




Pharrell Williams



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 <p>Pharrell Williams performing with N.E.R.D in Pori Jazz 2010.</p>	
Background information	
Also known as	Pharrell, Sk8brd
Born	April 5, 1973
Origin	Virginia Beach, Virginia, U.S.
Genres	Hip hop, R&B, funk
Occupations	Producer, musician, singer-songwriter, rapper, fashion designer
Instruments	Vocals, keyboards, guitar, drums
Years active	1992–present
Labels	Star Trak, Interscope, i am OTHER, Columbia
Associated acts	Child Rebel Soldier, The Neptunes, N.E.R.D, Clipse, Common, Jay-Z, Mac Miller, Mika, Snoop Dogg, T.I., Daft Punk
Website	pharrellwilliams.com ^[1]

Pharrell Williams (born April 5, 1973), also known simply as **Pharrell** (/fəˈreɪl/), is an American singer-songwriter, rapper, record producer, musician, and fashion designer. Williams and Chad Hugo make up the record production duo The Neptunes, producing soul, hip hop and R&B music. He is also the lead vocalist and drummer of rock, funk, and hip hop band N.E.R.D, which he formed with Hugo and childhood friend Shay Haley. He released his first single "Frontin'" in 2003 and followed up with his debut solo album *In My Mind* in 2006. His second album, *Girl* was released on March 3, 2014.

As part of The Neptunes, Williams has produced numerous hit singles for various recording artists. Williams has earned seven Grammy Awards including two with The Neptunes. He currently owns a media venture that encompasses entertainment, music, fashion, and art called i am OTHER. He is also the co-founder of the clothing brands Billionaire Boys Club and Ice Cream.

Early life

Pharrell Williams was born on April 5, 1973, in Virginia Beach, Virginia, the oldest of three sons of Carolyn, a teacher, and Pharaoh Williams, a handyman. He met Chad Hugo in a seventh-grade summer band camp where Williams played the keyboards and drums and Hugo played tenor saxophone. They were also both members of a marching band; Williams played the snare drum while Hugo was student conductor. Williams attended Princess Anne High School where he played in the school band; there he got the name Skateboard P. Hugo attended Kempsville High School.

In the 1990s, Hugo and Williams formed a four-piece "R&B type" group, *The Neptunes*, with friends Shay Haley and Mike Etheridge. They later entered a high school talent show where they were discovered by Teddy Riley, whose studio was next to Princess Anne High School.^[2] After graduating from high school, the group signed with Riley.^[3]

Career

1992–1997: Career beginnings

Through working with Riley, Williams went on to write a verse and help produce for Wreckx-N-Effect's 1992 hit "Rump Shaker". That same year, he also performed a small rap solo on SWV's second hit, "Right Here (UK Remix)". In 1994, Hugo and Williams had established themselves as a production duo under their old name "The Neptunes", and assistant-produced "Tonight's The Night" from Blackstreet's self-titled album. Over the next three years they continued to produce occasionally, and some of the results had little resemblance to the Neptunes sound later. However, some like Mase's 1997 song "Lookin' at Me" from his album *Harlem World*, and the most definite beginning of the distinctive "Neptunes sound", came with N.O.R.E.'s "Superthug" in 1998, reaching number 36 on the Billboard Hot 100, and gaining them widespread attention for the first time. In 1999, a mutual friend introduced Pharrell to Kelis, and their resulting collaboration produced her first album *Kaleidoscope*.

1998–2004: The Neptunes



Pharrell Williams in Berlin, March 2005

At this point The Neptunes were gaining a wide fanbase and audience. In 2001, The Neptunes produced Britney Spears' single, "I'm a Slave 4 U" gaining their first worldwide number one.^[4] The same year, N.E.R.D, consisting of Williams, Hugo and Haley, released their first album, *In Search of...*, in Europe, where the first Kelis album was better received. The album sounded very much like their previous production work; the group decided that they should make their work as N.E.R.D sound different, and re-recorded the album with the rock band Spymob. Williams and Hugo met rap duo Clipse in Virginia Beach in 1993, where they were signed to Arista Records through

Williams' Star Trak Entertainment imprint.

