

= The Smeezingtons =

The Smeezingtons are a songwriting and record producing team , consisting of Bruno Mars (born October 8 , 1985) , Philip Lawrence (born July 17 , 1980) and Ari Levine (born May 4 , 1984) . The Smeezingtons were established in Los Angeles , California . Their production and writing services have been increasingly in demand since 2009 .

The Smeezingtons broke into the American recording industry in 2010 , crafting songs for a diverse roster of talent , with the release of the Billboard Hot 100 No. 1 single , " Nothin ' On You " , produced and co @-@ written by the team and performed by rapper B.o.B and singer Bruno Mars . They also produced and co @-@ wrote with singer Cee @-@ Lo Green his single " Fuck You " , which topped the UK singles chart and peaked at No.2 in Hot 100 . Throughout their career they have been noted for their extensive work with Bruno Mars (one of the elements) , writing and producing two consecutive Billboard Hot 100 No. 1 singles with the singer in 2010 and other two consecutive Billboard Hot 100 No. 1 singles in 2013 .

The team has worked with various artists and received mainstream awards including the ASCAP Pop Music Awards for Songwriters Ari Levine accolade at the 2011 ASCAP / PRS Awards and the 2011 ASCAP Rhythm & Soul Music Awards for " Nothin ' On You " as the Top Rap Song . They have been nominated at the 2011 Grammy Awards and at the 2012 Grammy Awards for Producer of the Year , Non @-@ Classical . In 2011 , The Smeezingtons were awarded the title of ' Biggest Songwriters of 2010 ' by Music Week . In 2013 , they were ranked # 5 Top Hitmakers among 35 by Hollywood Reporter magazine and Billboard ranked them # 3 among the " Top 10 Producers in Music " . In the same year , Billboard , considered Bruno Mars , Philip Lawrence and Ari Levine the sixth , seventh and eighth best songwriters of 2013 , respectively . " Locked Out of Heaven " has been nominated for four 2014 Grammys including Song of the Year and Record of the Year .

= = Career = =

= = = Formation and early works = = =

The Smeezingtons formed in 2009 . They are a songwriting @-@ producing trio based in Los Angeles , California , and they consist of Bruno Mars , Philip Lawrence , and Ari Levine . Before they first met , Lawrence , after finishing college , did some theater and also worked in Disney World in Florida for seven years . He said that upon moving to Los Angeles he was " holding down these random telemarketing jobs to keep the lights on " . After Mars graduated in Hawaii he moved to L.A. , and there he found that he could only pay rent by DJing . Before they met each other , " a lot of time was wasted working with random producers bouncing around from studio to studio but never getting anything done . "

When Lawrence was first asked to meet Mars he was reluctant to do so , since it would cost him everything he had to go there . Keith Harris , drummer for The Black Eyed Peas , told him , " Whatever it costs you to get out here , I ? ll reimburse you . " Lawrence responded , " Just give me five dollars back for the bus . " They started working together and writing songs together for Mars to perform , but they received many rejections from labels . The duo considered moving back to their home cities . However , in that week , they got a call from Brandon Creed (Mars ' manager) who was A & Ring a reunited Menudo who needed songs . He liked their song " Lost " , which was written for Mars . At first Mars and Lawrence didn ' t want to give it up , so he offered \$ 20 @, @ 000 for it . They were so surprised that they said " You can have that one and whatever else you need ! " It was that call that saved them , allowing them to stay in L.A. a little bit longer . Afterwards they were asked by Aaron @-@ Bay Schuck (Mars ' A & R) to help write Flo @-@ Rida 's number one single " Right Round " .

In 2008 , Lawrence was a Los Angeles artist , Mars a struggling singer @-@ songwriter , and Levine was a producer looking to work with new songwriters . Lawrence was the first guest at Levine 's studio (Levcon Studios) ; they had previously worked together after being introduced by a mutual

friend . One day Mars and Lawrence were sitting in the car with no money in their pockets when they decided to try producing for themselves and enlisted the help of Levine who contributed his equipment and expertise in drum programming , sampling and other electronic sounds that dominate . Lawrence is responsible for connecting Levine and Mars . After creating the team , they worked over 10 hours every day for two years .

