

Dear Colleagues,

I am proud to present a pointe shoe I have been fitting for the past two years. When Mr. Alex Kedrov, former Bolshoi Ballet, Boston Ballet, Ballet Memphis soloist, now co-founder of Siberian Swan Pointe Shoes approached me about this brand, I had reservations. I thought it would be just another attempt at a plastic shank. I purchased a pair for myself first and taught a couple of beginning pointe classes. I felt something I had not felt in a pointe shoe in many years ... support and comfort. I am not a young dancer anymore so a comfortable pointe shoe seemed a bit impossible. But it is possible ..

I am still fitting this shoe. I am still teaching dancers who wear this shoe. I fit it on my own students, on students in surrounding studios and even online in studios across the country even as far away as Spokane, WA. I also consult with teachers and dancers around the globe. I frequently travel with Siberian Swan to present shoes in studios in the US.

Now I am taking on the retail market. I am approaching dancewear store owners with trusted fitting experience that teachers and directors have come to know and rely on. I am focused on fitters who know pointe shoes, know and understand classical ballet and pointe training and fitters who value the philosophy that only the best for their customers will do.

What I have found with my work with these retailers is that education for dancers and teachers about this shoe is needed. It is relatively new on the market and I have found that a number of retailers have not yet heard of the shoe and in some cases, teachers haven't either. So my focus with this letter is to begin the process of educating you, the teachers, about this brand and why this shoe should become a major choice among teachers, students and fitters.

The brief history is this ..

Sergei Bobrov, Artistic Director of the Russian Krasnoyarsk State Theater of Opera and Ballet, Principal choreographer of the Russian State Ballet of Siberia and Alex Kedrov were approached by dancers of Mr. Bobrov's company, the Russian State Ballet of Siberia. The company tours four months out of the year from Singapore to the United Kingdom. They dance on stage after stage, venue after venue, touring with upwards of six full length ballets each touring season. The dancers wanted a pointe shoe that addressed problems not yet solved by the major brands on the market. They wanted quiet, stable, supportive and comfortable pointe shoes that would last longer than other brands.

The result was that these dancers, along with Mr. Bobrov and Mr. Kedrov's extensive research, formulated a shoe that would become their pointe shoe of choice. Input from the dancers in the company was, and continues to be, a major force behind the design and development of this brand. This pointe shoe brand is truly the shoe built by dancers for dancers.

The next page of this document will outline the features of this brand as I have seen them in class, rehearsal and performance over the past two years. I have yet to find a pointe shoe company that will actually implement change based on customer reviews. Siberian Swan has and continues to do so. It amazes me that I feel as though I, too, have been a part of the ongoing development of this shoe based on my experience in fitting the shoe as well as my experience watching this shoe first-hand.

Here is how Siberian Swan pointe shoes work .. Feature by Feature.

I want to draw attention to the shoe's Active Arch Support feature as it relates to the anatomical functioning of the dancer's foot. I will start with that and will elaborate even more toward the end of the next page. It is what sets Siberian Swan off from the rest of the shoes on the market, in my research and experience.



Three models now exist but my work here will feature the two original models currently on the market.

1. **Pavlova:** the tapered platform

2. **Karsavina:** the broad platform

3. **Rudolf:** Siberian Swan's newest release designed for the men who choose to study / dance en pointe.

I am happy to further discuss the particular foot shapes that benefit from either of the models during in-store presentations.

The Shank:

Plastic shank engineered by computer aided drafting and computer aided cutting of the shank to ensure almost zero human error.

Active Arch Support: A patented technology that allows for this shank to break in right under the dancer's heel instead of in the middle of the foot. When compared to a leading brand with a similar philosophy, this shank is not pre-arched in the middle of the dancer's foot but instead allows the dancer's foot to remain straight up and down in the box. The Active Arch Support kicks in at the metatarsal area allowing the dancer to feel the floor properly while en pointe but not allowing the dancer to sink down into her metatarsals. The result here is a pressure release from the toes and a reduction of discomfort commonly thought normal in the past. The intrinsic muscles of the feet are trained right from the start how to work and strength is built exponentially faster than in the competitor shoe.

The Box:

Unlike a leading brand on the market, this box is constructed with breathable, natural biodegradable materials like conventional boxes. These boxes are also reinforced with a proprietary epoxy that prevents premature breakdown and softening at the platform. Siberian Swan also uses the cedar oil from the Siberian cedar trees that promotes antimicrobial activity, wicking away moisture and odor which also works to prevent premature breakdown of the boxes.

The Platform:

The platform of the shoe is enhanced with a thin layer of foam right under the outer fabric of the shoe. This enhancement makes the shoe extremely quiet in class, rehearsals and on-stage.

The Outer Fabric:

Although the shoe has been known by its signature highly durable, matte fabric, a fabric with just enough shine to it to create a beautiful, seamless line, directors and teachers wanted an equally durable satin material. So Siberian Swan listened and produced a line with satin. A high GSM makes this fabric durable with a beautiful color we think directors and teachers will be thrilled to see.

The Inner Sole:

The inner sole of the shoe is slightly cushioned. Again, the dancers of the RSBS wanted a more ergonomic shoe for their touring season so the design features an inner sole that is cushioned slightly without adding bulk to the shoe.

The Outer Sole:

The outer sole of the shoe is amazing. The response here is that the sole is so flush to the floor that the stability while not en pointe is beautiful. Think about adagio exercises in the center .. Dancers feel the floor and are nice and stable while not battling the shanks of their shoes while performing promenade and long held extensions.