Then in 2002 their re-produced album was released worldwide, and The Neptunes reached number one in the U.S. with Nelly's single, "Hot in Herre". In August of the same year, The Neptunes were named "Producers of the Year" at both The Source Awards and the Billboard Music Awards. Clipse released their commercial debut album *Lord Willin'* in August 2002. The album started at number one on the *Billboard* Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums chart and number four on the *Billboard* 200, fueled by its first two singles, "Grindin'" and "When the Last Time", which peaked at number 34 and number 19 respectively on the *Billboard* Hot 100.

The Neptunes released a self-credited album called *The Neptunes Present... Clones* in 2003, with songs and remixes from various artists. This topped the U.S. *Billboard* 200 Albums Chart. The Neptunes and Williams specifically were also kept in public eye largely due to ties with Jay-Z, producing several hit singles for him and two tracks on his *The Black Album*. The track "Frontin'" was a big hit (the 34th biggest of 2003 according to *Billboard*). A survey in August 2003 found the Neptunes produced almost 20 percent of songs played on British radio at the time, a survey in the US had them at 43 percent. The same year, The Neptunes remixed the Daft Punk song *Harder, Better, Faster, Stronger* for the duo's poorly received remix album *Daft Club*. The track also had a brief rap section performed by Williams.

N.E.R.D's second funk rock-oriented album, *Fly or Die*, released in March 2004. Williams' rock credentials were further bolstered by his appearance at the 2004 Grammy Awards, performing The Beatles' "I Saw Her Standing

There" on drums with Sting, Dave Matthews, and Vince Gill. Williams received two Grammy Awards that night, one for Producer of the Year, Non-Classical, and another for Best Pop Vocal Album for his work on Justin Timberlake's hit album *Justified*. They also gained their first UK number one, again with Nelly, and *Flap Your Wings*.

In September 2004, Williams was featured on the Snoop Dogg single "Drop It Like It's Hot." The song would eventually peak at number one on the Billboard Hot 100 two months later, marking Williams' first number one single in the United States. The song was named "Rap Song of the Decade" by *Billboard* in 2009.

2005–09: *In My Mind*

On September 9, 2005, Williams performed the opening single from his first solo album *In My Mind*, "Can I Have It Like That", featuring Gwen Stefani. The single did poorly in the US, reaching only number 48. It fared better in the UK, reaching number three. Between then and the July 25, 2006 release of "In My Mind", he released "Angel" (in Europe only), and later "Number One" with Kanye West. Several songs leaked to the internet before the album release, most notably "Mamacita" featuring Daddy Yankee, which was subsequently cut from the final version. "That Girl" featuring Snoop Dogg was the final single.

In 2006, The Neptunes produced Clipse's second album *Hell Hath No Fury*. Most critics labeled the album The Neptunes best production in years, and put the duo back in the charts. A year later, Williams collaborated with Madonna, on the song "Hey You", which was available for download on the MSN website. 25 cents for each of the first one million downloads was donated to the Alliance for Climate Protection, in support of Live Earth. Later that year, Williams performed songs at the Concert for Diana on July 1, 2007. On July 7, he performed at the Brazilian leg of Live Earth in Rio de Janeiro.

A remix album of Pharrell's solo debut, *In My Mind*, titled *Out of My Mind*, was recorded with his newly formed band "The Yessirs" featuring Questlove of The Roots and was produced by Questlove and keyboardist James Poyser. However, Williams' record label Interscope Records did not think that the album would sell well and subsequently was shelved. The album has built up a strong fanbase asking for its release. The tracks started appearing on Questlove's MySpace, and with every 10,000 plays, a new song was made available. As of July 4, 2007, the full CD has leaked onto the internet along with two songs not featured on 'In My Mind'; a remix of "Mamacita" and "Creamsickle".

