

Berlin-Inside

in depth - in focus - informed - in English



Herb Alpert jazzed up from the man with a horn and a Tijuana Brass Band to funky tunes: "Doing what I do best"

A man and his sound: trumpeter Herb Alpert & His Tijuana Brass sold 13.7 million copies of a least two of five number one hits in the US in the 60s: "A Taste of Honey", "Lonely Bull" and "This Guys in Love" amongst them. For more than 30 years he has been at the forefront of Latin music, selling more than 72 million salsa-soaked albums. But his rise to fame might never have occurred had he not gone to a bullfight in Tijuana.

In the early 1960s, before his Tijuana Brass band became popular, Alpert worked for \$33 a week as a songwriter for a small record label, scoring a number of hits. His biggest success at that time was the pop standard "Wonderful World" written with Lou Adler and Sam Cooke, performed by Sam Cooke.

Not content to remain in the background, Alpert experimented musically and even attempted to kick-start his career as a singer under the pseudonym Dore Alpert. But it was his visit to a bullfight that became the catalyst for stardom.

"A bullfight I saw in Tijuana turned me on to trying to explore the feeling that I saw -- not the sound of what I was hearing but I was trying to somehow connect the spirit (of the music) with that afternoon," he recalls in an interview.

The result was "The Lonely Bull," which launched Alpert's Tijuana Brass in 1962 as one of the most successful bands of that era.

After producing with his trombonist, Jerry Moss, they founded the well recognised label "A&M" (Alpert & Moss) Records one of the world's leading independent record companies. Fine music was a result through the years: "Sergio Mendes & Brasil 66" with hits like "Mas Que Nada" and other South American favourites - now standards. "A&M's concept was not to look for the music that was on the air at the time. We were trying to find things that didn't quite fit but had a chance," Alpert says.

That concept attracted the likes of The Carpenters, Peter Frampton, Supertramp, Sting, Bryan Adams, Amy Grant and Janet Jackson, to name a few whom he led to stardom.

By 1990, Alpert and Moss sold the A&M label to Polygram but kept their Rondor Music publishing company. While terms of the sale were never publicly disclosed, Polygram was said to have paid about \$500 million for A&M.



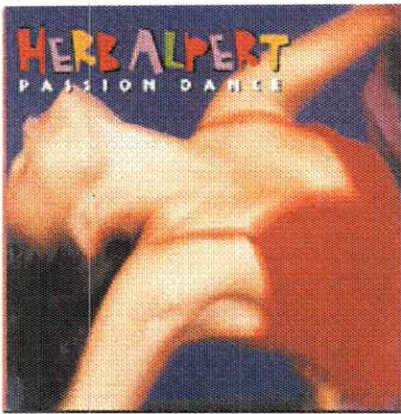
The sound of the 70s changed his style: "Rise" become the ultimate instrumental of this decade. In the 80s Herb Alpert decided to concentrate on painting. He settled in Hollywood and even opened with some fine and in a kind "wild" art a gallery in Berlin Mitte - once a while ago, playing free jazz on opening night. Nobody realised that on his side he presented his wife, the former lead singer from Sergio Mendes, a star of her own. "That's the way who I can express myself in the best

way in the moment", he explains and quotes his friend Stan Getz who assured him not to play a single note that he does not feel. Now his style has changed once again. With Jeff Lorber he has recorded a new CD last year, a fine mixture of jazzy ballads and soulful tunes driven by a great groove: "Second Wind.



While Alpert, 62, is an icon for fans of Latin music, he is of Russian-Jewish descent. In April, he was honoured with a lifetime achievement award at Billboard's Latin Music Awards.

"I don't want people to think I'm an imposter," Alpert told Berlin-Inside, adding that he never planned to be known as a Latin musician but was just playing what felt right to him.



With the release of his latest album, "Passion Dance" Alpert is once again doing what he does best: playing music that makes you want to dance. Passion dance is a perfect mixture of Latin, Soul and Funk.

"THE TIMING WAS RIGHT"

"The timing was right and we felt we had accomplished everything we wanted to, and it was so large that it lost its personal touch for us," Alpert said on the release of "Portrait in Music" - a fine compilation of



his favourite tunes.

"It started out in my garage with just the two of us, and all of a sudden we had four or five hundred people and I didn't know three quarters of them. We were not having as much fun at the end as we had in the beginning and the middle."

Alpert and Moss started up a new label in 1995, Almo Sounds. Already that label has broken its first internationally famous act, called Garbage.

When he is not recording music, Alpert puts much of his energy into the charity work of The Herb Alpert Foundation, which he said is his attempt to give something back to a world that gave him fame and fortune. The foundation makes contributions to education, the arts and the environment.

Alpert, who first picked up the trumpet at age 8, spoke passionately about the need for music appreciation classes in public schools.

"Unfortunately, they don't have those programs in the public school system anymore ... it's unfortunate that doesn't happen today because music needs to be a part of what is education."

Note:

The Berlin and Leipzig concerts have been **cancelled** on July 1st. **Poor Berlin! Poor state of Arts in this Capitol!!!**

Herb Alpert performed in Hamburg "Stadtspark", an open air concert. Playing "Rise" in the beginning and closing with "This Guys In Love" as encore. Between his programme was dominated by tracks from "Passion Dance" CD. Next Alpert performed at the Dutch North Sea Jazzfestival, a concert in Munich and Nuremberg, July 20. (db.)

[BACK](#)

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