

# HERB ALPERT

*Albums remastered and reissued, rarities revisited and released*

BY GILLIAN G. GAAR

Throughout 2005, Shout! Factory reissued Herb Alpert's classic albums of 1963-74. Alpert launched his career with the single "The Lonely Bull" in 1962, released on his own label, A&M Records, and went on to land 13 albums in the Top 40 in the '60s, including six #1s — especially impressive when you consider the albums were largely instrumental. His blend of Latin-tinged pop has remained popular today, and *Discoveries* talked with Alpert about the first batch of reissues.

**DISCOVERIES:** *Why did you start your own record company instead of placing "The Lonely Bull" with an existing label?*

Herb Alpert: Well, we had a deal with Dot Records, with a record called "Tell It To The Birds." They gave us \$500 for that master plus a percentage, and we put that into [the single] "The Lonely Bull." I think we were figuring on putting it out on our own label and then turning it over for distribution, but the record took off. Three or four days after it was released, we got a call from Australia — they already had the record! So we had a runaway smash and just decided to see how long we could hang onto it.

*It must've been a surprise for your first record to do so well.*

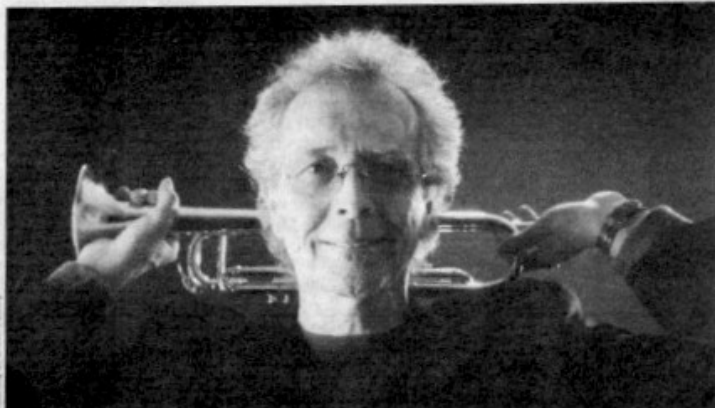
Well, it was a big shock. But we were able to handle it. Because we were adults!

*The Latin influence gave your music a different sound.*

That was my experience in Tijuana, watching bull fights; that was the start of the Tijuana Brass sound. But I have to give credit to Les Paul, because those records he did with his wife, where he overdubbed his guitar and his wife's voice several times — I was experimenting in my little studio at home with something very similar. I had two tape machines, and I'd go from one machine to the other, back and forth, until I ended up with lots of hiss, but I had a real interesting sound with the horn.

*They called your music "Ameriachi."*

I didn't coin that. Some people thought it was a combination of the two, but I never listened to Mariachi music. I was attracted by the sound that I heard in the stands at the bullfights in Tijuana, these fanfare trumpets that would introduce the different events. That got me. Plus the thousands of drunk people shouting



Herb Alpert demonstrates a reverse pull-up.



"Olé!" Those fanfares can give you goosebumps. I was in the USC band, and every time they played "Conquest," everybody in the stands would go wild. I think maybe the Tijuana Brass name led people in the direction of thinking it was Latin or Mariachi music, but I did songs that had nothing to do with that type of music.

*What are the challenges in putting out albums of instrumentals?*

The trick is picking good songs. I don't think it's any more complicated than that. I think you need a good song and you need a good arrangement. And I think the biggest ingredient of all is honesty. I mean, I didn't contrive that sound. That sound comes out of me; that's just the way I play.

*How did you choose the covers?*

Prior to A&M Records I had a group, and I used to play with other people's groups and I'd play many weddings and parties. I

was able to play just about any song I could hear on the trumpet, all the songs of the day that were popular. So for the albums I just chose songs that would come up in my memory, that I'd find myself whistling in the shower. And that's what happened with "Taste Of Honey." I was whistling it in the shower. When I'd find a song that I wanted to record, I was always intent in trying to find a way that it hadn't been heard before.

*Your second album [Herb Alpert's Tijuana Brass Vol. 2] isn't included in this reissue series.*

Right. Well, that sound didn't quite work. I was using a studio I wasn't quite happy with; I thought the sound was a little metallic, and it didn't sound like the other records, although it was a gold record. *The Lonely Bull* was the biggie and the second volume did OK, but the third volume was the one that really kicked it off with *South Of The Border* because it had "Mexican Shuffle"; that became very popular, and from that point on, it took hold. We might go back into that second volume at some point, but I'd like to remix it, into a little warmer sound.

