## 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.

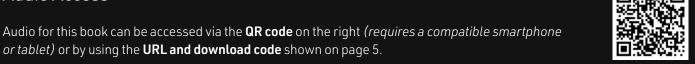
The verses and chorus are sung in a soft falsetto/head voice quality and you will need to focus on this sounding as clear as possible with secure intonation and forward projection to avoid any breathiness on the tone.

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



**Pharrell Williams** 

from DESPICABLE ME 2 Words and Music by Pharrell Williams



### **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  $\downarrow = 90$ .

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 $\sharp$ 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  $\rfloor = 90$ .

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 J=80-90.

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



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