

Fragrance & Music Creation—An Entertaining Analogy

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Musical themes such as that for *L'air Du Temps* graphically illustrate the widely recognized connection between fragrance and music. It's in the air. Both fragrance and music travel through the air to be perceived. Both elicit an emotional response. Both have the ability to evoke vivid images of previous experiences.

There are many common terms to fragrance and music, e.g., notes, blend, harmony, balance, accent, composition, modifier, mood, hot or cool, soft or bold. Both can be evocative, refreshing, invigorating, exhilarating and both are the result of the blend of science and art.

Based on our personal experiences each of us responds individually to the various stimuli. However, there seems to be a greater enjoyment when many people, especially our peers, also experience the same emotional satisfaction from a common stimulus. This is what artists of all types, perfumers or performers, consciously or subconsciously try to achieve—ideas and emotions that can be shared with many by way of a universal language. This is the intangible common denominator of all art forms. How does one go about creating an intangible? How can one produce an artistic product that touches many in a positive way? A difficult question. I suspect

most artists first try to please themselves and, if they are fortunate, find themselves in tune with many and are hence "successful."

The approaches used to create a work of art are extremely varied and all of them are valid if they work. I am proposing a formula for success in the form of the three P's—Practice, Persistence and Potluck.

If we focus on the basic framework of a fragrance we can isolate three main parts: the foundation, the body or theme, and the topnote. The same terminology adequately describes the framework of a piece of music.



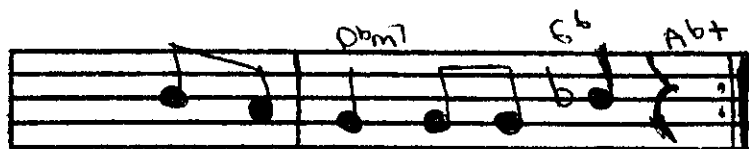
Now that we know the basic parts, where do we begin? We might begin at the foundation—after all, many things are built from the ground up. The foundation could consist of a blend of oakmoss and precious woods. The musical correlative would be the bass section and percus-

sion or rhythmic drum section.

In perfumery however, it is not necessary to follow convention. Why not start with the topnote? This may be a bright and lively citrus blend—musically, an interesting and easily recognizable melody. For example, Shalimar has a bright citrus blend using bergamot on a powdery balsamic base. Musically Chuck Mangione had a very successful hit with the song entitled "*Feels So Good*." This tune uses the bright tone of the flugelhorn playing a flowing melodic phrase over a very rhythmic foundation.

One could just as well begin with the body or theme, which may be a classic blend of jasmin and rose, or musically, a classical chord progression of well known but beautiful changes.

Now I know some of you are saying to yourselves there is nothing new in what I am saying. Those are all the same old ingredients that are used over and over. This is all quite true. However, if we compare the extreme diversity of musical sound that is accomplished with just 88 notes, we may begin to see the nature and breadth of the complexity of fragrance which may be drawn from a reservoir of not fewer than 5,000 notes.



Many songs have the same basic framework consisting of familiar rhythms and predictable and repetitive chord progressions. On the fragrance side, there are many fragrances built on familiar classic accords. In any event, the amount of diversity can be seen by the inexhaustible supply of new fragrances and new tunes in the market place. We will not even include those creations on the shelves of fragrance houses and copyright files that may never be experienced.

Now back to creating our fragrance. As I indicated earlier it is possible to begin anywhere, topnote, body, or base note. I will start with the body or theme and the character I have decided on is a floral blend of jasmin and carnation, with the emphasis on the carnation or spicy side. The counterpart of a piece of music would be the rhythm or chord progression.

I should point out that many changes are possible from the original starting position and the first idea is not necessarily permanent. It so happens that this musical piece is suitable and

stays intact until completion. (I have no odor evaluation board to go through.) It is, however, only a section of the body and cries out for expansion. The jasmin and carnation are not quite interesting enough to stand on their own. The idea occurs to add some notes of lilac and the floral woody notes of violet. This will nicely link the body to what I begin to anticipate the foundation will be like. The musical section is represented by maintaining the rhythmic feel of the piece, but altering the chord progression.