*Why aren't there more bonus tracks?*

We talked about that, and we went back and forth on it. With *The Lonely Bull*, unfortunately, I went back to the studio where it was originally recorded, and they had lost the tapes. We did have master two-track tapes, and in the case of *The Lonely Bull* it was a mono tape, but other than that I had nothing to cull from. So that album had to be just the way it is. And it felt to me that those albums did so well that I didn't want to change the integrity of them. But as it turns out now, I was talked into seeing if I could find some bonus tracks that were recorded around the same period to include in the albums. I was told that the public kind of expects that to happen when you re-release a product. So that's what we're doing now. That's why there's two extra ones on *Whipped Cream*, and as we go along I'll see what I have in that particular period with the other CDs we're going to release.

*How did Lost Treasures come together?*

I wasn't looking to release another album, actually I was just interested in digitizing the tapes that we had. But as I went back into the catalog, I saw a bunch of unreleased masters that I didn't remember recording. So I started listening to these tapes, and I found that I was getting a good feeling from them. There's probably 28 or so tracks that I found, and we whittled it down to 22. There were some that were not completed: The basic tracks were there, but some of the trumpet parts were either not recorded or incomplete. So I completed them and felt like it would be a nice package. I'm not a guy that likes to live in the past, but I thought this would be a worthy product to put out there. Every now and then somebody recognizes me and asks that typical question, "Are you going to record again with the Tijuana Brass?" Well, here's that package. That might satisfy some people.

*Why do you think your music has lasted?*

I think the songs are good, the performances are good. None of those records were recorded in desperation; I had a good time doing them. And I always felt that if I had a good time playing them and listening to them, there would be a good time for an audience to listen to them as well. And I think they hold up over time because the songs are there. I think it's all about the songs. ●

# A few moments with the "Whipped Cream Lady," DOLORES ERICKSON

BY GILLIAN G. GAAR

**H**erb Alpert credits art director Peter Whorf with coming up with the striking cover image for *Whipped Cream & Other Delights*. "He took the 'whipped cream' idea and really took it out to the edge!" he told *Goldmine*. "I don't think people bought it exactly just for the cover, at least I hope not. But it stirred up a lot of interest. In fact when he first showed it to us, my partner, Jerry Moss and I, we were a little reluctant. We thought maybe it was a little pushing the envelope a little bit too much. That was in 1965; that was way racy then. Now it doesn't even qualify."



*What did you think of the final shot?*

I thought it was cute. But Peter sent me a couple of outtakes, and one of them had the cream where it slipped all the way down to the waist. It was shocking to get them; I thought, "How dare you!" I didn't want my husband to see them — I had a really conservative husband — so I took them to my girlfriend's. I

tore one of them up, and I kept one. We were different in the '60s. Nobody wanted to swear — it was very different. And I was asked to model in *Playboy*; I wouldn't do that in a million years! That was why it was so shocking when Peter sent those pictures. And he wanted to shock me — that's why he did it!

*When did you realize the cover was a classic?*

I never talked about it. You didn't talk about the album covers you did; being on

a cover of a magazine was more exciting. Every once in a while somebody would find out and ask me to sign an album and I'd be so freaked out; I'd say, "You are kidding!" Then when an article appeared in the *Seattle Times* [in 2000] it really took off. People were coming out of the woodwork for me to sign their albums. And it became more and more fun. It's kind of humbling too, because it's Herb Alpert's music, but everybody wants you to sign the album. And now all these collectors are saying it's the world's most famous album cover! ●

Dolores Erickson is the woman under all that cream. Now a painter (you can see her artwork and other album covers at [www.whippedcreamlady.com](http://www.whippedcreamlady.com)), she shared memories of the *Whipped Cream* session with *Discoveries*:

**DISCOVERIES:** *How did you get the Whipped Cream assignment?*

Dolores Erickson: I was in New York, working at Eileen Ford's [modeling agency]. Peter Whorf presented the idea to A&M, and they booked me and flew me out. I was booked to stay at the Wilshire Hotel or something, and I said, "No way, I want to hang out with my friends!" because I knew Herb. When I lived in L.A. we were part of a group that all ran around together.

*When did you find out what you would do?*

I found out the idea that day, when I walked into the studio.

*What did you think about the idea?*

It was just fun. Just another job. You don't think anything of it when you're on a shoot. I'd done loads of fashion things where it looked something like that, except I didn't have my finger in my mouth!

*How did they set it up?*

You know that fine cotton they put under Christmas trees? Peter put that around me. I had a bikini on underneath — everybody's always disappointed when I say that! It didn't really take that long to put the cream on. It was mostly shaving cream; I only had whipped cream on my finger and on my head. We shot all afternoon in his studio; that's typical.

