



Pharrell - The "Despicable Me" Interview

Pharrell was born on April 5, 1973 in Virginia Beach, VA, the eldest of three sons to bless the union of Carolyn and Pharoah Williams, a schoolteacher and handyman, respectively. At the age of just 12, the aspiring musician started playing with Chad Hugo, a kid he met over summer vacation at band camp.

They formed a group called The Neptunes which was discovered while still in high school by the legendary Teddy Riley who signed the pair soon after graduation.

Since then, Pharrell has embarked on an enviable career, both as a member of The Neptunes, Child Rebel Soldier and NERD and as a solo artist. Furthermore, the triple Grammy-winner's singing, performing and/or producing services have been sought for recordings by everyone from Beyoncé' to Jay-Z to Ludacris to Madonna to Mystikal to Lupe Fiasco to Snoop Dogg to Shakira to The Game to J-Lo to Britney Spears to Babyface to Usher to Busta Rhymes, to Gwen Stefani to Nelly to P. Diddy to NSYNC and to Fabolous.

As busy as he's been kept by the entertainment industry, Pharrell still found time to launch the Billionaire Boys Club, a luxury fashion line of clothes and accessories. Here, the versatile talent talks about his latest venture, branching into cinema by scoring the soundtrack of Despicable Me, a 3-D animated adventure revolving around a diabolical villain determined to steal the moon.

Kam Williams: Hey, thanks for the time, Pharrell.

Pharrell: Thank you.

KW: Let me start off with a question from FSU grad Laz Lyles who would like to know what it was like creating the score for this animated feature?

Pharrell's Philosophy

Written by with Kam Williams

P: I can't remember the last time that I was doing something creatively that I hadn't mastered yet, in the sense of familiarity. Mastering, meaning understanding the concept of how it worked. This was something that was brand new, that I'd never done before. This was so new to me, it was like "Whoa!" It was like the next level.

KW: Laz wants to know what's been the most unusual sonic inspiration or everyday sound that you've incorporated into your music?

P: That's the thing, I like to use a lot of everyday sounds in my music.

KW: Nick Antoine asks, what struggles have you had to deal with in your career?

P: I don't know that there were any struggles. I'm too thankful for the opportunities I've had to complain about anything.

KW: Nick also asks, what are some of the tools that you would attribute to your success?

P: Education, first and foremost.

KW: You're a person that a lot of people turn to for help producing their projects. Who is it you rely on when you need support? □ **P:** I look to my family for support.

KW: Are you interested in pursuing further film work?

P: Sure! I've learned a lot from it, and it's made me happier as a person.

KW: Which fellow hip-hop producers are you really into right now?

P: Oh man, there are so many of them. I really love what Hi-Tek has been doing recently. There's a lot of them. I really love Diplo. I think he's super talented.

KW: Larry Greenberg says, "I love that you are a Star Trek fan like me. Which character is your favorite?"

P: I'd say Spock, but now everybody's on him, so, like, cool.

KW: Attorney Bernadette Beekman says she saw you perform several years ago at the Costume Institute Ball and that you seemed almost at one with the audience. She's curious about what's going on with you in terms of art and sculpture.

P: Obviously, I put out "The Simple Things" project with Takashi Murakami. That was a great success, and we've done two "Chair" series which have really been fun. And I have a couple of upcoming art projects that I'm working on at the moment.

KW: Yale grad Tommy Russell asks, "What do you think the chances are that BP will stop the oil leak?"

P: I think the BP oil leak is probably a consequence of Murphy's Law and I see it as a warning from the universe telling us to pay attention because the Earth is our home. We've got to figure it out. If we don't, we're going to be in very big trouble.

KW: Is there any question no one ever asks you, that you wish someone would?

P: No, I'm content.

Pharrell's Philosophy

Written by with Kam Williams

KW: The bookworm Troy Johnson question: What was the last book you read?

P: The Memory Book by Harry Lorayne.

KW: The music maven Heather Covington question: What are you listening to on your iPod?

P: The last thing I listened to was Janelle Monae's album.

KW: When you look in the mirror, what do you see?

P: I see appreciation.

KW: If you could have one wish instantly granted, what would that be for?

P: Oh man... I think the greatest gift one could have is more time.

KW: The Ling-Ju Yen question: What is your earliest childhood memory?

P: Spending time with my great-grandfather when I was about three-years-old.

KW: What is your favorite dish to cook?

P: Warming up Cherry Kellogg's Pop Tarts.

KW: The Teri Emerson question: When was the last time you had a good laugh?

P: I have one every day.

KW: The Tasha Smith question: Are you ever afraid?

JK: No.

KW: The Columbus Short question: Are you happy?

JK: Very.

KW: Here's a new question I just got from Tavis Smiley. Are you introspective?

P: I couldn't imagine not being introspective.

KW: Also from Tavis: What do you want your legacy to be, and where are you in relation to that legacy?

P: I'm afraid I'm only a half a paragraph deep into a thousand-page book.

KW: Which of your many talents is your favorite?

P: All of them, as they all are vessels of expression.

KW: What advice do you have for anyone who wants to follow in your footsteps?

P: Feed your curiosity, and remain a kidult forever.

KW: The Boris Kodjoe question: What do you consider your biggest accomplishment?

P: Having a connection with the kids who are the future deciders of life as we know it.

KW: The Laz Alonso question: How can your fans help you?

P: By building the NERD Army

Pharrell's Philosophy

Written by with Kam Williams

KW: How do you want to be remembered?

P: I don't know. I'm not psychic.

KW: Thanks again for the interview, Pharrell, I really appreciate.

P: Thank you, sir.