Williams produced Beyoncé's version of "Diamonds Are a Girl's Best Friend". He then wrote The Neptunes produced "Why Should I Be Sad" on Britney Spears' fifth studio album, *Blackout*. He also produced two songs from The Hives album, *The Black and White Album*, titled "Well All Right!" and "T.H.E.H.I.V.E.S."

In April 2008, Madonna released her eleventh album, *Hard Candy*, which featured vocals from Williams and production from The Neptunes on several tracks. In June, an article in NME revealed that Williams was very interested in producing The Strokes' fourth album.^[5] Later that year, Williams worked on a remix album for Maroon 5's *Call & Response*.

Williams continued working with a variety of artists, including Shakira on the songs 'Did It Again', 'Why Wait', 'Good Stuff' and 'Long Time' for her sixth studio album, *She Wolf*. In September 2009, Williams was credited as a co-writer and producer of the song "Fresh Out the Oven" for Jennifer Lopez. It was released as a buzz single from Lopez's seventh studio album *Love?* The following month, Williams made a guest appearance on French indie/electronic rapper Uffie's first album, which arrived in early 2010.^[6] In late 2009, Williams worked with the



Williams and American astronaut Leland D. Melvin present a montage to record producer Quincy Jones.

rapper Game on his fourth studio album, *The R.E.D. Album*.

2010–12: *Despicable Me* and collaborations

In July 2010, Williams composed the soundtrack to the movie *Despicable Me*, produced by Hans Zimmer and recorded with the Hollywood Studio Symphony. In October 2010, Williams and his group N.E.R.D supported Gorillaz on their *Escape to Plastic Beach World Tour*. On the tour, Damon Albarn recorded a song with Williams but this was not featured on Gorillaz's album, *The Fall*, but it may appear on a future album. The following month, N.E.R.D released their fourth studio album Nothing through Pharrell's label Star Trak. In late 2011, Williams worked on three tracks for Mike Posner's second album *Sky High*.

In 2011, Williams collaborated with singer/composer Adam Lambert, co-writing two tracks for Lambert's album *Trespassing*, which was released in May 2012, including the title track and "Kickin' In".

In 2012, it was announced on Lupe Fiasco's website that he and Lupe will work on a collaborative album and work on Waka Flocka Flame's album *Triple F Life: Friends, Fans and Family*.^[citation needed]

He has also collaborated with Pittsburgh rapper Mac Miller on the *Pink Slime* EP. The first track, "Onaroll" was followed by "Glow". It was produced by Pharrell, with vocals from Mac Miller.

Williams composed and produced the music for the 84th Academy Awards alongside composer Hans Zimmer. He collaborated with the singer Miley Cyrus on her album *Bangerz* and composed the new intro music for *Chelsea Lately* in 2012. He later contributed four tracks to The Game's *California Republic* mixtape called "When My Niggas Come Home" and "It Must be Tough"; produced two tracks on Usher's 2012 seventh studio album, *Looking 4 Myself*, titled "Twisted" and "Hot Thing"; collaborated with Mika on his new track "Celebrate"; co-produced the tracks "Sweet Life" and "Golden Girl" from Frank Ocean's debut album *Channel Orange*; and is working with Solange Knowles on her third studio album.

2013–present: *Girl* and *The Voice*

Pharrell featured on Daft Punk's fourth studio album *Random Access Memories* on songs "Get Lucky" and "Lose Yourself to Dance". In addition, Williams contributed to Azealia Banks' debut studio album *Broke with Expensive Taste*, featuring on the song "ATM Jam." Williams penned three new original songs, included alongside composer Heitor Pereira's score, for the sequel *Despicable Me 2*. These were "Just a Cloud Away", "Happy", and "Scream" (featuring Cee Lo Green). His two original songs from the first film were also reprised on the soundtrack - "Despicable Me" and "Fun, Fun, Fun". He also participated in the drummer sessions of the soundtrack of *Man of Steel* by Hans Zimmer.

