

# DANCE VOCABULARY



Kristine Necessary.  
Photo by Charlie McCullers.

**Ballet** – A theatrical art form using dance, music, and scenery to create a story.

**Classical ballet** – A traditional style of ballet, which stresses the academic technique developed through the centuries.

**Modern ballet** – A type of ballet from the twentieth century. To this day, modern ballet looks to re-invent itself and focus on the creation of new, original movement.

**Choreograph** – To design or plan movements of a dance.

**Pas de deux** – A dance for two people used to display their beautiful technique.

**Tutu** – The short classical ballet skirt made of many layers of tulle. A romantic tutu is a long tulle skirt reaching below the calf.

**Pointe shoes** – The satin ballet shoes used by dancers when dancing on their pointe (toes). Pointe shoes are reinforced with a box constructed of numerous layers of strong glue in between layers of material. Pointe shoes are not made of wood.

**Adagio** (u-da-zhe-o) – A succession of slow, soft, lyrical and continuous movements. Adagio creates the illusion that the positions flow from one into another.

**Allegro** (a-leg-grow) – Involves fast and dynamic movements, usually jumping steps and sequences.

**Arabesque** (eh-rah-besk) – A position on one leg with the other leg raised behind the body and extended in a straight line.

**Grand jeté** (gr-awn-d jet-ay) – A big jump from one foot to the other in which the working leg is brushed into the air and appears to have been thrown.

**Plié** (plee-ay) – Bent, bending – of the knee or knees.

**Pirouette** (peer-o-wet) – A rotation or spin – a complete turn of the body on one foot, on pointe or demi-pointe (half-pointe).



Atlanta Ballet dancer  
Jessica Assef.  
Photo by Charlie McCullers.