

Herb Alpert and Lani Hall Alpert play The American Music Theater



Photo by Gerry Wersh Herb Alpert and Lani Hall Alpert have been making music together for 46 years. They will perform at the American Music Theatre in Lancaster Sunday, March 29.

By **Rob Nagy**, *The Mercury*

Music icon, philanthropist and Rock and Roll Hall of Famer Herb Alpert, who turns 80 later this month, is back in the spotlight with the release of his latest album, “Herb Alpert In The Mood.”

Offering a collection of more than a dozen classics masterfully interpreted and arranged by Alpert, the album features American standards “Chattanooga Choo Choo,” “Blue Moon,” “Begin The Beguine,” “Spanish Harlem,” “When Sunny Gets Blue” and “America The Beautiful.”

“Some songs pop up into my memory bank for whatever reason — I don’t know,” says Alpert from his Malibu, California home as he prepares to hit the road for more concerts. “When that happens, I see if I can pursue it and do it in a way that hasn’t been heard before. If it’s daunting, I pass on it. I’m super spontaneous. I try to do it as naturally as possible without fighting it. If something is fun for me to play, I think there will be a certain amount of people for whom it will be fun to listen to.”

“‘America the beautiful’ — I wanted to do that because this country is a melting pot for people coming from all different parts of the world,” added Alpert. “We used percussion instruments from the seven different continents, put them all together and created this ‘America The Beautiful.’” vertisement

This is a country where creativity can flourish. You can’t say that for many countries in this world.”

The new album features Alpert's wife of 46 years, Grammy Award winning vocalist Lani Hall Alpert. Lani is best remembered as the voice of the hit Sergio Mendez 60's group "Brasil '66." She sang the title song in the 1983 James Bond film "Never Say Never Again."

With nearly two-dozen albums to her credit, Lani won her first Grammy in 1986 for "Best Latin Pop Performance" for her album release "Es Facil Amar."

Herb Alpert rose to international prominence in the '60s with his group "Herb Alpert and the Tijuana Brass."

Responsible for recording the classic songs "A Taste of Honey," "Spanish Flea," "Whipped Cream," "Casino Royale" (movie theme), "Lollipops and Roses," "Tijuana Taxi" and "This Guy's in Love With You," to name just a few, Alpert is the recipient of nine Grammy Awards, 15 Gold records, and 14 Platinum records, with worldwide record sales surpassing 72 million.

"I like the way I play," Alpert modestly admits. "I remember in the '60s when I was doing the Tijuana Brass. I was doing the "Whipped Cream" album. I was sitting on top of the consul listening to a play back of "Taste of Honey." I said to myself, 'Man, this is good. I like it. I would buy this (laughs).' I think part of being a good artist is you have to underwrite what you're doing."

"Timing and good luck are important," says Alpert.

"It's hard to predict that. You have to be at the right place at the right time, and if you're prepared you can walk through the door. I think the mass appeal of all artists is honesty. I'm not trying to play to impress anyone. I'm trying to experience my own creativity and be as honest as I can in delivering those melodies. I was looking into my own way of expressing myself, and when I found it with that Tijuana Brass sound, it was a happy moment in my life."

Forming the immensely successful A&M Records with Jerry Moss in the early '60s, Lani came to the attention of Herb when the label signed "Brasil '66" in 1966. A relationship with Lani ensued, and the couple remains inseparable to this day.

"I'm crazy about her, says Herb. "She changed my life. Last December we celebrated our 41st wedding anniversary. We've been together 46 years. She is an extraordinary person. She has this honesty that is unrelenting. She is honest to a fault. She's smart. She's a great writer. She's a wonderful partner. She's a wonderful wife. She's a great compliment to what I'm doing."

"We have a very special relationship, and we know it," added Lani. "We're aware of it, and we don't take it for granted, that's for sure."

Lani recently released an audio book entitled "Emotional Memoirs & Short Stories," a collection of fiction and non-fiction stories from her days growing up in 1960s Chicago. As Lani narrates, the listener is taken on an emotionally charged journey. The book brings to life themes of adolescence, depression, relationships, sexuality and survival, enveloped with the music of Herb as well as other composers.

"It's not an autobiography," says Lani. "It's a book of ten short stories. When I was writing the book, I could hear music behind the scenes. I really thought I'd like to see what it felt like to

hear music behind the narration. I had some things that I remembered Herb had recorded. I was told about this website called 'Extreme Music,' where all kinds of composers put pieces of their work, and you can lease whatever you choose. So, I started listening to these pieces. With each piece that I heard, I could see a scene in my head of something somewhere in the book, and that's how I started piecing it together."

"I felt like the book was coming to life," added Lani. "It just felt so alive to me when I heard how the music made it feel. The music added an emotional landscape to the whole book. I'm really happy with how it turned out."

Hall's book is available for a limited time as a free download at www.lanihall.herbalpresents.com

Speaking of her talented husband, Lani Alpert says, "It's very inspiring for me to be constantly around someone that's that gifted and to see the amount of work he does. He's prolific with painting and sculpting and his music, recording, arranging and composing. It's contagious."

"I'm a lucky guy," says Herb Alpert. "I know I've been blessed. I know that I have a gift and I want to share that gift. I'm still having a good time playing and I know I can make a certain amount of people happy with the music and I'm going to continue doing that."

Herb Alpert and Lani Hall Alpert perform at the American Music Theatre, 2425 Lincoln Highway East, Lancaster, PA 17605, on Sunday March 29, 2015 at 7 p.m. Tickets can be purchased online at www.amtshows.com or by calling 800- 648-4102 or 717-397-7700.

To stay up to date with Herb Alpert visit www.herbalpresents.com.



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