1958

box 04 folder  
41

Scrapbook: Newspaper clippings of reviews and publicity for ballets with Collette Marchand, 1960

box 05 folder  
01

Carmina Burana sheet music (with handwritten choreography notes), approximately 1960 to 1969

box 05 folder  
02

oversized folder  
box 12 02

Folies Bergere at the Tropicana Hotel, Las Vegas: magazine articles, 1996-1999

box 05 folder  
03

oversized folder  
box 12 03

Folies Bergere at the Tropicana Hotel, Las Vegas: newspaper clippings, 1969

box 05 folder  
04

oversized folder  
box 12 04

Scrapbook: Newspaper clippings, photographs, and magazine articles of various ballets in Europe and work with Folies Bergere in Las Vegas, 1962-1968

oversized folder  
box 12 01

Folies Bergere at the Tropicana Hotel, Las Vegas scrapbook (includes black-and-white and color photographs, newspaper clippings and programs), approximately 1996 to 1999

oversized  
box 13

Scrapbook: newspaper clippings and personal photographs, approximately 1960 to 1979

oversized  
box 14

Photograph collages of Sulich's performances over the years, approximately 1940 to 2000

flat file  
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Physical Description: 3 Items

Nevada Ballet Theatre records		
Board of Directors minutes, 1996	box 06	folder 01
Choreography list of Vassili Sulich (with abstracts), approximately 1990 to 1999	box 06	folder 02
Correspondence		
Correspondence and thank you cards, undated	box 06	folder 03
Incoming, 1970-1990	box 06	folder 04-06
Nancy Houssels, 1973-1994	box 06	folder 07
Incoming, 1973-1994	box 06	folder 08
Controversy after Sulich resignation, 1998	box 06	
Set design for unknown ballet, undated	box 06	
Touring schedules, 1983-1991	box 06	
Invitations to Nevada Dance Theatre (NDT) events, undated	box 06	
Fundraising and promotional brochures, 1970-1990	box 06	
Fundraising Black and White Ball programs, 1991-1997	box 06	
Sulich choreography for Flagstaff Symphony Orchestra: programs and newspaper clippings, 1993-1996	box 06	
Guestbook for NDT events, 1970	box 06	
Promotional fliers for NDT, including includes 20th and 25th anniversaries, undated	box 06	
Le Corsaire: sheet music with handwritten choreography notes, undated	box 06	
NDT season brochures, 1974-1997	box 06	
NDT 25th Anniversary celebration: ephemera, 1996-1997	box 06	
NDT 25th Anniversary celebration: calendar, 1996 to 1997	box 06	
NDT Guild brochures, 1980-1990	box 06	
<i>Ballroom Dance Magazine</i> article on dance teams, 1967	box 06	
Magazine articles on NDT, approximately 1970 to 1999	box 07	folder 01-04
Programs		
Programs, 1972-1998		

	box 08	folder 01-26
10th and 20th anniversaries, undated	box 08	folder 27
Touring programs, 1981-1995	box 08	folder 28
Community Concert Association programs, 1982-1997	box 08	folder 29
Shadow Creek, 1993-1994	box 08	folder 30
Special programs: Liberace at Las Vegas Hilton, Columbia Artists Festival, International Ballet Stars, Hansel & Gretel Opera, Nevada Festival Ballet, undated	box 08	folder 31
Miscellaneous, undated	box 09	folder 01
Newspaper clippings of reviews, 1973-1998	box 09	folder 02-30
<i>To the Pointe</i> newsletter, 1990-1997	box 09	folder 32
Press releases, 1990	box 09	folder 33
Press releases: Sulich biography, undated	box 09	folder 34
Nevada Dance Theater performance advertisement posters, approximately 1980 to 1999	flat file 15	
Other choreography papers		
Ballet		
Dubrovnik Festival (Best of Vassili Sulich): programs and publicity, 2004-2005	box 10	folder 01
Royal New Zealand Ballet: programs, 1985-1990	box 10	folder 02
Sarasota Ballet of Florida: programs, 1993-1994	box 10	folder 03
Singapore Dance Theatre: program, 1990	box 10	folder 04
Teatro Municipal do Rio de Janeiro: programs, 2000-2003	box 10	folder 05
Ballet company programs, 1979 to 2001	box 10	folder 06-07
Le Ballet Eddy Toussaint: reviews, 1984		

	box 10	folder 08
Best of Vassili Sulich: reviews, 2005	box 10	folder 09
Le Don des Etoiles: reviews, 1989	box 10	folder 10
Dubrovnik Festival: reviews, 1998	box 10	folder 11
New Mexico Ballet: reviews, 1987	box 10	folder 12
Sarasota Ballet of Florida: reviews, 1991-1994	box 10	folder 13
Royal New Zealand Ballet: reviews, 1984-1990	box 10	folder 14
Various ballet companies: reviews, 1976-1997	box 10	folder 15
Dubrovnik Festival: various materials, 1998	box 10	folder 16
Opera		
Correspondence, 1991	box 11	folder 01
San Francisco Opera programs, 1982-1987	box 11	folder 02
Seattle Opera programs, 1980	box 11	folder 03
San Francisco Opera reviews: Adriana Lecouvreur, 1985	box 11	folder 04
San Francisco Opera reviews: Eugene, Oregon, 1986	box 11	folder 05
San Francisco Opera reviews: La Gioconda, 1983-1988	box 11	folder 06
San Francisco Opera reviews: Queen of Spades, 1982-1987	box 11	folder 07
Seattle Opera reviews: War and Peace, 1990	box 11	folder 08