The Chipmunks Encyclopedia Article

The Chipmunks

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The Chipmunks

The Chipmunks—Alvin, Simon, and Theodore—were the only cartoon rodents to sell millions of records and star in their own television series. The voices of all three chipmunks, as well as the part of David Seville, were performed by actor/musician Ross Bagdasarian (1919-1972). As Seville, Bagdasarian had enjoyed a #1 hit with "Witch Doctor" in early 1958; later that year he released "The Chipmunk Song" ("Christmas Don't Be Late") in time for the Christmas season, and sold over four million singles in two months. The Chipmunks, with their high warbling harmonies, churned out a half dozen records in the late 1950s and early 1960s. All of Bagdasarian's records were on the Liberty label, and the chipmunks were named for three of Liberty's production executives.

The Chipmunks' popularity led to a primetime cartoon series (*The Alvin Show*) on CBS television during the 1961-62 season. In 1983, Ross Bagdasarian, Jr., revived the act with a second successful cartoon series, *Alvin and the Chipmunks*, which aired on NBC from 1983 to 1990, and a new album, *Chipmunk Punk.*

Further Reading:

Brooks, Tim, and Earle Marsh. *The Complete Directory to Prime Time Network TV Shows.* 5th edition. New York, Ballantine Books, 1992.

"Cartoon-O-Rama Presents: The Alvin Show." http://members.aol.com/PaulEC1/alvin.html. February 1999.

Whitburn, Joel. *The Billboard Book of Top 40 Hits.* 6th edition. New York, Billboard Books, 1996.