

# Giovanni Vittorio Rosi:

## A Preliminary Inventory of the Ballet Collection in the Performing Arts Collection at the Harry Ransom Center

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### Descriptive Summary

<b>Creator:</b>	Rosi, Giovanni Vittorio (b. 1867)
<b>Title:</b>	Giovanni Vittorio Rosi <i>Quo Vadis</i> Ballet Collection
<b>Dates:</b>	circa 1904-1949 (bulk circa 1904-1905)
<b>Extent:</b>	2 document boxes, 1 oversize box (1.26 linear feet)
<b>Abstract:</b>	<i>Quo Vadis</i> , a ballet in five scenes composed by Giovanni Vittorio Rosi and Sam Cudworth circa 1904, was based on the popular 1896 novel by Henryk Sienkiewicz. The Giovanni Vittorio Rosi <i>Quo Vadis</i> Ballet Collection is comprised of a "ballet book" of dance notation, plot synopses, and musical scores.
<b>Call Number:</b>	Performing Arts Collection PA-00199
<b>Language:</b>	English, French, and Italian
<b>Access:</b>	Open for research

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### Administrative Information

<b>Processed by:</b>	Ancelyn Krivak, 2008
<b>Repository:</b>	<a href="#">Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin</a>

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## Sources:

Carter, Alexandra. *Dance and Dancers in the Victorian and Edwardian Music Hall Ballet*. Ashgate Publishing, 2005.

Gessner, Peter K. "Henryk Sienkiewicz and *Quo Vadis*." InfoPoland, <http://info-poland.buffalo.edu/classroom/sienkiewicz/QV.html> (accessed November 5, 2008).

Kirstein, Lincoln. *Four Centuries of Ballet: Fifty Masterworks*. New York: Dover Publications, 1984.

Tachiki, Akiko. "Living with Japanese Ballet History." Dance Advance Archives: Documents, [http://www.danceadvance.org/03archives/maki\\_ballet/index.html](http://www.danceadvance.org/03archives/maki_ballet/index.html) (accessed November 5, 2008).

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## Scope and Contents

*Quo Vadis* is a ballet in five scenes with libretto by Giovanni Vittorio Rosi and music by Sam Cudworth. Based on the popular 1896 novel by Henryk Sienkiewicz, Rosi's ballet, composed circa 1904, followed several film and stage adaptations. An epic love story set among the early Christians in Nero's Rome, *Quo Vadis* was again adapted as a ballet in 1906 (titled *Eunice*) by Leonide Massine.

Dancer, choreographer, director, and teacher Giovanni Vittorio Rosi was born in Rome in 1867 and trained at La Scala in Milan. An ambassador for the systematic training and technical innovations of the Italian School of ballet teaching and composition, he directed *corps de ballet* and taught dancers in various locations around the world, including Japan and Los Angeles, in the early twentieth century. From 1904 to 1908, he is known to have directed ballets at the Alhambra Music Hall in London. Although *Quo Vadis* was not among them, it may have been choreographed in London during this time period. Nothing is known of the biography or works of *Quo Vadis*'s composer, Sam Cudworth.

The Giovanni Vittorio Rosi *Quo Vadis* Ballet Collection is comprised of a "ballet book" of dance notation, plot synopses, and musical scores. The ballet book is hardbound and contains handwritten lists of characters, settings, and dances and a scene-by-scene description of the ballet in French, in addition to the dance notation. The notation takes the form of stamped and hand-colored figures with hand-drawn lines to indicate movement, superimposed on paper pre-printed with the backdrops for the scenes. On the facing page, a table lists the dancers and their positions in the scene depicted on the opposite side.

The description of *Quo Vadis* written in the ballet book also exists in the collection in the form of individual manuscripts and typescripts, written in French, Italian, or English. The remainder of the collection is made up of musical scores, including the piano score, dated 1904, and the orchestral score, dated 1905. Scores for individual orchestral parts are undated and may be more recent; a clipping from 1949 regarding the upcoming film version of *Quo Vadis* was found among them.

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**Series I. *Quo Vadis*, ballet fantastique en cinq scènes, 1904-1949, undated**

"Ballet Book," dance notation on preprinted paper, undated	<b>Container 3</b>
Plot synopses, undated	
Manuscripts, French and Italian	<b>Container 1.1</b>
Typescripts, English (2 copies) and Italian	
Scores	
Piano, 1904	<b>Container 1.2</b>
Orchestral, 1905	<b>Container 3</b>
Parts, undated	
Bass; cello; first clarinet	<b>Container 1.3</b>
Second clarinet; first cornet; second cornet	<b>Container 1.4</b>
Flute (2 copies); first horn; second horn	<b>Container 1.5</b>
Oboe; timpani, with clipping re film version of <i>Quo Vadis</i> from <i>New York Times</i> , December 8, 1949	<b>Container 2.1</b>
Trombone (2 copies); viola	<b>Container 2.2</b>
Violin, first and second	<b>Container 2.3</b>