**Aromatherapy for dancers**

**The art of Aromatherapy**

**Our distant ancestors, ten thousands years ago, must have known how and what to eat before they even knew how to make fire and cook food. Even in those early times they may have known simply from experience that some plants were poisonous, some would induce vomiting or diarrhoea and other aided digestion. They almost certainly used their nose, as well as their eyes, to determine whether a plant was the one they were seeking, or whether it was suitable to eat.
It is impossible to point to a date when plants were first used medically. In the course of thousands of years the healing virtues of plants must have gradually been discovered. When Man learned how to make fire he must have sometimes burned aromatic plants, finding that some were good to eat with cooked food, and that others made a pleasant smell.**

 **Through burning aromatic plants they would have discovered other properties; sometimes the smoke would be good to breathe, sometimes it would make one feel drowsy or invigorated.**

 **Smoking a patient is one of the earliest recorded forms of treatment with herbs. It was often used to drive out evil spirits.**

 **These plants also came to be used for other reasons, perhaps being burnt as offerings to the sun of Mother earth, or on the birth of a child or the death of an enemy.
Noticing the effects of herbal infusions and decoctions on the body, and the effects of herb smoke on the mind, early man naturally attributed some power to them. As offerings, then, they had a real significance, and were associated with the earliest forms of ritual and magic. Even today, in some parts of the world, herbs are only picked when the moon and stars are in a certain position, and a particular chant is recited as the plant is being gathered, sometimes a different chant being required for each herb.**

 **The senses of our distant ancestors were probably more acute than ours. Civilization may bring refinement in some senses, but it can not increase the acuity of our basic instincts and the perception of our senses. We do not use our nose to smell the direction of the wind, the where about of an enemy, or the tracks of an animal, although there are a few tribes in South America, who can track by smell. Smelling fine perfumes may increase our appreciation of sophisticated scents, but we have lost the ability to smell an enemy, a poisonous herb, or a particular disease. The sense of smell is very closely linked to proverbial ”sixth sense”.**

**During the neolithic period of the Eastern world, between 6000 and 9000 years ago, Man discovered that plants such as olive, castor and sesame contained fatty oil, which could be extracted by pressing. The flax plant, which was also used to make clothes, yielded linsees oil. If, at this period man could bake bread and use herbs in cooking and in medicine, it is quite plausible to suppose, that he could make scented oils. He undoubtedly used fatty oils to rub on his body and his hair.
Finding that these oils went racid after a time and began to smell bad, it is possible, that he began to scent them with aromatic herbs commonly used in the kitchen, on the fire, and in medicines. If such scented oils were made by neolithic man, he may then have found that they had similar effects to the herbs, when the body was massaged with them.**

**A number of vessels, mostly made of alabaster and dating between 3000 and 2000 BC, can be seen in the Egyptian rooms of the British Museum. Some of them look uncommenly like ointmentpots, and others, more vertically orientated, were probably made for scented oils. For the period in which they were living the Egyptian people were incredibly advanced; so much so, infact, that the pyramids they built still present us with a number of unsolved questions, which the most scientific mind cannot unravel.
How where the pyramids built ? How were such enormous stones made to fit so perfectly together, to form an enormous perfect shape containing hundreds of yards of tunnels and tombs ?**

**No satisfactory answer has yet been given. Perhaps we have found a clue to the reason for their shape, in the fact that it preserves corpses, whether they are embalmed or not. But if this is the reason, how did the Egyptians come to discover it ?
If we look at their buildings, their carvings, their culture and their art, we see a nation at a very height of civilization. This is the same period in which one of the oldest books in the world is supposed to have been written. The Yellow Emperor of Classic of Internal Medicine, a Chinese text, was written by Huang Ti, the Yellow Emperor or Yellow Lord. This ancient author also knew things that we are only now beginning to understand. His book deals mainly with the causes and treatment of disease, and is the most important text for all acupuncturists, even the Chinese.**

