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HERB ALPERT

If there is a formula for success in the record industry during these recessionary times, Herb Alpert may well have found it.

Ironically, Alpert, who enjoyed one of his biggest hits ever with "Rise," says "You don't get hit records from trying to be clever." Observes Alpert, "I just try and express myself the best I can."

"I've never intentionally tried to make a hit record," he informed, "just a good record. I think quality always wins out, it seems to be the common denominator for success."

"Rise" did everything to substantiate Alpert's theory by becoming his first #1 pop record in over a decade. The single version of "Rise," and the album were both certified platinum for a million plus sales, adding to Alpert's career tally of over 60 million records sold world-wide.

Alpert's rejuvenated popularity on pop radio stations, and a new and strongly supportive Black listening audience led to a banner year which was capped by his winning the Grammy Award for "Best Pop Instrumental Performance." He also became the first music personality to be inducted into the recently established Hollywood Hall of Fame.

"'Rise' gave me renewed vigor and helped to restore my confidence with respect to my music," reflected Alpert. "I've always had an adventurous nature, and I think my latest album, 'Beyond,' is an outward expression of that musical adventure."

Alpert's evolution as one of contemporary music's premier producer/musicians is convincingly evident on "Beyond." Using his trumpet as the focal point, "Beyond" is underscored by melodic potency, futuristic instrumentation, and complete digital recording techniques.

Alpert, the artist, says he purposely recorded "Beyond" more from a producer's angle. "I wanted to utilize all the producing techniques I've learned through the years, and be more responsive to sound and textures."

"Beyond," the title track, is a pulsating instrumental that meshes an unrelenting rhythmic force with futuristic and emotional brass instrumentation.

Alpert has tapped the contemporary congestion and frustration of urban life in the '80's, and used it as a metropolis setting; but the exuberance and potency of his music symbolically stresses a sense of hope and defiance; for people to rise beyond our society's seemingly incurable afflictions. In layman's terms, Alpert mused, "You've got to keep on truckin'."

While Alpert lends credence that his music does infer some social commentary, he emphasized that he is more concerned with building the right musical environment in the studio.

"I go in the studio not always sure of what I want, but I know what I don't want," says Alpert. "I like to set up the best environment for musicians to respond to, leaving a lot of freedom for them to express themselves through me, while still allowing them to exercise their own musical integrity."

"Beyond" features some highly touted musicians, including bassist, Abraham Laboriel; drummers, Steve Gadd and Manolo Badrena; guitarist, Tim May; Ernie Watts on tenor sax; Johnny "Guitar" Watson, and others. The album was co-produced by Randy Badazz (who also penned "Rise") and Andy Armer, (co-author of "Rise") who also performs stellar electric piano and synthesizer throughout the album.

Utilizing the 3-M 32 track digital console, "Beyond" is Alpert's second complete digital recording. "The digital process gives the full overtones of each sound, so the sound quality is definitely upgraded," explains Alpert. "I usually hear the melody first, and try to present it in the right way. I never have forfeited feeling and emotion for sound, but now I'm inclined to think that it's possible to capture both."



B I C G R A P H Y

Alpert glides along the scales of emotion boldly, invoking frenzy and urgency on tracks like "Beyond," and "The Factory," coupled with pulsating up-tempo jazz tunes like, "Kamali," "Reach For The Stars," and "Red Hot," and soft instrumental ballads like "Interlude (for Erica)."

It's the lack of that emotion and adventure that is shackling many artists today, according to Alpert. "There are lots of frightened artists today who are trying to respond to trends. They're too cautious, and they don't have the fresh air to express themselves. Many record companies analyze and use demographics to make music, but a lot of original ideas don't come out that way."

Through the seventies, Alpert has worn three hats, one as artist, a second as producer, and a third as Vice-Chairman of A&M. All which have given him invaluable insight and understanding about the complexities of the music business.

It began in 1962, when he and Jerry Moss started a "little" record company whose first offices were a garage in West Hollywood. In August of 1964, they released "The Lonely Bull." It sold over 700,000 copies and A&M Records was suddenly more than a hopeful logo. In the next decade and a half, it grew to become the world's largest independent record company. In its first years, the growth of the company paralleled the tremendous success of the Tijuana Brass. Alpert racked up an impressive string of hit singles and albums and in April of 1966 occupied #1, #3, #6, #14, and #17 on the national album charts, a landmark achievement of five albums in the Top Twenty that has never been equaled.

A native of Los Angeles, Alpert, son of a Russian immigrant father and a Rumanian mother, began playing the horn when he was eight. After a stint in the Army, he hustled as a songwriter in the late fifties with his then partner, an insurance salesman named Lou Adler. Jerry Moss was the top independent promotion man in the country when he and Alpert first met in the early sixties. The company they formed was based on Alpert's philosophy toward the record industry. "If I ever have a record company," he remembers saying, "I would definitely give more importance to the artist, because it all centers around the artist."

Most recently, he recorded two albums with the reformed Tijuana Brass, "You Smile—The Song Begins," and "Coney Island," a solo album, "Just You And Me," and two albums with Hugh Masekela, "Herb Alpert And Hugh Masekela," and "Main Event." As a producer, he's been involved with Michel Colombier, Letta Mbulu, Gato Barbieri and Lani Hall. His responsibilities at A&M, he says, consist of "not answering a lot of memos" but his daily presence is a gentle reminder of the company's "artist-oriented" roots.

A&M Records, housed where Charlie Chaplin once filmed his movies, sees a lot of Herb Alpert these days.

"In my heart, if I never had another hit record it would still be beautiful," says Alpert of "Rise," "but it was a starting point for me to expose my music again, and I'm having fun."