They ventured into the U.S. market , mostly writing songs for R & B @-@ pop performers . They were given the chance of working with less successful acts such as Mike Posner , Cobra Starship , Chad Hugo , and Lupe Fiasco . On the other hand , they were able to create songs for the likes of Flo Rida , Lil Wayne , Wiz Khalifa and Cee @-@ Lo Green . One of their first successful productions was the single " Get Sexy " , performed by Sugababes , which peaked at No. 2 in the United Kingdom in 2010 .

This success was followed with Matisyahu ' s song " One Day " , which was chosen as NBC ' s 2010 Winter Olympics theme song . The team has also collaborated with Somali @-@ Canadian artist K 'naan . Three songs from his fourth album , Troubadour , were produced in Levcon studios . This album 's most successful song , " Wavin ' Flag " , was released throughout Europe and the US and became the theme song for the 2010 FIFA World Cup , giving the trio attention from the worldwide music industry . At this time they called the team The Smeezingtons .

In 2009 , The Smeezingtons settled in Hollywood . A year later , they started to work on Bruno Mars ' debut album , Doo @-@ Wops & Hooligans writing and producing all the songs . They spawned the number one worldwide singles " Just the Way You Are " , " Grenade " , and " The Lazy Song " . The first two of those topped the Billboard Hot 100 and ushered The Smeezingtons into American pop songwriting and production . They funneled lessons learned through label meetings and early hits into Mars ' solo work .

= = = Notable collaborations = = =

The Smeezingtons quickly landed the singles " Nothin ' on You " for American rapper B.o.B 's 2010 album B.o.B Presents : The Adventures of Bobby Ray , which topped the Billboard Hot 100 and featured Mars . " Fuck You " , a single by American singer Cee @-@ Lo Green , became another successful single for The Smeezingtons , reaching No. 1 in the United Kingdom , the Dutch charts and No. 2 in the United States , in 2011 .

In 2010 , the crew was also responsible for the single " Billionaire " , recorded by American rapper Travie McCoy and featuring Mars . In the same year , The Smeezingtons produced the four songs for Mars ' first EP It 's Better If You Don 't Understand . All the songs were later included on his debut solo album , Doo @-@ Wops & Hooligans . The Smeezingtons produced and co @-@ wrote all the songs on that album , and among those songs are the singles " Just the Way You Are " and " Grenade " , both of which reached No. 1 on the Billboard Hot 100 .

In 2011 , The Smeezingtons received nominations in more than 5 categories for the 2011 Grammy Awards , including Producer of the Year , Non @-@ Classical . They won their first Grammy in the same show in the Best Male Pop Vocal Performance category for " Just The Way You Are " , performed by Bruno Mars . With the team 's contributions to music , Ari Levine (from The Smeezingtons) received one award at the ASCAP Pop Music Awards for Songwriters for the singles for " Billionaire " , " Just the Way You Are " and " Nothin ' On You " . The team also earned the ASCAP Rhythm & Soul Music Awards for the song " Nothin ' on You " as Top Rap Song .

In 2011 , " The Lazy Song " , a single by Mars , became another successful song for The Smeezingtons , reaching No. 1 in the United Kingdom and a top 10 in other countries . The single " Lighters " , a duet between Bad Meets Evil and singer Bruno Mars , became a top 5 in U.S. and reached the top ten in United Kingdom . The Smeezingtons produced the single " It Will Rain " for The Twilight Saga : Breaking Dawn ? Part 1 . The song peaked at No. 4 at Billboard Hot 100 , becoming a success worldwide . They also worked with Snoop Dogg and Wiz Khalifa on the lead single " Young , Wild & Free " for the movie Mac & Devin Go to High School . That song was included in the soundtrack and featured Mars ' vocals . The single peaked at # 7 in US .