**While the Chinese were developing acupuncture, the Egyptians were, among other things, acquiring knowledge of essences.
The twelfth dynasty was the golden age of Egyptian jewellery; during this time cosmetics were also widely used. These consisted mainly of kohl (an early equivalent to our mascara) eyes-shadow, which was usually green, and various unguents and ointments to beautify the complexion. They used red ochre to colour the lips and cheeks, and henna to stain the hands and fingernails a deep orange/yellow. White lead was also used to whiten the face, but being highly poisonous, it was probably not much used. Some very beautiful cosmetic boxes have been recovered, dating from the twelfth dynasty (c.2000 BC). These ornate boxes contain small pots and jars made of stone, which would have contained some of the cosmetics mentioned above, included scented unguents.**

**When the tomb of Tut-Ankh-Amon was opened in 1922, a number of such vases and scent pots were discovered, some containing unguents. These had been placed in the tomb, when it was sealed in 1350 BC, - over 3000 years ago. The pots were made of calcite, and the contents, which had solidified, later revealed the presence of frankincense and something resembling Indian spikenard. These were mixed in a base of animal fat, which formed 90% of the blend. The scent, though understandably faint, was still detectable.**

**At first these unguents were probably highly valued, and only used by royal families and perhaps the high priests. Later on they would become less sacred, and wider used by ordinary people. They would be used in cosmetics, massage-oils, medicines and so on. There are papyri recording the medicinal use of herbs, dating back to the reign of Khufu, who built the Great Pyramid 2800 BC. All these records show, that magic was considered being just as effective as medicine. In order for a remedy to have its full effect, it was customary for the physician to recite a magic formula four times. This kind of recitation was common in many other civilizations, and is still used by herbalists or witch doctors in part of Africa.**

**I will present you the three massages which I consider the most useful to dancers**

**Products for dancers**

**MUSCLE RELIEF MASSAGE OILS

Specifically formulated to soothe aching muscles without over stimulating. Muscle Relief Oil is especially good to ease and relax after time in the garden. For a more stimulating muscle massage use Sports Massage Oil.

This blend is also helpful for those with stiff joints.

1. INGREDIENTS; Coconut mct and Jojoba oils essential oils of Lavender, Rosemary,Ginger,Cajuput,Juniperberry and pine. May also be used as a bath oil, leaving the skin silky smooth and moisturised.

2. INGREDIENTS; Cocos-nucifera and Simmondsia chinensis. essential oils of: Lavandula angustifolia, Rosmarinus officinalis, Zingiber officinalis, Melaleuca cajuputi, Juniperus communis and Pinus sylvestris

May also be used as a bath oil, leaving the skin silky smooth and moisturised.

To use:
5 to 30ml for massage as needed or add one or two caps full to running Bath & mix well.

Care should be taken as the bath may be quite oily and slippery.

Keep away from eyes & out of reach of children. Avoid if high blood pressure. Nut Alert: bottled near nut oils.

\* Soothing and Relieving
\* Reviving \*Rejuvenating
\* Increases circulation
\* Warming
\* rub tired aching muscles**

**RELAXING MASSAGE OILS

Relaxing and calming blend of oils, theraputic for mind and body. Two ideal massage oils for relaxing after a stressful day.

1. INGREDIENTS; Coconut mct and Jojoba oils, essential oils of lavender, Orange, Marjoram, Vetivert, ho leaf, Spikenard and Chamomile . May also be used in the bath. Care should be taken as the bath may be quite oily and slippery.
OR
2. INGREDIENTS; Cocos-nucifera-mct, \*Simmondsia chinensis, Pure Essential oils: \*Lavandula angustifolia, Citrus sinensis, Origanum marjorana, \*Andropogen muricatus, \*Nardostachys jatamansi, Cinnamomum camphora & Anthemis nobilis \*Organically grown

Essential oils Naturally contain: Linalool, Citral, Geraniol, Limonene, Citronellol, Coumarin, Farnesol

Keep out of eyes.

To use:
5 to 30ml for massage as needed or add one or two caps full to running Bath & mix well.
Take a few deep breathes & unwind.**

**REVITALISE MASSAGE OILS

Specifically formulated to help revitalise, uplift and recharge the mind, body and spirit.

1. INGREDIENTS; Coconut mct and Jojoba oils essential oils of Maychang, Lime, Red Mandarin, Petitgrain and Coriander 100% Pure Essential Oils. May also be used as a bath oil, leaving the skin silky smooth and moisturised.

2. INGREDIENTS; Cocos-nucifera and Simmondsia chinensis. Pure Essential oils: Litsea cubeba, Citrus aurantifolia, Citrus reticulata, Citrus aurantium, Coriandrum sativum

To use: 5 to 30ml for massage as needed or add one or two caps full to running Bath & mix well.

