



HERB ALPERT & COLORS

Like a diamond forever in search of a brighter, more contemporary setting, Herb Alpert's horn is always reaching toward the cutting edge of what's hip, fresh and grooving. On Herb Alpert & Colors, his third release for Almo Sounds, the legendary trumpeter brings his classic style to the cusp of the new millennium with the same vibrancy and passion that characterizes all of his artistic, creative and philanthropic endeavors over the past four decades. Working with and vibing off of the unique trip-hop rhythmic inspirations of co-producers Will Calhoun and Doug Wimbish, Alpert creates a picture perfect mood album, melodic and coolly funky, atmospheric and hypnotic, irresistibly soulful and seductive.

As with all of the music that Alpert's created over the years—from his 60's heyday with The Tijuana Brass through his late 70's hit "Rise" and on into his hip-hop, jazz and Latin endeavors in the 90's - Herb Alpert & Colors is an honest portrayal of where his heart is at this moment of his life. Rather than give in to the fleeting trends of any given era, he's staked his multi-faceted career on trusting his instincts and responding to musical ideas that keep his creativity flowing.

Herb Alpert & Colors grew naturally out of the same basic philosophy of "just capturing what feels good" with those he chooses to work with. Alpert enjoyed the music of Calhoun and Wimbish's band Jungle Funk and when he arrived at Calhoun's house in the Bronx to discuss a possible collaboration, he found Wimbish there and the three started jamming spontaneously. "I immediately liked the feeling with them, and the way we sparked each other," says Alpert. "My lifelong love for expressionist painting and sculpting is one of the reasons I called this project 'Colors,' in fact. I like to think that as my musical palette has grown along with my pursuit of other artistic expressions, and just as there are primary colors and hues in between on a canvas, I enjoy exploring the unique harmonic colors in music."

He adds that the true excitement of the album came from leaving themselves open to new ideas even when those notions hit them from out of the blue while they were working on something else. The bluesy, shuffling trance-like cover of Burt Bacharach's classic "The Look of Love," for instance, was completely unplanned. Alpert recalls, "I was working on the right arrangement of Marvin Gaye's 'I Want You,' and suddenly, almost subconsciously, I began to segue into the other song, ad-libbing over the groove that was going on. Doug jumped out of his chair and exclaimed, 'Man, that's phat!' and I knew we had something to pursue."

"I was completely fascinated watching Doug create so many exotic sounds with his guitar rack, and on many cuts my trumpet is going through his rack. It's a different type of texturing for the horn than I've ever done before."

While Wimbish and Calhoun's impressive array of electronic artillery forms the rhythmic foundation and cool ambience of the album, other colors are fleshed out by some of contemporary music's most acclaimed studio talent: keyboardist/organist Bernie Worrell, guitarist Hector Periera, percussionist Paulinho da Costa, Eddie del Barrio (who contributes strings and vocal samples), keyboardist Greg Smith, and Jorge "Coco" Trivisonno, who plays the bandoneon on the hypno-blues meets Latin jazz dance adventure "Libertango."

Alpert's wife Lani Hall sampled voices and sings sultry lead vocal on "The Look of Love," and Bernard Fowler croons beautifully in Spanish on the throbbing, heavily techno-percussive "Dorita."

Tracks written by Alpert with Calhoun and Wimbish include the joyous "Think About It," which eases from a romantic folksy blues atmosphere into a fiery jam session featuring some of Alpert's most inventive improvisations ever on both trumpet and flugelhorn; the sensuous hip-hoppy, retro-soul shuffle "Love At First Glance," and the smoky and haunting, Miles Davis-like "Slow Train," which finds Alpert scatting softly along with his muted trumpet reflections over a trance-inducing ambience. Written by Greg Smith, the title track "Colors" paints mostly a dark and mysterious nighttime scene with its artful blend of acoustic jazz and thick industrial percussion. Newfangled twists on cover tunes include a simmering take on the Michael Jackson-popularized "The Lady in My Life," a dreamy and intimate "I Want You" (written by Leon Ware, made famous by Marvin Gaye) and a polyrhythmic approach to Alpert's own mid-80s hit "Magic Man," featuring a gently floating vibe occasionally punctuated by thick, marching percussion.

Alpert attributes his amazing ability to thrive artistically to his lifelong love for the horn. "Making records is a passion for me," he emphasizes. "I love to do them, and there's always a bit of a letdown when the process is over. I keep playing because of a personal need. When I go for months without going into the studio, my energy level starts waning. I just can't imagine my world without making music."

In all, Alpert and the TJB recorded 14 platinum albums, six of which earned Grammy nominations. The group had 14 Top 40 hits, and Alpert, under his own name, hit #1 with his tender vocal on Bacharach/David classic "This Guy's In Love With You," in 1968. Eleven years later, when the Grammy winning "Rise" hit #1, Alpert became the only artist in pop history to jump to the top of the charts as both a vocalist and instrumentalist. In all, Alpert has received seven Grammys, including Record of the Year in 1966.

During the 60s and 70s, Alpert was a top album producer as well, helming four bestselling projects for Sergio Mendes & Brasil '66 as well as famed saxman Gato Barbieri's Caliente!, which spawned the classic rendition of "Europa." Another key collaboration in the 70s for Alpert were the two albums he recorded with South African flugelhorn master Hugh Masekela. Alpert's wife Lani Hall began her career as lead singer with Brasil '66 and recently brought her fondness for Brazil into the modern age with last year's magnificent, Windham Hill Jazz released Brasil Nativo.

Just as he has over the past thirty years, Alpert spends most of his non-recording related creative time painting (every day) and sculpting (twice a week). While most people tend to focus on his musical endeavors, he's emerged as a talented and highly prolific expressionist painter with international exhibitions throughout the 90s in Belgium, Germany, New York, Chicago, Florida and Los Angeles. Like his music, Alpert's works invoke a sense of rhythm and improvisational freedom. "Painting, sculpting, music, dancing...all art is similar in that it has the ability to go straight to one's heart," he says. "It's all about communication, someone sending a message out there and many others receiving something spiritual from it. Artistic expression is, to me, one of the wonders of life itself."

That commitment to the arts has led Alpert to co-produce a handful of Broadway plays, including the Tony Award and Pulitzer Prize winning Angels in America, Jelly's Last Jam, Arthur Miller's Broken Glass and August Wilson's Seven Guitars. Even more precious to Alpert's philanthropic heart, however is the Herb Alpert Foundation, which assists educational, arts and environmental programs dedicated to the training of young people, helping them discover their own potential and vibrant energy.

"I think it's important to encourage young people to pursue the arts, as a possible professional path for some, as a basic discipline for others," Alpert says. "I believe a commitment to fostering the arts in young people, helping them learn, appreciate and nurture their natural gifts, is one of our only hopes to cure the

greed and insensitivity that permeates our society these days. It's a pleasure to give back to the world in this way."

Of all the great blessings of Alpert's life, he counts his relationship with his three children and his wife Lani Hall most important. "She is just an amazing woman, and I'm very fortunate to have my family as the foundation of all of my artistic pursuits. Musically, though, I have to come back to the horn. I'm just hooked, and whatever the future holds, I have no doubt, I'll still be playing. That's the thing that gives me the most pleasure."

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