So you think you want to buy dance shoes….

First, let me start by saying that it’s not necessary to buy dance shoes right away, especially for your first few competitions. Dance shoes tend to be a bit pricey, even when you buy them at a discount dance store, and you want to be sure that dance is a hobby that you will stick with long enough to make buying shoes economical.

Supposing that you STILL want dance shoes, here is some good information about selecting and buying some:

- Should you buy Latin or ballroom style shoes (open or closed toe)? The answer is to start with closed toe ballroom shoes, since they provide more support for your foot, and it can be difficult and sometimes painful to dance the ballroom dances with open toed shoes. It is perfectly acceptable to dance Latin in ballroom shoes.

- Although most shoes are usually offered in black, tan, and white, your best bet at this point is to go with the tan or beige shoes. Tan shoes blend your footwork into the floor more, so that sloppy steps won’t be as obvious; the tan will also make your legs look longer, which is obviously a good thing. Dancers in the upper levels (silver, gold, open, etc.) often buy white shoes and then dye them to match their costume.

- Dance shoes often come with different heel heights and shapes, including a one inch fat Cuban heel, two inch flared heel, two and a half inch heel, and three inch heel. At this point, going with a two and a half inch heel is the wisest decision, since three inch heels are a lot higher than they sound, and they hurt your feet. Believe me.

- Sizing: Depending on what brand you buy, sizing may be different from your street shoe size. Many dance shoes can come from England, Germany, Italy, etc., so make sure you find out how the sizes run before you buy. Capezio brand shoes are made in America and generally run about the same or ½ a size smaller than your street shoes, while shoes from England are about 2 ½ sizes smaller than American sizes. Just ask questions!

With these tips in mind, here are a few reliable places to buy ballroom shoes:

- **www.allaboutdance.com** This is a discount dance store online that offers nice quality Capezio shoes (a known name-brand) at around $60 - $70. I have ordered from them before and they are reliable.

- **www.discountdance.com** Same idea as allaboutdance, although I’ve never ordered from them.

- Ebay Not as tacky as you’d think. Many sellers offer brand new dance shoes in many different sizes at a slightly lower price than you’ll find at a dance supply store. Make sure you ask the seller a lot of questions before you buy, though, such as how the sizing generally goes, and whether they have the size, color, heel height, etc. in the style you want.

If you have any questions about anything, ask me!

--Christina