At the 2012 Grammy Awards they were nominated in five categories , including Producer of the

Year , Non @-@ Classical , due to the team involvement in Mars ' second album , Unorthodox Jukebox . Regarding this nominations at the Grammy 's , Levine is still surprised : " To be nominated for a Grammy before you ? re 30 ? you don ' t expect that , ever " . They were responsible for the singles " Locked Out of Heaven " and " When I Was Your Man " .

In 2013 , " Young , Wild & Free " was nominated for Best Rap Song at the 2013 Grammy Awards . They will continue provide the springboard for Mars ' international @-@ chart @-@ topping solo success as an artist . They are responsible for producing , writing and recording songs for him .

In 2014 , Mars said that he was no longer interested in churning out songs for other artists , he explained " There 's a piece of me that 's no longer there , which was basically let me write a song and then sell it . That was back in the day when I was struggling and hustling to pay rent . I was selling songs for 250 bucks . " Despite this , they have produced a song for Adele 's third studio album 25 , entitled " All I Ask " .

= = = Other ventures = = =

The songmaking team says they hope to eventually move from for @-@ hire work to development of new artists . Meanwhile , their Levcon Studios is open to all , from country musicians to rappers . " I don 't think you can name an artist that we don 't want to work with , " Mars said .

The Levcon studios are located in Los Angeles , and are co @-@ owned by Ari Levine and his brother and manager , Josh Levine . They are used by The Smeezingtons and have been described as a " tiny Hollywood studio " with a " whiteboard hanging on the wall " . It is adorned with many " doodles " , including a picture of Alf and a joking note that producer @-@ engineer Ari Levine " hangs out with Jamaican drug lords on the reg . " Lawrence says " we always find that we still do our best work in our little shack of a studio ... That ? s where we find our magic . "

= = Influences and style = =

Lawrence and Mars came from musical families . Lawrence grew up listening to " everything " while Mars was exposed to a diverse mix of reggae , rock , hip hop and R & B. Their interest in music started in a very young age ; Lawrence started to perform when he was four years old , and Mars started to perform when he was three years old and performed on a more regular basis with his family band by the age of four . In an article by American Songwriter , Lawrence cites acts such as Billy Joel , Elton John and Seal as his biggest influences and inspirations . He was raised listening to acts as Isley Brothers , The Eagles , Led Zeppelin , Stevie Wonder and Billy Joel . Mars , at an early stage of his life , was influenced by R & B artists such as Keith Sweat , Jodeci and R. Kelly , as well as 1950s rock ' n ' roll and Motown . Later , in high school , he began listening to classic rock groups such as The Police , Led Zeppelin and the Beatles . His influences include Billy Joel , Elton John , Prince , The Police , Michael Jackson , Little Richard , and Bob Marley . Mars has stated " Ari turned out to be the secret ingredient to what me and Phil were doing , " explaining , " I 'm used to live stuff . So you give me a studio with a bunch of live instruments , I can do it . But radio 's not playing that stuff . " The three also share a love for producers The Neptunes and Timbaland , the hip @-@ hop song makers of their youth , who influenced them in their throwback sounds . The three admitted their musical influences also comes from The Beatles , Police , Motown , Earth Wind & Fire , Michael Jackson and Disco .

In their usual production style , The Smeezingtons start their songs as a cathartic freestyle jams . Lawrence has said , " We 'll go into the studio , and [Mars will] start playing the piano and I 'll start freestyling or vice versa . We 're heavily influenced by the ' 80s [sound] . Lawrence sees himself and Mars as " melody guys " ; he completed the idea by stating " That 's kind of our main focus , to have really good , memorable melodies . " They can also start their songs production with a " Levine beat , a Mars guitar melody or a lyric snippet from Lawrence . They shoot down each other 's bad ideas and encourage the good ones in " a melting pot of trial and error " " , according to Lawrence . This production formula allowed the team to work with an assortment of artists from various genres .