In March 2013, Pharrell appeared alongside T.I. on Robin Thicke's hit single "Blurred Lines". The song has been a worldwide hit, has peaked at number one on the *Billboard* Hot 100, and has also reached number one in 13 more countries including the United Kingdom and Germany, making it Pharrell's third *Billboard* Hot 100 number one single. On June 29, 2013, Pharrell became the 12th artist in the chart's history to simultaneously hold the number one and two positions with "Blurred Lines" and "Get Lucky", respectively.

By July 2013 there had only been 137 singles in UK chart history to have sold 1 million copies in the UK; that month Pharrell scored two million-sellers with "Get Lucky" and "Blurred Lines". In August 2013, Busta Rhymes talked about an unreleased "documentary album" by Pharrell where he talks about "inner-city strife and hardship".^[7] In November 2013, Pharrell released the first 24-hour music video to his *Despicable Me 2* collaboration song, "Happy". Guest appearances included Magic Johnson, Steve Carrell, Jimmy Kimmel, Jamie Foxx, Odd Future, Miranda Cosgrove, Janelle Monáe, and many others. It has received approximately 5.5 million views as of Christmas Day, 2013.

It was announced in December 2013 that Williams had been nominated for seven Grammy Awards, including Producer of the Year.^[8] In the same month, a press release from Columbia Records announced that Pharrell had

signed a contract with the label and would be releasing an album in 2014, featuring the single "Happy" from the *Despicable Me 2* soundtrack. For "Happy", Pharrell was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Original Song. In February 2014 Major Lazer announced they would be releasing a five-track EP titled *Apocalypse Soon* on the 25th of that month. The EP, released via Mad Decent and Secretly Canadian, will feature Pharrell and Sean Paul, among others. The first single off the EP, which features Pharrell, is titled "Aerosol Can". Pharrell contributed a verse to Future's February 2014 single "Move That Dope", which also featured Pusha T and Casino over production from Mike Will Made It.

On February 18, Pharrell announced via Twitter that his sophomore album, *Girl* would be released on March 3, 2014. At the 86th Academy Awards on March 2, 2014, Williams' song "Happy" lost to "Let It Go" from *Frozen*. Afterwards, when *GQ* magazine asked Williams "how badly" did he want the Oscar, he responded: "When they read the results, my face was...frozen. But then I thought about it, and I just decided just to...let it go." On March 31, 2014, Williams was announced as a new coach for the seventh season of *The Voice*, replacing Cee Lo Green.

Musical style

Williams has stated that he does not have any direct influences, but has expressed his admiration for several musicians, including Michael Jackson, J Dilla, Stevie Wonder, Donny Hathaway, Marvin Gaye, Rakim and Q-Tip. Williams explained that A Tribe Called Quest's 1990 album, *People's Instinctive Travels and the Paths of Rhythm*, caused a "turning point" in his life, which "made me see that music was art".

Business ventures

Pharrell co-founded the clothing brands Billionaire Boys Club and Ice Cream Footwear. He has a boutique store in New York City on West Broadway.

In 2008, Pharrell co-designed a series of jewelry ("Blason") and glasses for Louis Vuitton. He has also worked on furniture with Galerie Emmanuel Perrotin and a French manufacturer, Domeau & Pérès. One of his works, a molded plastic seat with human legs, was created because he "wanted to know what it was like to be in love." The chair depicts a sexual scene with a pair of female legs and male legs.

In 2009, Pharrell unveiled a collaborative sculpture with Takashi Murakami at Art Basel, which spoke to the metaphor of value.

In May 2011, it was announced that Williams would serve as Creative Director of KarmaloopTV alongside founder and CEO Greg Selkoe and former AMC president Katie McEnroe.

On August 1, 2011, Williams launched his new YouTube channel, *i am OTHER* as part of YouTube's \$100 million original channel initiative.^[9]

Williams will co-compose *The Amazing Spider-Man 2* with Hans Zimmer, Johnny Marr, Michael Einziger and David A. Stewart.^{[10][11]}

Personal life

Williams married his long-time girlfriend, model/designer Helen Lasichanh, on October 12, 2013. They have a son, Rocket Williams, born in November 2008. The *Despicable Me* song "Rocket's Theme" was written in honour of his son.