Now that I have a firm idea of what the body of my fragrance is like, many potential ideas come quickly to mind. The creative scope is narrowed and the possibilities diminish to a manageable number. As I indicated earlier, I had an idea of what the foundation of this fragrance would be like. In fact, I had an idea of what the completed fragrance would be like from the moment of conception. The effort is introduced when converting a dream or an idea to reality for all to sense.

The foundation for this fragrance must be suitable for the body which is already established. It must harmonize with all the notes and extend gracefully into the theme of the fragrance. The notes I choose are rich, woody amber blends of patchouli, vetiver, olibanum, labdanum and myrrh. The fragrance takes on a more definite oriental direction.

The analogous parts of a piece of music would be the bass notes, which are the lower frequencies of the music section. The bass section needs support as does the entire piece by a rhythm section, in this case, a drum set of many pieces. The drums themselves do not produce precise musical notes but provide the meter and feeling which support all the instruments.

The fragrance is now two thirds complete. The body and foundation are well established and blend harmoniously. The next chore is more difficult—the topnote. This will be the first impression of the fragrance. It will be the most identifiable portion. It is analogous to the melody of a piece of music. It is what most people can identify and remember. People do not remember or identify songs by their chord progressions or bass lines or drum tracks. They remember the melody. This is not solely due to the lyrical content either. It is by coincidence that the lyrical message and the melody are the same. No one has a problem recognising or humming the melody to an exclusively instrumental piece like Chuck Mangione's "*Feels So Good*" or, for the more classical minded, Beethoven's "*Fifth*."

The topnote of this fragrance would take many

directions. Perhaps a blend of citrus notes like lemon, lime, bergamot, tangerine or mandarin. While this could produce a traditional fragrance and one that would be quite acceptable, I think it more appropriate to use some different materials for the topnote. These will include the more volatile oils of the gums and resins that are employed in the base notes. The oils of olibanum and myrrh will naturally extend the foundation of the fragrance into the topnote, giving a continuity and identity to the overall composition. To this I would add a measure of Elemi oil which is itself quite bright and somewhat citrusy.

Now that we have all the sections complete, the base, the body, and the topnote, we now have a product that is ready to be finished. Many would say now the hard part begins. We have a good idea, a diamond in the rough. Our aim is to try and polish it to brilliance, not to grind it into unrecognisable powder. Nor should we smother it with so many changes and additions that the original idea becomes obscure. There can be many attempts to brighten the composition, to make it come alive, to add more interesting and new notes. On the musical side, perhaps some vocal harmonies, or some instrumental solo could be positioned nicely in the composition. After many hours and weeks and sometimes months of refinement we have a finished product that should at the very least please the author if no one else.



Dr. Kenneth Roth, President of Hydro Optics, graduated from the University of Pennsylvania in 1963 with an A.B. degree and went on to the New England College of Optometry for a B.S., O.D. degree in 1967. From 1967-1971 he practiced optometry, specializing in contact lenses.

In 1971, Dr. Roth founded Hydro Optics, Inc. The company was originally founded to develop and market soft contact lenses. During 1975, the company began to explore and develop non-optical, commercial applications of polymer systems. This development led to controlled release polymer systems, trade marked Volon.

The company presently develops and produces proprietary controlled release polymer products for the Lehn & Fink Division of Sterling Drug Co., Avon Products, Inc. and other marketing companies.

Dr. Roth will discuss the past, present, and future of environmental trends.

Left, Steve Manheimer, J. Manheimer, with Ed Malcolm, IFF

Right, Tom Pampinella, Mary Kay, with Mark Banwer, Belmay

Left, Jack Funesti, Y and F Consultants, with Jean Baer, Baromatic

Right, Claude Dir, Mane Fils, with John Adsit, Union Camp

Left, Cindy Sprague, Firmenich, with Claudia Van Essen, PPF

Right, Rick Smith, Bristol Myers, with George Hagstoz, Takasago

Left, Dave Anderson, Roure, with Mike Finnen, PFW

Right, Thomas Laridaen, PFW, with Bertrand Dor, PPF