

#binballetpink

Dear friends and colleagues,

I'm writing to invite you to join me in making Ballet class a more welcoming place, starting with the uniform. As a teacher, I want all my students to feel important, valued and included. Most of us insist on a strict uniform for our dancers, which includes 'pink tights and pink Ballet shoes'. Today, I ask that we make a change.

In Classical Ballet (and related styles), we seek a continuous line from fingertip to toe. Traditionally, shoes were matched to skin tone to maintain that unbroken line. When Marie Taglioni famously shortened the Ballet skirt in the 19th century, tights were added as nude legs would have been unacceptable. Because all ballet dancers were white at that time, 'Ballet Pink' shoes and tights became the norm.

"I remember growing up in the south [USA] and in Ballet class I was often the only POC. I would always wonder why my legs or feet didn't look as nice as my peers in pink tights, ballet slippers and pointe shoes but I didn't know at the time that those colors didn't compliment my skin tones, my line."

- Constance Stamatiou,
Alvin Ailey dancer

Popular dancewear companies like [Freed](#), [Bloch](#), [Capezio](#) and [Gaynor Minden](#) are now producing shoes, tights, underwear and pointe shoes in a range of tones, in limited runs, in response to demand from strong voices within the professional dance world.

Broadly, though, Ballet Pink remains the default because that's what we ask our students to buy. As a considerable portion of their customer base, we have the power to dictate the supply with our demand.

It is about time that we acknowledge that Ballet Pink does NOT match the skin tone of all our dancers. When we require Black and Brown students to wear pink shoes and tights, we fail them. We don't help them create that classical line and we don't include them in the Ballet world.



Click [here](#) to watch a BBC mini-documentary on Ballet Black and Freed, making brown and bronze pointe shoes available in the UK.

If we allow, encourage and empower our students to choose dancewear that matches their skin, those companies will respond to the growing demand until our Black and Brown dancers will be able to enter any dance store and find dancewear that matches their skin tone.

By taking the simple step of editing our uniform requirements, we're not only catalysing a shift in the market, we're creating greater representation, so that all dancers will see that they are welcome.

Let's come together and remove the requirement for 'pink tights and pink shoes' from our paperwork and websites and replace it with 'Ballet shoes and tights to match the dancer's skin'.

Ballet is for everyone and pink is not the default.



Thank you,

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