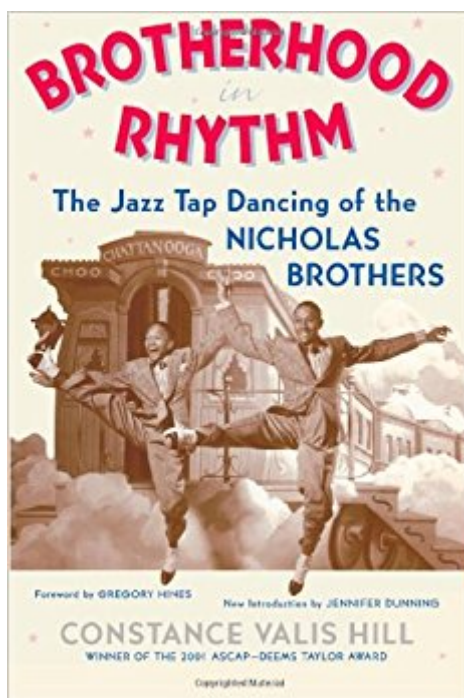


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# Brotherhood In Rhythm: The Jazz Tap Dancing Of The Nicholas Brothers



## Synopsis

Tap dancing legends Fayard (b. 1914) and Harold (1918-2000) Nicholas amazed crowds with their performances in musicals and films from the 30s to the 80s. They performed with Gene Kelly in *The Pirate*, with Cab Calloway in *Stormy Weather*, with Dorothy Dandridge (Harold's wife) in *Sun Valley Serenade*, and with a number of other stars on the stage and on the screen. Author Hill not only guides readers through the brothers' showstopping successes and the repressive times in which their dancing won them universal acclaim, she also offers extensive insight into the history and choreography of tap dancing, bringing readers up to speed on the art form in which the Nicholas Brothers excelled.

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## Customer Reviews

This is a lovingly researched and thoughtfully created portrait of Fayard and Harold Nicholas, whose spectacular dance routines have captivated stage and screen audiences from the Depression era to current times. Hill's infectious admiration will inspire even those not well acquainted with the pair to locate *Down Argentine Way* or *Sun Valley Serenade* and enjoy their performances. In his introduction, Gregory Hines praises the one-of-a-kind routines the brothers developed, which included intricate steps, breathtaking splits, and impeccable timing. Their style was outstanding, but so was their highly professional approach to the mercurial world of show business, with its particularly disturbing racial issues. Exceptionally clear and useful descriptions of the elements of early jazz, the evolution of the minstrel show, and the components of various dance forms provide background on the forces influencing the performance world of the time. A natural for dance

enthusiasts, this is also essential reading for anyone interested in entertainment history. -Carol J. Binkowski, Bloomfield, NJ Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Hill takes the high road in presenting the work more than the lives of Fayard and Harold Nicholas, whose graceful and athletic dancing continues to astound viewers of the otherwise often humdrum movie musicals in which they appeared. Hill furnishes just enough about the brothers' theater-musician parents, Fayard's precocious choreographical mind and Harold's aptitude for speed-learning movement, black dancers in vaudeville, and vaudeville's transition to stage and film to prepare readers for her analysis and appreciation of the Nicholases' art. She doesn't trade in gossip, instead giving move-by-move breakdowns of the brothers' classic numbers and discussing what films of them rehearsing at home and performing in theaters and New York's legendary Cotton Club also reveal. Stressing the joyousness of their work, she imparts just how they achieved it, which makes the book an ideal companion for dance and film buffs intent on inspecting the Nicholases' sometimes impossible-seeming foot-and bodywork--their death-or-grievous-injury-defying splits, for instance. Invaluable dance-term glossary included. Ray Olson --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

A well-done and enjoyable account of the lives and accomplishments of two of the best dancers who ever lived and of the times in which they performed. Informative and entertaining. It gave me more insight into the era during which my father, too, performed, but as a ballroom dancer ("Dancing in the Stars: Carroll Webster, International Luminary of Vaudeville and Hollywood"). I know that my father met the brothers, and after reading this book I feel as if I, too, knew them. Thank you.

"Brotherhood" met all of my expectations. The writing is excellent, the narrative is easy reading, and the story of the Nicholas family is well researched. It is loaded with historical tidbits, laced with little known facts, and interesting behind the scenes coverage. I thoroughly enjoyed it. The only troublesome thing for me had nothing to do with the book itself; it is truth-telling at its finest. Here is my problem: The acrobatic, creative, energetic, stylish, classy, graceful dancing of the Nicholas Brothers was stymied only by racism, not by their enormous ability. All the more a reason to celebrate their capacity to be creative and to joyfully dance in the face of systemic racial prejudice.

I ordered this book to help in the writing of a research paper on the career of the Nicholas Brothers.

It is an astonishingly brilliant piece of work. Not only does it provide an intelligent and empathetic look at the lives and careers of the Nicholas Brothers themselves, but it also weaves in insightful narratives about the various intersecting traditions of which the Nicholas Brothers were a part. If you are looking for a panoramic and scholarly understanding of the history of black tap dancing in America, as well as an incredibly detailed and informed examination of the Nicholas Brothers, this is a wonderful book.

If you're a fan of the Nicholas Brothers or tap dancing or musical films of the thirties and forties, you will enjoy this book. A superb review of their career. Worthy of the extraordinary talent of the subjects.

A great history of old Hollywood and jazz dance.

I haven't finished reading it but so far it is great. The Nicholas Brothers were the greatest Jazz Tap Dancers that ever were or ever will be.

I would recommend purchasing Ms. Hill's treatise on the dance and historic origins of the Nicholas Brothers' dance styles and choreography. However, those who seek a detailed biography will be disappointed, as this book was aimed to be a scholarly work, not a biographical one. The book has little mention of their personal life, marriages, divorces, activities apart and completely ignored many foreign films they made in the 1950's. Harold's marriage to Dorothy Dandridge is mentioned only in passing, and his extensive career in Paris for a decade was only lightly researched. No personal family interviews were apparently done. Although excellent as a dance resource, those seeking a more well-rounded insight on the personality and life of these two genius entertainers will be better served by a biography, which Ms. Hill's book does not aim to be. It will make a great companion work to a still much-needed in-depth look at their lives.

How anyone could take the most facinating subjects in the world (the Nicholas Brothers) and make it dull, dead, BORING is beyond me! But this author has done it. I hope she has another career goal, because her writing is just awful and she conveys NO excitement, fun or even history. She glosses over Fayard & Harold's actual history and instead focuses on describing each tap step of each routine--and even to me, as a tap dancer, DULL! I want to hear their stories, for goodness' sake. I KNOW their dancing!

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