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UCLA Library Acquires A&M Records Collection

(Note to Editors: Digital images are available upon request.)

The UCLA Library has acquired the A&M Records Collection, donated by company co-founders Herb Alpert and Jerry Moss. Founded in 1962 in Los Angeles, A&M became America's largest independent record company. The collection includes sound recordings, manuscript musical arrangements, photographs, correspondence, promotional materials, posters, gold albums, awards, books and ephemera from the company's founding in 1962 through its sale to Polygram in 1989.

"A&M is a legendary company, and we are deeply honored that Herb and Jerry have chosen to give this collection to the UCLA Library," said University Librarian Gary E. Strong. "These materials provide a unique insight into the Southern California music scene and will form an invaluable resource for students and scholars researching the creation and business of popular music."

The materials are housed in the Music Library Special Collections. Alpert and Moss have also given substantial funds for organizing and preserving the collection, digitizing portions of it and creating an online finding aid, or inventory. In addition, the Library's Oral History Program plans to conduct interviews with Alpert and Moss as part of its series on popular music in Los Angeles.

"As music scholarship broadens its scope to include popular music of the twentieth century, collections like these represent music history in the making. Alpert and Moss were at the center of important trends in music and entertainment, as well as pivotal figures on the Los Angeles music scene during a period of explosive growth," stated Robert Fink, associate professor in the Department of Musicology. "In the old days a musicologist might spend years studying handwritten pay records, hoping for an insight into the way things worked at a provincial German court chapel; if we ever want to have the same level of understanding about the music-making going on right under our noses, this is the place to start."

Both men were born in 1935, Alpert in Los Angeles and Moss in New York. The two met in the early 1960s, when Alpert was writing and recording songs and Moss was an independent record promoter.

Their social acquaintance quickly became a partnership when in 1962 the two formed Carnival Records, based in Alpert's garage. With contributions of \$100 from each man, the

company released the single “Tell It to the Birds.” After discovering later that year that the Carnival name was already in use, Alpert and Moss created the company’s new name from the initials of their last names.

A&M Records’ first release, the single “The Lonely Bull” by Herb Alpert and the Tijuana Brass, came out in August 1962. It reached number six on the Billboard charts and sold some 700,000 copies, setting the tone for the band’s and the company’s success.

Other best-selling Tijuana Brass albums followed, including “Whipped Cream and Other Delights” and “What Now My Love.” Led by the success of the Tijuana Brass, A&M revenue topped \$50 million by 1968; by the end of the decade the group had sold some 45 million albums and had been outsold only by the Beatles and Elvis Presley.

From its founding A&M worked with recording artists other than the Tijuana Brass, and its roster featured many of the top pop and rock acts from the 1960s, ‘70s, and ‘80s. Among those represented in the collection are Bryan Adams, Burt Bacharach, the Baja Marimba Band, the Captain and Tennille, the Carpenters, Cheech and Chong, Joe Cocker, Peter Frampton, Lani Hall, Janet Jackson, Joe Jackson, Sergio Mendes and Brasil ’66, the Neville Brothers, Jeffrey Osborne, the Police, Squeeze, Cat Stevens, Sting, Styx, Supertramp and the Tubes.

Another focus of the company’s attention was on jazz. Represented in the collection are a number of jazz composers and performers, including Chet Baker, Gato Barbieri, Stan Getz, Antonio Carlos Jobim, Quincy Jones and Paul Winter.

Even the company’s home was legendary. In 1966 Alpert and Moss purchased the former Charlie Chaplin Studios, built by Chaplin in 1917, from CBS. Named as a historic cultural monument by the Los Angeles Cultural Heritage Board in 1969, the complex still contains the sound stage where Chaplin made all of his classic silent films. The collection includes photos, drawings, and articles related to the facility.

Selections from the collection have been digitized and can be viewed online at <http://www.library.ucla.edu/amrecords>

The Music Library’s Special Collections include rare books and scores, manuscripts, archives and the Archive of Popular American Music. Important holdings include 18th-century opera scores and librettos, collections of ballads and songs of the British Isles, film and television music archives and music manuscripts and archives of Southern California composers including the Ernst Toch Archive and the Eric Zeisl Archive.

The A&M Collection complements the library’s extensive holdings documenting the history of music and the music industry in Southern California. These include jazz collections, such as those that document the Central Avenue jazz scene; popular music archives such as those of Jimmy Van Heusen, Jimmy Durante and Carole Burnett; and film and television music collections such as those of Henry Mancini, Alex North and CBS Inc.