

## **CHARLOTTE BALLET**

### **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Statement**

At Charlotte Ballet, we take a comprehensive view of inclusion, from the audiences we serve, to our dancers, staff, leaders, and volunteers. To cultivate an inclusive organizational culture that fosters belonging and acknowledges that the work is ongoing, Charlotte Ballet works to incorporate the ideals of diversity, equity, and inclusion in everything that we do.

Charlotte Ballet's mission is to provide artistically excellent programming to diverse audiences in our home city of Charlotte, the Southeast region, and in the varied communities that we serve while on tour across the nation and throughout the world. We embrace the responsibility that our position of leadership in the dance community invites to amplify marginalized voices and to challenge, stimulate, educate, and enrich our audiences.

At Charlotte Ballet, we believe that diversity makes us stronger. We believe that every person has traditions that are inherently valuable and worthy of celebration. Given the reckoning that has taken place throughout American society as a result of the racial justice protests of 2020, we have taken the opportunity to look at our organization in new ways, and to transform systems and ways of working that are both deeply entrenched and in need of change. Through our educational offerings, community engagement programs, and artistic programming, we strive to serve and reflect the diversity of the Charlotte community.

We recognize that at the heart of our work is the mission to care for and interpret the art form of ballet in ways that no longer center and elevate European contributions to the art form above all others. We believe that Charlotte Ballet has a moral obligation to confront the biases and inequities of our history and the present. The ballet community has long centered certain stories while marginalizing and suppressing others. We acknowledge the adverse consequences of this exclusionary past and its impact on the present within the specific social and cultural context of our diverse community. . We are working to improve our dance company's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion through workplace training, mentorship programs, and scholarship opportunities. We were a founding member of "The Equity Project: Increasing the Presence of Blacks in Ballet", a three-year partnership program organized by Dance Theatre of Harlem, The International Association of Blacks in Dance, and Dance/USA. In addition, our artistic programming and educational offerings strive to lift up and highlight the talents of marginalized communities. Our REACH scholarship program offers accessible dance education to children throughout the Charlotte community.

We are dedicated to embedding equitable practices in performances. We will continue to implement an inclusive approach with the choreographers with whom we collaborate and the subject matter and cultural touchstones of our performances. Charlotte is a vibrant, diverse, and ever-expanding city. As the city grows, Charlotte Ballet will grow and develop alongside it. In this period of growth, we recommit to diversity, equity, and inclusion as a driving influence in all that we do. Our areas of focus will include:

- Increasing access to ballet training in every Charlotte community, through expansion of our REACH program and additional scholarship opportunities for the Academy.
- Continuing to recruit diverse staff and Board members so all students feel that they are represented in Charlotte Ballet's leadership.
- Investing in mentorship programs to ensure students, dancers, and employees have the support they need to be heard and succeed.
- Expanding performance and educational offerings to areas outside of Uptown Charlotte.
- Continuously updating our diversity, equity, and inclusion training efforts for staff, executive leadership, and Board members.
- Ensuring that our artistic programming highlights the voices and talents of marginalized artists.

Diversity, equity, and inclusion are critical to the long-term viability of Charlotte Ballet and to the communities we serve. We hold ourselves accountable to these actions, the success of which will result from listening to—and respectfully learning from—staff, visitors, and supporters; artists and makers; students and educators; and community leaders and organizers.

At Charlotte Ballet, we are passionate about diversity, equity, and inclusion and we intend to continue leading the way not only in Charlotte, but in the dance community at large.

[Include links to additional materials]

Historical background of Charlotte Ballet

[\(https://charlotteballet.org/2022/02/10/celebrating-black-history-month-charlotte-ballet/\)](https://charlotteballet.org/2022/02/10/celebrating-black-history-month-charlotte-ballet/)

The Equity Project

[\(https://www.iabdassociation.org/page/EquityProject\)](https://www.iabdassociation.org/page/EquityProject)

Dance/USA: Increasing the Presence of Blacks in Ballet

[\(https://www.danceusa.org/announcing-equity-project-increasing-presence-blacks-ballet/\)](https://www.danceusa.org/announcing-equity-project-increasing-presence-blacks-ballet/)