

Happy | Pharrell Williams



Album: *Despicable Me 2: Original Motion Picture Soundtrack/Girl*
Released: 2013
Label: Back Lot Music/I Am Other/Columbia

Genre: Soul
Written by: Pharrell Williams
Produced by: Pharrell Williams

Background Info



'Happy' was written and performed by American producer and singer-songwriter Pharrell Williams. The track was released as part of the soundtrack for the 2013 animated film *Despicable Me 2* as the lead single, and later released on Pharrell's 2014 studio album *Girl*. 'Happy' topped the charts in multiple countries and sold millions of copies worldwide.

Pharrell Williams first achieved success as part of contemporary R&B duo The Neptunes, and hip hop rock band N.E.R.D. Since launching his solo career, he has released two studio albums and both have reached the top ten in the UK. Pharrell has also won 13 Grammy Awards and received two Academy Awards nominations.

Performance Notes



In this up-tempo soul/pop song Pharrell's flawless *falsetto* and intricate melodic phrasing creates a good challenge to aspire to at this grade.

The verses and chorus are sung in a soft *falsetto*/head voice quality and you will need to focus on this sounding as clear as possible with secure intonation and forward projection to avoid any breathiness on the tone.

Varying the dynamics will help you move into a more projected and strong tone quality in the bridge, and you can experiment with creating expressive changes that support the lyrical content.

The rhythmic feel is important and may be emphasised by *staccato* and accented phrasing, particularly for the verses. In the bridge section you are free to embellish and stylistically develop the line if you wish, whilst maintaining a secure delivery against the backing vocals on the backing track.

'Key Features to Implement at this Grade' are shown in the *Repertoire Overview* on page 6

Audio Access

Audio for this book can be accessed via the **QR code** on the right (*requires a compatible smartphone or tablet*) or by using the **URL and download code** shown on page 5.



Happy

from DESPICABLE ME 2
Words and Music by Pharrell Williams

Pharrell Williams

♩ = 160 Pop

Vocals

F⁷ N.C.

It might seem cra - zy what I'm 'bout to say:
Here come bad news, _____ talk - in' this and that.

Piano

mf

Note: Lead vocal sounds one octave lower than notated throughout. Backing vocals are notated at pitch.

B^b A^b6 B^b C B^b/A^b F⁷ N.C.

Sun - shine, _____ she's here; -
Well, gim - me all you got, -

4

F⁷ A^b6 B^b C B^b

— you can take a break. I'm a
— no _____ hold - ing back.

7

F⁷ N.C. F⁷ A^b6 B^b C

hot air bal - loon _____ that could go to space
Well, I should prob - 'bly warn _____ you, I'll be just _____ fine.

10

Technical Exercises

Group A: Scales

The major and natural minor scales should be prepared as shown below. The example below is shown from the starting note of A3, however, you may perform it *from a starting note of your choice*. Please note: the examiner can play starting notes in the range A3–G#4, but you may sing *in any octave*.

This test is performed to a compulsory metronome click. The examiner will ask you which starting note you have chosen. You will hear the starting note followed by a one-bar (four click) count-in. You may perform this test using any vocal sound except humming or whistling. The tempo is ♩=90.

Major scale



Natural minor scale



Group B: Arpeggios

In this group, *both* of the arpeggio exercises need to be prepared as shown below. You will be asked to perform *one* of them in the exam, as chosen by the examiner.

The examples are shown on the starting note of A3, but you may perform them *from a starting note of your choice*. Please note: the examiner can play starting notes in the range A3–G#4, but you may sing *in any octave*.

This test is performed to a compulsory metronome click. The examiner will ask you which starting note you have chosen. You will hear the starting note followed by a one-bar (four click) count-in. You may perform this test using any vocal sound except humming or whistling. The tempo is ♩=90.

Major arpeggio



Minor arpeggio



Improvisation & Interpretation

The examiner will give you a chord sequence in the key of G major or E minor. You must improvise a melody over the backing track. You will hear the backing track three times. The first and second time is for you to rehearse and the third time is for you to perform the final version for the exam. Each playthrough will begin with the root note and a four-beat count-in. The backing track is continuous throughout, so once the first playthrough has finished, the root note and count-in of the second and third playthroughs will start immediately. The tempo is ♩=80–90.

Note: You may perform the improvised bars in this test using any vocal sound except humming or whistling.

♩=80 *Pop*

G Bm Am C G

Please note: the test shown is an example. The examiner will give you a different version in the exam.