**HERB ALPERT & THE TIJUANA BRASS**  
**The Lonely Bull**  
Shout! Factory (DK 32771)

**Lost Treasures**  
Shout! Factory (DK 32867)

**HERB ALPERT'S TIJUANA BRASS**  
**South Of The Border**  
Shout! Factory (DK 32772)

**Whipped Cream & Other Delights**  
Shout! Factory (DK 32868)  
reviewed by Gillian G. Gaar

Herb Alpert's '60s albums might seem prone to being lumped in with the lounge music of the '50s that was rediscovered during the "space age bachelor pad" music craze of some years back. But in fact Alpert's music isn't nearly as kitschy (though perhaps his pseudo-Mexican image with the Tijuana Brass was), and it holds up as a fine example of how catchy and memorable instrumentals can be.

The first four albums released in what's billed as the *Herb Alpert Signature Series* cover Alpert's early '60s successes, along with an album of rarities. Alpert's first album was born from the success of its title track: "The Lonely Bull" single reached #6 in 1962, so an album was quickly recorded as a follow-up (it reached #10). The title track opens the album and sets the Latin mood with the type of trumpet fanfare that first inspired the tune (and which Alpert heard while attending bullfights in Tijuana). The fanfare then segues into a melody that conjures up a lazy stroll through the Mexican streets on a warm afternoon, with Alpert's trumpet handling the melody, along with occasional flourishes from other instruments (in this case the guitar) and crooning backing vocals. The rest of the album outlines the basic approach Alpert would take with the Tijuana Brass (in this case, a group

of session musicians), a mix of original material and imaginatively arranged covers. Standouts include the melancholy "El Lobo" and brighter material such as "Desafinado," "Struttin' With Maria" and especially the jaunty "Acapulco 1922."

*Herb Alpert's Tijuana Brass, Volume 2* didn't hit the Top 40 on its initial release in 1963, but Alpert bounced back with 1964's *South Of The Border*, which reached #6. The covers are much better on this release, from the jazzy take on "The Girl From Ipanema" to Alpert's nicely deadpan vocal on "Hello Dolly!" to a brisk version of The Beatles' "All My Loving." "Mexican Shuffle" hit the mainstream when it was used in a chewing gum commercial. It must've been a tough call: the upbeat material on *Border* ("Up Cherry Street," "Salud, Amor Y Dinero," "Numero Cinco") all have the same breezy, finger-snapping quality. And the quieter numbers ("Angelito," "Adios, Mi Corazon") feature increasingly expressive trumpet work from Alpert.

1965 was a banner year for Alpert, for he had his first #1 with *Whipped Cream & Other Delights*. The album gets off to an exhilarating start with his inventive cover of "A Taste Of Honey," with its pulsating drums, sprightly trumpet line and unexpected changes of tempo (a Top 10 hit, the song also won three Grammy Awards). Sol Lake (who got the ball rolling as the composer of "The Lonely Bull") contributes his usual quota of strong material, including "Green Peppers" and the exciting "Bittersweet Samba" (heightened by a great change of key halfway through). "Whipped Cream" found a home as theme music on *The Dating Game*, and again, it's easy to imagine "Butterball" or "Lollipops And Roses" taking its place. The Latin influence isn't as prevalent here, except on "Peanuts"; the down 'n' dirty take on "Love Potion #9" is another highlight. This

is the first album in the series to have bonus tracks, in this case the outtakes "Rosemary" and "Blueberry Park," both slower, emotive numbers, though the latter lacks a bit of life; it's easy to see (or hear) why it wasn't used.

*Lost Treasures* is a collection of rare and previously unreleased material, though regrettably little information is given to distinguish which is which. It's great fun listening to Alpert's version (with vocal!) of "(They Long To Be) Close To You"; Alpert's producer convinced him it didn't quite work, and Alpert passed it on to The Carpenters. There are some expected cover choices (middle-of-the-fare such as "Raindrops Keep Falling On My Head" and "Killing Me Softly") fit the Tijuana Brass aesthetic nicely, but there are also more unusual picks including Harry Nilsson and Ian Freebairn-Smith's "Wailing Of The Willow" or Cat Stevens' "Whistlestar" (which starts quietly but builds steadily throughout) that show Alpert considered a range of material in choosing songs to record. Some tracks, such as "Happy Hour," were initially incomplete and feature newly recorded trumpet parts. In all, 22 tracks were "rescued," making this, as Alpert said, the closest thing you'll get to a new Tijuana Brass album.

The albums have all been remastered, and the sound quality is excellent. Each has a booklet of liner notes, although there's quite a bit of overlap in the copy between the four. Illustrations include previously unseen photos and artwork/liner notes from the original albums; *Whipped Cream* also comes with a small poster of the album cover. Although these albums have been previously released on CD, these versions are superior due to their overall presentation, all of which makes it a joy to rediscover the timeless appeal of Alpert's music.