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## HERB ALPERT

**MIDNIGHT SUN**, ALPERT's 32nd album, comes with a fresh perspective. The cool, sumptuously romantic jazz album features Alpert's trademark trumpet sound, embracing classic tunes from the pop and jazz worlds.

"It started with my need to hear songs that have broader melodies," Alpert explains. "I'm a radio scanner, and it's hard to find songs that have full melodies these days. I was thinking of the songs that stuck to me through the years, the melodies that kept surfacing, for whatever reason. Those are the songs we recorded."

Included on the wide-ranging yet cohesive album: "*All The Things You Are*," "*Someone to Watch Over Me*," the title cut "*Midnight Sun*"--a vintage Lionel Hampton jewel;-- an elaborately arranged "*Mona Lisa*," and a new version of the runaway Tijuana Brass hit from the mid-60's, "*A Taste of Honey*."

For many, **MIDNIGHT SUN** signals Alpert's long-awaited official foray into jazz, which has always played a role in his musical sensibility.

"The things I did with the Tijuana Brass had a jazz influence. I've approached everything I've done musically from a jazz point-of-view in terms of spontaneity, the freedom of expression--not really adhering to the notes as they appear on the paper but responding to what the spirit dictates."

One subtext to the **MIDNIGHT SUN** project is its dedication to the late great jazz saxophonist Stan Getz. Alpert befriended Getz in the last few years of his life, brought him to the A&M roster and produced Getz' celebrated 1990 album **APASIONADO**.

Alpert and Getz, along with composer/arranger Eddie del Barrio (who also worked on **APASIONADO**), recorded the song "*Friends*" in 1990 for a fund-raising album which never came to pass. The track, bolstered by Getz' signature sound, serves as a kind of homage to a friend. Alpert says that Getz "was like no other person I've ever met in my life. I truly miss him."

Alpert made his principal mark on the musical world as a distinctively tasteful trumpeter, but his understated vocal style--as heard on "*Someone to Watch Over Me*" and "*I've Grown Accustomed to Her Face*"--is also notable. In 1968, Herb had a number one hit as a vocalist with "*This Guy's In Love With You*" (also the first number one hit for the song writing team of Burt Bacharach and Hal David).

"*A Taste of Honey*," this time done in a subtly swinging jazz mode, brings Alpert full circle. Revisiting past material, Alpert notes, is "something I usually don't do, but I thought it would be unique in this case. '*A Taste of Honey*' was the pivotal record for the Tijuana Brass, the one that really broke through."

"I've always gotten pleasure from seeing how many ways I could play a song. If a song is good, if there is a quality melody there, it could be very flexible, and if there is also lyric to the melody I am very conscious of it as I am playing."

"*Mona Lisa*," featuring an adventurous orchestration by del Barrio, is another example of exploring new variations on a familiar theme. "It takes '*Mona Lisa*' on a whole trip," Alpert says. "It goes from this classical setting, tuxedo-with-a-tie-on and sitting-up-straight-in-your-chair approach, to a much looser, funkier--sillier at times--approach. Then it slips back into something a little looser, and wraps up again with that more serious atmosphere. I think it's a fun way to approach a song."

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Alpert has found in del Barrio, who led the Latin fusion band Caldera, a good friend and collaborator. “We come from different points of view, musically. He was born in Argentina and his parents ran a conservatory. He’s an extraordinary musician and wonderful to work with. He writes music very naturally.”

In preparing for **MIDNIGHT SUN**, Alpert presented a song list and discussed ideas with del Barrio, who then worked up orchestrations on synthesizers. “Once it felt right to me, he put it down on paper and we recorded it live – with real live humans,” Alpert laughs. “I take pride in that: there are humans on this album.”

The album features pianist Frank Collett, guitarists Larry Carlton, Barry Zweig, and John Pisano (a Tijuana Brass alumnus), drummer Harvey Mason, and the late and legendary jazz bassist Monty Budwig.

“For me, the key ingredient is to conjure up some images. If it doesn’t have an image attached, it just doesn’t send out any message. Music that touches sends out something, positive or negative.”

“The very first record I had as an artist that was successful was *The Lonely Bull*. ‘I received a lot of letters from people around the world who thanked me for taking the them on this vicarious trip to a bullfight--transporting people through the sound. I started thinking of music in terms of ‘what’s the image,’ where’s the movie, where’s the picture?’ It became a key ingredient for me.”

And the image for **MIDNIGHT SUN**?

“Well, it’s a sensual image. There’s romance attached to it. I think there’s a cozy feeling.”

Even after 32 albums, Alpert’s passion and curiosity for what propelled him into the music business in the first place continues to lure him and drive him.

“I’m a music junkie,” Alpert insists. “I’m a trumpet junkie. I love to play the trumpet. I wake up dreaming about things to practice, new things to work on. It’s an endless road for me, and I love it. There are countless songs, rhythms and combinations that keep surfacing for me, and I’ll always keep looking for them.”