

## B I O G R A P H Y

### HERB ALPERT and LANI HALL *I FEEL YOU*

*"The running theme of artists making music worth listening to is honesty."*  
-- Herb Alpert

*I Feel You*, Herb Alpert and Lani Hall's newest release is packed with innovative arrangements and skilled improvisations that make old songs new and bring new songs to their audience. "I think originality is the whole key," says Alpert. "The thrill for us has always been to find our own little niche. When we find songs that we like, we try to do them in a way that puts our own spin on them. And we were so fortunate to find the versatile and creative musicians in our band, Michael Shapiro (drums), Bill Cantos (keyboards) and Hussain Jiffry (bass), to work with and fill this music with our personal touch."

The song collection is vast but what is most striking about *I Feel You* is the natural grace with which Herb and Lani blend their vocal and instrumental talents. Hall has said, "Each song is like a flower opening up, exposing new color and fragrance, strength and fragility."

"I think a good melody is a good melody," comments Alpert. "Lani and I are always having a friendly feud about this. I think the key is a great melody. Naturally she thinks it's an equally expressive lyric." Responds Lani, "It's true. I really look for wonderful words to sing, but I admit ideally you have to have the melody. In great songs they complete one another." The outcome of their complementary philosophy is 14 songs that marry the essence of their shared gifts.

The Chicago-born Hall, who's especially known for her emotional vocal interpretations, started her professional career as the original lead singer with Sergio Mendes and Brasil '66. She helped propel the group to international stardom with her distinctive vocals on the infectious Brazilian tune "Mas Que Nada." It was in 1966, while singing with the group in an audition for A & M Records, that she met Alpert. They were married in 1973 and since then their lives and musical gifts have mingled. Hall has enjoyed a distinguished solo career, having recorded some 14 solo albums (variously in English, Portuguese and Spanish.) In 1983, she sang the title song of the James Bond movie, *Never Say Never Again*, starring Sean Connery, and won a Grammy for Best Latin Pop Performance for her album *Es Facil Amar* in 1986. She also has credits as a lyricist, producer, arranger, writer and editor.

"I am an interpreter," Lani explains. "The singers that have influenced me the most are jazz singers like June Christy, Anita O'Day, Carmen McRae, Nancy Wilson, Lambert, Hendricks and Ross, and pop performers like Frank Sinatra, Judy Garland and Barbra Streisand. All of them were always engaging to watch and had a sense of drama about them, probably because some were also actors. They were always expressive and had the ability to pull you into a song and make it feel real."

Alpert is a legend in the music business and the co-founder of A & M Records, one of the most successful independent record labels in history. In the decades before Alpert and partner Jerry Moss sold A&M in 1990, he significantly influenced and/or produced a diverse roster of talent, including Janet Jackson, Gato Barbieri, George Benson, Chuck Mangione, Sergio Mendes & Brasil '66, Milton Nascimento, Stan Getz, Gerry Mulligan, Chet Baker, The Carpenters, The Police, Joe Cocker, Sheryl Crow, Peter Frampton and scores of others.

Of Alpert's performing style, the late Miles Davis once remarked, "You don't have to hear but three notes before you know it is Herb Alpert." For his part, Herb explains, "There is a certain satisfaction and energy that comes from playing the horn -- a feeling that comes when I am really in my element. I am passionate about what I am doing. I am just playing what comes out. I try to stay conscious of things that are happening in the spontaneity of the moment."

The principle of being authentically in the moment extends to his other modes of expression as well. Alpert is a prolific painter, sculptor, philanthropist and theatrical producer. He helped bring to Broadway Tony Kushner's Pulitzer prize-winning "Angels in America," as well as plays by Arthur Miller, David Mamet, August Wilson and others. "It's the same with any creative form of self expression," Herb observes. "If it isn't feeling good I feel all stuffed up and not satisfied with it. But when it resolves itself, BANG! I get that good feeling again."

The first song you hear on *I Feel You* is Van Morrison's come-hither classic, "Moondance." Herb and Lani make the song their own, with cool vocals expertly mixed with exotic, Middle Eastern rhythms -- seductively colored by Herb's expressive, inimitable horn and a hypnotic bass groove by Hussain Jiffry.

"The musical communication that happens spontaneously between us is very romantic," says Lani. "The music is emotional and sensual." A great example of that is her free vocals in duet with Herb's horn for a smooth, breezy ride on "Cast Your Fate to the Wind," originally written and made famous by jazz pianist Vince Guaraldi.

"When Herb and I decided to put a group together and go on the road we knew that Brazilian music was something that would be a part of it," Lani recalls. Here the Brazilian feeling is captured in the meditative, soulful "Club Esquina" ["Clube De Esquina"] by Milton Nascimento, and Lani's lush vocal leading to Herb's jazzy improvisations on the sensuous "Viola" ["Viola Fora De Moda"] by Edu Lobo. *I Feel You* also features a stirring rendition of the classic, mesmerizing "Berimbau" by Baden Powell, which ends in an exciting, climactic release with a haunting chorus sung by the entire band.

Also in the collection are two Beatles songs that feature a sometimes dissonant and definitely passionate rendition of Lennon & McCartney's "Blackbird," and an intense version of George Harrison's memorable "Here Comes the Sun." In this interpretation, Lani provides an emotional weather report for Herb's horn, spreading warmth throughout a track that's held together by the relentless tension of the drums expertly played by Michael Shapiro. As Lani explains, "I can see music in pictures when I am singing, and that helps me set the tone for each song."

The album is also a reminder that while Herb is best known for his horn virtuosity, he can also lay down an enticing vocal. He did that memorably with Burt Bacharach's tune "This Guy's In Love With You" in 1968, which was a global smash. Now Herb takes the tune "Something Cool," a song originally done by June Christy in 1954, and makes it a man's wistful lament. Lani balances Herb's "cool" number with a sizzling cover of "Fever," and the temperature rises.

*I Feel You* also showcases Herb's vocal in an up-tempo version of "There Will Never Be Another You." As Lani notes, "Herb's horn has always had such character, warmth and expression, but I don't think people have ever heard him sound this way before."

Another echo from the rich musical canon is a re-imagined version of "Call Me," [written by Tony Hatch] which was a hit record, produced by Herb, for Chris Montez in 1965. Herb and Lani's interpretation is a dreamy, romantic piece that is sweet and flirtatious from both a vocal and instrumental point of view. As listeners, we feel like we are eavesdropping on an intimate encounter.

For "Till There Was You," which was written by Meredith Wilson for the Broadway hit "The Music Man," Herb plays an unusual instrumental rendition with a sense of humor and has fun, while bass player, Hussain Jiffry, maneuvers his way in and out of the catchy track. The album's title cut, "I Feel You" is the work of keyboardist/songwriter Bill Cantos, whose lyrics are imbued with longing vocals by Lani that seem to follow Herb's trumpet down a rainy, London cobblestone street.

Those familiar with Herb Alpert and the Tijuana Brass will no doubt recognize one of their greatest hits, "What Now My Love." Although the arrangement is quite different and has a world music feel, Herb approaches this song with simplicity and emotional depth while painting a musical picture for the listener to fill in.

Herb Alpert and Lani Hall have found new and thrilling emotional possibilities on their latest collection. Their natural grace together blends their vocal and instrumental gifts in a magical pairing. Their first "studio" CD in nearly a decade, *I Feel You*, shows that this artistic couple continues to creatively breathe new life into their signature sound.