

Guide to the Robert Kovich Papers, 1958-1990

(S) *MGZMD 206

Jerome Robbins Dance Division

**The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts
New York, New York**

Contact Information

The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts
Jerome Robbins Dance Division
40 Lincoln Center Plaza
New York, New York 10023-7498
Phone: 212/870-1657
Email: dance@nypl.org
Web address: <http://digilib.nypl.org/dynaweb/ead/dance>

Processed by: Mary Robison
Date Completed: June 2008

Processed and encoded through a gift from Robert W. Wilson.

© 2008 The New York Public Library. Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations. All rights reserved.

Descriptive Summary

Title:	Robert Kovich Papers
Collection ID:	(S) *MGZMD 206
Creator:	Kovich, Robert
Extent:	1.5 linear feet (3 boxes)
Repository:	Jerome Robbins Dance Division. The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts
Abstract:	Robert Kovich was a dancer and choreographer, originally with the Merce Cunningham Dance Company. In the 1980s, Kovich performed, choreographed, and taught dance, mainly in New York and France. The collection includes choreography notes, scripts, correspondence, some photographs and teaching material.

Administrative Information

Access

Collection is open to the public. Photocopying prohibited. Advance notice may be required.

Publication Rights

For permission to publish, contact the Curator, Jerome Robbins Dance Division.

Preferred Citation

Robert Kovich Papers, (S) *MGZMD 206, Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

Source

The Robert Kovich Papers were donated to the Jerome Robbins Dance Division in 1998 from the Robert Kovich estate.

Processing Information

The collection was processed and cataloged in 2008.

Biographical Note

Robert Kovich was born in California on January 17, 1950. He studied dance with Isa Partsch Bergsohn at the University of California-Santa Barbara from 1968 to 1971, and then with Judith Dunn and Martha Wittman at Bennington College in Vermont from 1970 to 1972, where he received a bachelor's degree.

Kovich was a dance fellow at the Judith Dunn/Bill Dixon Dance Company from 1971 to 1972, and in 1973, he joined the Merce Cunningham Dance Company in New York as a dancer and teacher. In 1981, Kovich left Merce Cunningham and moved to France to work as a choreographer and teacher. From 1981 through 1984, supported by the French Ministry of Culture, Kovich choreographed *Loupe* for the Maison de la Danse in Lyon, *Tarantula (with Tarantella)* for the Festival at Arles, and *Scanner/Rhapsody* at the Pompidou Center. Kovich also presented dances in New York during this time and worked as a choreographer and teacher for various dance companies and festivals in the United States, Europe and Israel.

Throughout the 1980s, Kovich created dances that explored the traditional roles of musician and dancer, collaborating with such musicians as John King, Rhys Chatham and Linda Benglis. He produced a variety of works at dance workshops, festivals and centers in the New York area, North Carolina, Minnesota and other locations. Awarded grants and fellowships by the National Endowment for the Arts and the New York Foundation for the Arts among others, Kovich received the Metropolitan Life Foundation/American Dance Festival Young Choreographers Award in 1986. He was a member of the Société des Auteurs et Compositeurs Dramatiques.

Kovich died of cancer at the age of 40 on April 23, 1991 in Manhattan. In his obituary, the New York Times noted that Kovich was known as a “demanding but gentle master teacher” and a dancer with “an ironic wit, great physical deftness and precision and a sense of vivid coloration.”¹

¹ New York Times. Robert Kovich, 40, Dancer and Teacher, [Obituary], 1991, April 23, A.19

Scope and Content Note

The Robert Kovich Papers span the years 1958-1990 and consist of correspondence, teaching notes, workshop material, grant applications, choreography notes and sketches, some photographs, and materials reflecting collaboration with other artists, such as John King and Rhys Chatham.

The collection is important in its documentation of the development of several different dance programs and collaborative works in the 1980s. The collection is mostly professional material, with a limited amount of personal material, which includes correspondence, sketch pads and notebooks.

Organization

The collection is organized into 6 series. They are:

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| Series I: | Correspondence, 1979-1990, undated |
| Series II: | Collaborations, 1972-1990, undated |
| Series III: | Foundations, 1980-1990, undated |
| Series IV: | Kovich Productions, 1984-1990, undated |
| Series V: | General Office Files, 1958-1990, undated |
| Series VI: | Notebooks, Sketches, 1983-1989, undated |

Series Descriptions

Series I: Correspondence, 1979-1990, undated **[.5 box]**

Arrangement: Alphabetical

This series consists of professional correspondence, with some personal correspondence from Merce Cunningham and other performing artists included.

Series II: Collaborations, 1972-1990, undated **[.5 box]**

Arrangement: Alphabetical

This series consists of correspondence, production budgets, scripts, resumes and other planning materials related to works Kovich produced for projects and dance festivals; included are materials related to Kovich collaborations with musicians Rhys Chatham and John King. The majority of the material dates from the 1980s.

Series III: Foundations, 1980-1990, undated **[.5 box]**

Arrangement: Alphabetical

This series consists of material related to grant applications, correspondence and requests for funding Kovich's dance productions. Included are Kovich's descriptions of his goals and initiatives regarding productions and collaborations with other artists.

Series IV: Kovich Productions, 1984-1990, undated **[.5 box]**

Arrangement: Alphabetical

This series consists of materials related to Kovich Productions. Most of the material consists of scripts, scores and production notes for dances produced in the 1980s, along with a small group of office files related to these works.