Care should be taken as the bath may be quite oily and slippery.

Keep away from eyes & out of reach of children. Nut Alert: bottled near nut oils.**

**ESSENTIAL OILS FOR THE** **MIND

When I visit Egypt or Turkey, for sure, you will find me in one of the perfume shops !
In Egypt they teached me to recognize the genuine pure essential oil from other qualities...
At first one is dazzled by the variety, as many as 50 different pure and blended scents. Of course, for those who know perfumes or know just what they want, this presents no problem.
But what of the novice ?
Well, if you are at all interested and serious, you have to spend some time sniffing through samples. This can be confusing initially, but I quickly began separating the strong from the subtle, the sweet from the piquant. But you can not simply pop the stoppers and whiff away. Since perfume are worn on the skin, they have to be tested on the skin or the wrist, back of the arm; and you should step outside the shop, away from myriad other aromas, to catch the true scent. I found that you test a perfume on your skin for two important reasons. It smells different on the skin than it does in the bottle. This is because your skin has its own special smell; and since your skin is different from everyone else’s in the first place, the same perfume can smell slightly different from one person to the next. And still, I also love to exanimate, what the scent from the different essential oils does to my mind. My favourite oils are rose, jasmine and sandalwood from Egypt. Robert B. Tisserand, a very skilful aroma therapist in England, has made this useful guide for the mind:**

* ***Anger:* Camomile, melissa, rose, ylang-ylang**
* ***Apathy:* Jasmine, juniper, patchouli, rosemarry**
* ***Confusion, indecsion:* Basil, cypres, frankincense, peppermint, patchouli**
* ***Dwelling on unpleasant past events:* Benzoin, frankincense**
* ***Fear, paranoia:* Basil, clary-sage, jasmine, juniper**
* ***Grief:* Hyssop, majoram, rose**
* ***Hypersensitivity:* Camomile, jasmine, melissa**
* ***Hypochrondria:* Jasmine, melissa**
* ***Impatience, irritability:* Camomile, camphor, cypress, lavender, marjoram, frankincense**
* ***Jealousy:* Rose**
* ***Panic, hysteria:* Camomile, clary-sage, jasmine, lavender, marjoram,
melissa, neroli, ylang-ylang**
* ***Shock:* Camphor, melissa, neroli**
* ***Suspicion:* Lavender**

**THE** **SKIN**

**The skin, which has been called the largest organ in the body, covers an area about 1,5 square metres. It covers every inch of you, keeping out cold, water, and undesirable organisms and substances, and keeping in heat, body fluids, and so on …
It is the earth in which your hair and nails grow (and so the health of these three is intimately linked). It secretes sebum, a kind of waxy oil, which oils the hair. The sweat glands eliminate water soluble waste products. (Sweat is very similar to urine; when you sweat a lot you do not urinate so much and vice versa). On exposure to ultra-violet light substance scalles sterols in the skin are converted into vitamin D. (This is accompanied by an increase in pigmentation.) It also acts as a sense organ, recording touch, pressure, pain, heat, and cold.
The skin is also able to absorb certain substances, mainly those which are oil-soluble, such as essential oils.**

**R. M. Gatt classified skintypes into four major groups:

Oily:
... An excess of sebum, an oily, yellowish appearance, often large, dilated pores. Prone to acne and infection. The oil is most abundant where the sebaceous glands proliferate: the lower part of the nose, the chin, and the forehead.

Dry:
... Alipic & lacking in oil, but not necessarily dehydrated. Aparchment like appearance, often fragile in nature, with no apparent sebaceous gland openings, and related to a deficiency in endocrine secretion.

Dehydrated:
... Lacking in water & quickly wrinkled, drawn, often cold. Frequent in old people, and those exposed to the severities of the weather. Related to an endocrine imbalance & an excess of thyroid and a lack of adrenal secretion. People with this type of skin are often thin and emaciated.

Hydrated:
...Oedematic, having and excess of water; very sensitive to atmospheric variations. Sensitive to cold, and subject to chapping and chilblains. May be related to an abnormal vicosity of the blood, which slows up the circulation to the hands and feet. (This type corresponds to what we now call a sensitive skin.)**

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