Customizations:

Obviously a stock shoe is preferred and, as of yet, I have not had to customize a Siberian Swan pointe shoe, this is an incredible option for dancers who need to tweak this shoe.

Customizations can happen almost anywhere on this shoe:

Vamp length

Shank thickness

Heel height

Profile height

The beauty is that this shoe is already made to order anyway so customization is not an issue with extra time or cost to the store. A store can certainly choose to add on a customization fee if they feel they need to but, again, I have not had to customize yet so I wouldn't feel the need as a retailer. I would simply need to work with the retailer and the dancer after a shoe or two has been worn to measure and spec out the customizations. As with any other brand, however, once it is customized, the shoe is the dancer's responsibility and cannot be returned to their store. This is why I strongly encourage the dancer to wear at least one pair or two before choosing this option.



Pointe Shoes

Other features to note:

Concealed drawstring: Inside of the shoe. Uninterrupted line from the throat of the shoe to the platform.
 V-cut throat continues the beautiful line of dancer's leg and foot.
 Three shank strengths: Soft, Medium, Hard. (See customization section).
 Four widths, ample lengths to fit a variety of dancers. This shoe takes care of a variety of foot shapes and sizes!
 The crown height, vamp length and profile height also accommodate a variety of feet.
 Easily considered an all-in-one shoe .. Class to Rehearsal to Stage.
 All of the historical pointe shoe hacks .. 3/4 shank, pointe shoe glue, darning, etc. are a thing of the past.
 Durability + Suggested Retail Price = Happy Parents.
 Comfort: Dancer response is that this shoe is comfortable. Side by side comparisons during fittings don't lie.

A note on the box of the Siberian Swan Pointe Shoe:

While it is true that the competitive brand can last a long time for dancers, the box of the shoe is completely different than Siberian Swan's box design.
 The competitor shoe is one continuous process of a plastic material. When that box gets soft (as plastic does with prolonged use), it becomes flatter and flatter often causing pain and bruised toenails. The crown height is already considerably lower than the flattening out of the box, coupled with the lower shank break-in spot can cause more discomfort than is necessary. Additionally, once the outer fabric breaks down, the plastic is exposed causing the shoe to become extremely slippery. Siberian Swan's outer fabric is extremely durable and there is no plastic used in the box of the shoe. The conventional box starts out higher in the crown and, because of its breathable design, will not flatten down to that extreme.
 The death of the Siberian Swan is marked with obvious loss of support in the shank and the box will, of course, eventually lose its strength. It's often hard to tell when the shoe is officially finished because the box does not get soft and the shank is virtually indestructible. By far, one of the most durable conventional boxes I have seen or worn.

The shank revisited:

The shank of the Siberian Swan is what I have sold this shoe on.
 A dancer's foot needs to feel the floor at the platform while en pointe but without the pressure exerted on her foot when allowed to have the arch of her shoe break in at the wrong place. This shank design allows the intrinsic muscles of the dancer's foot to work properly en pointe. Students tell me that they feel the difference in how those tiny muscles are working in Siberian Swan versus their previous shoe. One dancer describes it as "a lot of ab work except with my feet". Beginning pointe students are actually great candidates for this shoe as well. Immediately they are able to build the habits that we want them to build. As long as the fit is correct and the shank strength is the right support for the beginner, they will begin strengthening their feet from class number one.
 With the Active Arch Support, the dancer is supported all the way up the foot. The shank will break in high, just under the heel of the dancer's foot. With all of this support through the metatarsal, the shank is still pliable where we want it to be for our students to properly roll through the demi-pointe in every aspect of the practice .. Releve, walking, presenting feet, articulating through the tendu ... nothing has changed. It's a stunning design. We see an innovation in the shank support that is vastly different than the other major brand on the market. Side by side, you can see it.
 Because this shank is so supportive, pliable and durable, the shoe requires no break in. As you know, breaking in shoes prematurely advances the deterioration of the shoe. Siberian Swan's shank design and strong yet breathable box design, is ready to go. Dancers are instantly building proper habits en pointe from the beginning. This makes such a huge difference in the durability of the shoe while maintaining the strengthening features of the shoe.

One last note on this shoe ...

If I ever watched a dancer's foot become exponentially stronger and develop better and faster, it has been in this brand. The competitor's shoe has gained some criticism regarding the building of strength. While I disagree that the shoe is a "cheater shoe", I don't find it as sound for developing and strengthening a dancer's foot.



I hope this helps shed some light on the functionality and benefits of this shoe.

I am available for ongoing education and discussion regarding this shoe. My goal is to introduce this shoe to teachers and fitters so that we can continue to work to change the outdated philosophy on how pointe shoes can feel and function. I fit this shoe and watch the faces of young dancers light up when they feel the difference between their previous brand and Siberian Swan. We have one store who did a blind-folded test with their regular customers ..

One foot with their known shoe and the other with Siberian Swan .. It worked. They felt the support and the lack of pressure and pain in their feet. With Siberian Swan, I am working diligently to change the very "old school" and outdated philosophy that pointe shoes cannot be comfortable. They can. Siberian Swan's technology innovated that for us .. For our students.

Siberian Swan Pointe Shoes is a brand I fit my own students in and, as I tell students who dance for other colleagues of mine, I wouldn't compromise the confidence of teachers who choose me to fit their own students. Obviously not every foot will work in this brand but I am confident that with the backing of the teachers who are interested in learning why this shoe is so incredible, more dancers will see how it can benefit their training.

I open the lines of communication up from here .. Please feel free to contact me at missy@ticklepinkdancewear.com or at 540-570-0848.

With warm regards,
Missy Belcher Floyd for Siberian Swan Pointe Shoes



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