Series V: General Professional Papers, 1958-1990, undated **[.5 box]**

Arrangement: Alphabetical

This series consists of course schedules, notes, scripts, short stories and newspaper clippings (some in French and Dutch), including reviews of Kovich's work. The bulk of the material dates from the 1980s.

Series VI: Notebooks, Sketches, 1983-1989, undated **[.5 box]**

Arrangement: Alphabetical

This series consists of an assortment of Kovich's notes and sketch pads. Included are notes dating from the mid-1980s regarding Kovich's choreography and teaching projects, some of which are in French.

Box/Folder	Description
------------	-------------

Series I : Correspondence, 1979-1990, undated**Box 1**

- | | |
|------|--|
| F 1 | Ballet Theatre du Silence, 1981-1984 |
| F 2 | Bat-Dor Dance Company, 1981-1985 |
| F 3 | Cunningham, Merce, 1980-1987 |
| F 4 | D'Amato, Alfonse, 1988 |
| F 5 | Dance Umbrella, 1982-1983 |
| F 6 | Europe, some in French, 1982-1990, undated |
| F 7 | France, some in French, 1981-1989, undated |
| F 8 | Grant funding inquiries and awards, 1981-1990 |
| F 9 | Société des Auteurs et Compositeurs Dramatiques, in French |
| F 10 | Invoices, receipts, payment correspondence, 1982-1987 |
| F 11 | Payment records, <i>Autorun</i> payment correspondence, 1982-1985, 1987, undated |
| F 12 | Tax declarations, Philip Sylvester flyer, 1983-1986, undated |
| F 13 | USA, some in French, 1979-1990 |
| F 14 | Werkcentrum Dans, 1983-1985 |

Series II: Collaborations, 1972-1990, undated

- | | |
|------|--|
| F 15 | American College Dance Festival Association, 1985-1990 |
| F 16 | American Dance Festival, 1984-1987, undated |
| F 17 | Chatham, Rhys, 1972-1986, undated |
| F 18 | Dance Center, 1987-1990 |
| F 19 | Danspace Project, 1986-1990 |
| F 20 | Diversions Dance Company, 1990 |
| F 21 | Florida Dance, 1988 |
| F 22 | Harlem School, 1989 |
| F 23 | King, John, undated |

Series III : Foundations, 1980-1990, undated**Box 2**

- | | |
|-----|---|
| F 1 | Foundation for Contemporary Performance Arts, 1980-1988 |
| F 2 | Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, 1988-1990, undated |
| F 3 | Jerome Robbins Foundation, 1980-1987 |
| F 4 | National Endowment for the Arts, 1987-1990 |
| F 5 | 1987-1988 |
| F 6 | 1988 |
| F 7 | 1988-1990 |
| F 8 | New York Foundation for the Arts, 1986-1989 |

Series IV: Kovich Productions, 1984-1990, undated

- | | |
|-----|--|
| | <i>Blue Pacifica</i> , 1988 |
| F 9 | Dansgroep Krisztina de Châtel, some in Dutch, 1988 |

Box/Folder	Description
F 10	Greeting card, production flyer, photographs, picture postcard, 1988
F 11	<i>Cupid and Death</i> , circa 1986
F 12	<i>Dance on Camera</i> , 1990
F 13	<i>Fractions</i> , undated
F 14	Kovich Dance Company, undated
F 15	<i>Suite d'un Gout Etranger</i> , some in French, 1984-1985
F 16	<i>Tarare</i> , in French, undated
F 17	<i>T*R*A*N*S*P*O*R*T*A*T*I*O*N</i> (or) <i>The Kingdom of Jingle</i> , 1990
<u>Series V: General office files, 1958-1990, undated</u>	
F 18	Centre Georges Pompidou, in French, circa 1984
F 19	Course schedules, in French, 1984
F 20	Giorno Poetry Systems, 1990
F 21	List of exhibitions, 1958-1989
Box 3	
F 1	Newspaper clippings, some in Dutch, French, 1981-1990, undated
F 2	Picture postcards, 1982-1989
F 3	Scripts, short stories, some in French, 1981, undated
<u>Series VI: Notebooks, Sketches, 1983-1989, undated</u>	
F 4	Black and white notebook, includes choreography notes, addresses, mailing list, student payment ledger, notes, undated
F 5	<i>Brefs du Soleil Levant</i> notebook, haiku with blank pages, in French, circa 1985
F 6	Legal pad, choreography notes, short story manuscript, draft letter, addresses, telephone numbers, undated
F 7	Notes, sketches, choreography notes, rehearsal schedule, comments regarding videotape of Scanner/Rhapsody, undated
F 8	Orange and gray notebook, addresses, class attendance list, some in French, circa 1985
F 9	Orange Rhodia notebook, choreography notes, sketches, undated
F 10	La Pêrouse notebook, choreography notes, undated
F 11	Red plaid notebook, choreography notes, sketches, untitled, undated
F 12	Sketches of human figures, pen and ink, 1986
F 13-14	Steno pad, choreography and production notes, travel information, limericks, sketches, telephone numbers, untitled, undated
F 15	Williams College notebook, choreography notes, telephone numbers, addresses, French grammar list, circa 1983
F 16	Yellow memo book, choreography notes, lists, telephone numbers, addresses, untitled, circa 1989