

Brenda Dixon Gottschild

WRITER ON DANCE AND CULTURE

Joan Myers Brown & The Audacious Hope of the Black Ballerina

A BIOHISTORY OF AMERICAN PERFORMANCE

By: Brenda Dixon Gottschild

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Founder of the Philadelphia Dance Company (PHILADANCO) and the Philadelphia School of Dance Arts, Joan Myers Brown's personal and professional history reflects the hardships and the accomplishments of African Americans in the artistic and social developments through the twentieth and into the new millennium. Dixon Gottschild uses Brown's career as the fulcrum to leverage an exploration of the connection between performance, society, and race, exploring a concert dance tradition that has had no voice to tell its story. Brown's background and richly contoured biography are object lessons in survival—a true American narrative.

Brenda Dixon Gottschild is Professor Emerita of Dance Studies at Temple University and a former consultant/writer for *Dance Magazine*. She is the author of *Digging the Africanist Presence in American Performance*, *Waltzing in the Dark*, and *The Black Dancing Body*.

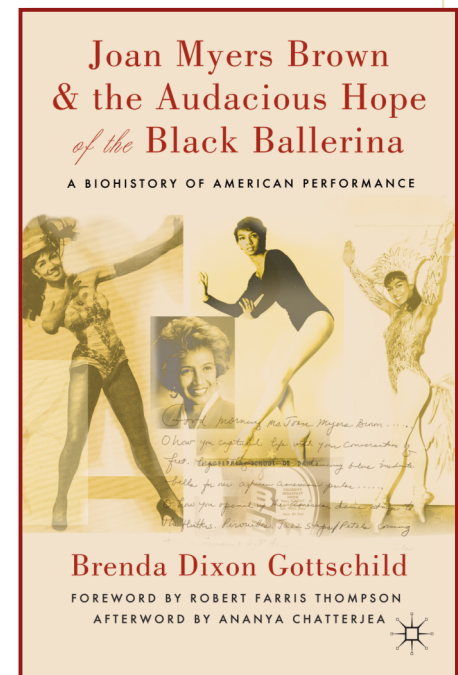
Praise

Brenda Dixon Gottschild brings a bracing mix of scholarship and unsentimental compassion to bear on the story of Joan Myers Brown, a classy, feisty, eminently pragmatic visionary whose life and dance company occupy a vivid and important place in the largely unexamined history of dance in Philadelphia, an early and important center for the art as well as Myers Brown's home. "Audacious Hope" is an indispensable good-read about an individual and her epic fight to make a place for herself in a world that did not accept black-skinned dancers like her, and then to build and maintain a major American dance company. But the book is much more. In the detail of the day-to-day work of being a dancer and developing dancers against the odds, so vividly evoked, too, in Myers Brown's pithy and unexpectedly poignant observations, Dixon Gottschild has captured the struggle of black Americans to help shape the culture of their country.

— Jennifer Dunning, former dance critic, *The New York Times*

Joan Myers Brown is a legend in the world of artistic dance. We now have her fascinating story for the world in Brenda Dixon Gottschild's brilliant book!

— Cornel West, Princeton University



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