

Herb Alpert and Lani Hall play the Sellersville Theater



Photo Chris-Adjani — submitted photo



Herb Alpert Photo Philipp Scholz Rittermann — submitted phot

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

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Synonymous with 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,” Alpert’s worldwide record sales exceed 75 million. His 9 Grammy Awards, 15 Gold records, 14 Platinum records, creation of a major record label and numerous philanthropic efforts have solidified Alpert’s standing as one of the most accomplished artists in modern music.

Securing his 9th Grammy earlier this year for “Best Pop Instrumental Album” for “Steppin’ Out,” Alpert, 79, has released a new gem titled “In The Mood.”

Accompanied by his wife Lani Hall, a Grammy Award winning vocalist, Alpert’s “In The Mood” offers an exceptional collection of standards and original compositions. “Chattanooga Choo Choo,” “Blue Moon,” “Zoo Train,” “Begin The Beguine,” “Don’t Cry,” “Let It Be Me,” “Spanish Harlem,” “5AM,” “Morning,” “When Sunny Gets Blue,” “Amy’s Tune,” “All I Have To Do Is Dream” (a tribute to the late Phil Everly), “Sneaky” and “America The Beautiful” are masterfully interpreted by Alpert.

“Making music is a natural thing for me to do,” said Alpert from his Malibu, Calif. home. “I love melodies from old standards, and I try to present them in a way that hasn’t been heard quite that way before. There’s no major continuity to the album. I really don’t work with a concept anymore. I used to do that. I’m kind of an eclectic guy. I hear a song that I like, and I hear a sound and a groove, and somebody comes up with an arrangement that touches me, and I feel like playing from the top of it – I’m in.”

“I think, if the melody is there, it’s fun for me to play,” added Alpert. “My whole premise is, if it’s fun for me to play, it might be fun for someone else to listen to. That is how I approach songs.”

A successful songwriter in the late 1950’s, Alpert embarked on his recording career in 1960 with RCA Records. Following a visit to Tijuana, Mexico, where he was exposed to mariachi music while attending a bullfight, Alpert, working out of his garage, experimented musically with what evolved into the innovative sounds of Herb Alpert and the Tijuana Brass.

“When I heard Les Paul stacking his guitar, I tried that with the trumpet and a couple of tape machines and out poured the Tijuana Brass sound. That opened the door for me to find my own identity. I think that is the key for any artist. You have to find your own voice.”

After partnering with recording industry executive Jerry Moss in 1962, the duo founded A&M Records. Herb Alpert and the Tijuana Brass’ debut album, “The Lonely Bull,” was soon released, and the title track quickly became a Top 10 hit.

With Herb Alpert’s Tijuana Brass continuous stream of hit records solidifying the label, Alpert and Moss spent the 60’s, 70’s and 80’s expanding their stable of artists. The Police, the Carpenters, Sergio Mendes and Brasil ’66, Janet Jackson, Cat Stevens and Liza Minelli, among many others, sold millions of records while on the A&M label. Alpert and Moss continued to manage the label into the early 90’s after selling to Polygram in 1987.

The commercial appeal of Herb Alpert and the Tijuana Brass on radio and vinyl soon found the group in demand to perform live. By 1965, they were one of music’s highest paid concert draws.

Within a few years, Herb Alpert and the Tijuana Brass had become a musical force. Outselling the Beatles in 1966, they placed 5 albums simultaneously on Billboard's Top 20 Pop Album charts, 4 of which made the Top 10 that spring, an accomplishment that has yet to be duplicated.

"Every time I found myself whistling or humming a song for no reason, just out of the blue, it was a melody that actually haunted me for some reason, and that was a song I tried to record," said Alpert. "Many of the songs I chose for the Tijuana Brass were songs that just popped into my head."

"I would ask these great writers that I got the opportunity to meet," recalls Alpert. "I said, 'Man, is there a song that you find yourself whistling, that you wrote, that didn't get to see the light of day, didn't get the right recording?' I got 'This Guy's In Love With You' from Bacharach because of that. When I asked that question of Hal David he gave me 'Close To You.'"

Herb Alpert and the Tijuana Brass' songs were now being heard beyond radio and records. TV commercials for everything from beer (Schlitz) to gasoline (Sunoco) to chewing gum (Clark Gum), TV game shows (the Dating Game) and films (Casino Royale) (1967) as well as appearances on TV variety shows exposed Alpert and the Tijuana Brass to a global audience.

Despite the popularity of the group, Alpert disbanded the Tijuana Brass in 1969. He spent the next three decades enjoying an accomplished solo career.

Alpert's biggest solo hit was his 1979 instrumental "Rise," which made it to number 1 and won a Grammy Award. This honor gave Alpert sole claim to being the only recording artist in music history to have a number 1 hit on the U.S. Billboard Hot 100 pop chart as both a vocalist for "This Guy's In Love With You" (1968) and an instrumentalist for "Rise" (1979).

In the early 80's Alpert and his wife Lani began their philanthropic efforts. They've donated more than \$100 million through the Herb Alpert Foundation to a variety of educational causes. Beneficiaries have included UCLA, where the Herb Alpert School of Music has been established, The California Institute of the Arts, PBS programming, the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz and various environmental groups.

"I've been successful beyond my dreams," reflects Alpert. "I wanted to do something that helped other people. I'm very high on education, the arts and keeping jazz alive. I try to be very selective with what I do through the Herb Alpert Foundation. One of my goals was to attract other people to do likewise. If I can do it, you can do it — like tag you're it. It feeds my spirit. I just felt it was the right thing to do."

Alpert and Moss' decades of success in the entertainment business have earned them a Grammy Trustees Award (1997), Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award (2007), a star on Hollywood's Walk of Fame and induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame (2006) as non-performer lifetime achievers for their work at A&M Records. In 2013, Alpert was the recipient of the 2012 National Medal of the Arts by President and Mrs. Obama.

"I try to make uplifting music," says Alpert, simplifying his accomplishments. "I don't think I go for it consciously. I think that's just the way I want to hear it myself" — a true understatement by a very grounded and talented soul.

IF YOU GO

Herb Alpert and Lani Hall perform at 8 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 15 the Sellersville Theatre located at 24 West Temple Ave., Sellersville. Tickets can be purchased by calling (215) 257-5808 or at www.st94.com.

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