In 2005, Williams was voted "Best Dressed Man in the World" by *Esquire*.^[12] He is a fan of the science fiction series *Star Trek*,^[13] as indicated by his consistent use of the Vulcan salute to signify his label name, Star Trak. He also enjoys the works of the late astronomer and science lecturer Carl Sagan, whom he calls "a genius".^[14] Williams is a skateboarder and has a half-pipe inside his home.^[15]

Williams is building a \$35 million afterschool center in his hometown Virginia Beach. His charity *From One Hand To Another* is a foundation developed for youth between the ages of 7 and 20 in at risk communities throughout the country.^[16]

In an interview for the magazine *GQ Style* (Autumn/Winter 2013), Pharrell described his religious views: "On paper I'm a Christian, but really I'm a Universalist."

Discography

- *In My Mind* (2006)
- *Girl* (2014)

Awards and nominations

Academy Award

Year	Recipient	Award	Result
2014	"Happy" from <i>Despicable Me 2</i>	Best Original Song	Nominated

Annie Award

Year	Recipient	Award	Result
2011	"Despicable Me" (with Heitor Pereira)	Best Music in a Feature Production	Nominated
2014	"Despicable Me 2" (with Heitor Pereira)	Best Music in a Feature Production	Nominated

BET Hip Hop Awards

Year	Recipient	Award	Result
2013	"Himself"	Producer of the Year	Nominated

ECHO Awards

Year	Recipient	Award	Result
2007	<i>In My Mind</i>	International Hip-Hop/R&B Artist/Group of the Year	Nominated

Grammy Awards

Year	Recipient	Award	Result
2003	<i>Nellyville</i> (as producer)	Album of the Year	Nominated
2004	<i>Justified</i> (as producer)		Nominated
		Best Pop Vocal Album	Won
	"Frontin'" (with Jay-Z)	Best Rap/Sung Collaboration	Nominated
	"Beautiful" (with Snoop Dogg & Charlie Wilson)		Nominated
		Best Rap Song	Nominated
	"Excuse Me Miss" (with Jay-Z)		Nominated
	The Neptunes	Producer of the Year	Won
2005	"Drop It Like It's Hot" (with Snoop Dogg)	Best Rap Performance by a Duo or Group	Nominated
		Best Rap Song	Nominated

2006	<i>Love. Angel. Music. Baby.</i> (as producer)	Album of the Year	Nominated
	<i>The Emancipation of Mimi</i> (as producer)		Nominated
	The Neptunes	Producer of the Year	Nominated
	"Hollaback Girl" (as producer)	Record of the Year	Nominated
2007	<i>In My Mind</i>	Best Rap Album	Nominated
	"Money Maker" (with Ludacris)	Best Rap Song	Won
2013	<i>Channel Orange</i> (as producer)	Album of the Year	Nominated
2014	Himself	Producer of the Year	Won
	<i>Good Kid, M.A.A.D City</i> (as producer)	Album of the Year	Nominated
	<i>Random Access Memories</i> (as featured artist)		Won
	"Get Lucky" (with Daft Punk)	Record of the Year	Won
		Best Pop Duo/Group Performance	Won
	"Blurred Lines" (with Robin Thicke & T.I.)		Nominated
	Record of the Year	Nominated	

MOBO Awards

Year	Recipient	Award	Result
2007	"Himself"	Best International Male	Nominated

MTV Europe Music Awards

Year	Recipient	Award	Result
2006	"Himself"	Best Male	Nominated
		Best R&B	Nominated

MTV Video Music Awards

Year	Recipient	Award	Result
2003	"Boys (The Co-Ed Remix)" (with Britney Spears)	Best Video from a Film	Nominated
2013	"Blurred Lines" (with Robin Thicke & T.I.)	Best Collaboration	Nominated
		Best Male Video	Nominated
		Best Song of the Summer	Nominated
		Video of the Year	Nominated

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External links

- Official website (<http://www.pharrellwilliams.com/>)
- Pharrell Williams (<http://www.imdb.com/name/nm1214289/>) at the Internet Movie Database

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