The team explained their songwriting creation at an " I Create Music Expo " by suggesting that every song should be like a " three @-@ minute movie " and that every song needs to have a conflict to make it interesting . Mars criticised " hit songwriters " by saying : " I liked hearing that from these hit songwriters , because it seems like many times songwriters are more interested in just finishing a song than really taking the time to make a good song a hit song " .

The team utilizes the talents of each of its members . Lawrence is usually the primary worker on the lyrics and melodies , Levine benefits the team with his skill and knowledge as a recording @-@ engineer , and Mars fulfils various roles and also provides much of the group 's energy . " Nine times out of 10 , Bruno will be on the piano , singing something , " Levine says . " I ? ll have a beat going , and Philip will be figuring out lyrics and melody . Whatever sparks something , we just try not to mess it up . "

Philip Lawrence notes " we all have a little bit of OCD " and Mars acknowledges he sometimes has trouble letting his songs go . Mars is an obsessively detail @-@ oriented musician . " Every day we hear a song that we produced on the radio , me and Ari call each other up at 2 o 'clock in the morning : ' We should have left that snare in . ' ' We should 've took that snare out , ' " Mars said . " It 's just a sickness that we have . "

It has been noticed that " Anyone could see that they are really great friends and their genuine connection is what translates into the music they create together . " After working with The Smeezingtons on Unorthodox Jukebox , Jeff Bhasker admitted that " One of their great talents is that they have this fun , light vibe in the studio " , something that enables anyone " to be free so that you can let that primal emotion come out without being embarrassed . Then they polish afterward " . Mark Ronson concurred adding that the key is on Mars ' charisma , which he has had since he began impersonating Elvis . Ronson concluded , " Everything Bruno adds is what takes it into superstardom " .

Mars says that the trust that he , Levine and Lawrence have built in seven years of working together is essential . He added " I may say , ' Yo , I like this song , ' but if Ari or Phil say it 's the corniest shit they 've ever heard , I trust them . And the other way around . We all know when we 're onto something ... We also know when something 's not jelling . And that 's the thing you pray you will always have . You can 't believe that everything you do is hot . " Nevertheless , Levine points to the musical influences the three of them share completing his idea " It 's about finding ways to mix the classic we all love with modern songs . That 's why people connect to the music on multiple levels : It 's familiar @-@ sounding but new @-@ classic songwriting and instrumentation with a little twist " .

= = Production equipment = =

The Smeezingtons use an Akai MPC4000 , Roland Fantom S88 , V ? Synth GT , a regular V ? Synth , Korg R3 , MicroKorg , Novation Ultranova , Dave Smith Mopho , and two Access Virus TI 's to produce music . Ari Levine stated that he rarely uses MPC , Storm Drum or Addictive Drums as software . In August 2012 , the team purchased a Korg keyboard .

While recording , they use a Yamaha 02R , Pro Tools HD , a Manley Langevin Dual Vocal Combo as pre / compressor / EQ , a Neumann U87 , and Event SP8 speakers with an 18 ? inch Mackie . Levine explained that the acoustics and vocals are all recorded with the 87 and the Manley , the basses and electric guitars via DI , adding that " the acoustic guitar that we use is a \$ 150 cheap Fender " . He runs most of the keyboards and the MPC through the 02R , and uses a Mackie Big Knobs as an interface . He often uses Pro Tools . Despite MIDI being already incorporated in Pro Tools , he doesn 't use it extensively . " We ? re not making dance songs , so we don ? t need the synths to do all kinds of crazy stuff . And I fairly quickly render MIDI tracks to audio in Pro Tools " . In 2011 he was thinking about purchasing a Minimoog .

Levine confessed that he doesn 't use any hardware and rarely uses plugins . He says " my favourites are the McDSP FilterBank for my EQ , the Waves Rvox and Renaissance Compressor as my compressors , the [Waves limiter] L2 , and my favourite reverb is [Avid ? s venerable plug ? in] D ? Verb . I also use [Line 6] Echo Farm , Sound Toys Echoboy , and , well that ? s pretty much it .

I have many plug @-@ ins , but I don 't really use them . " He said " I ? ve tried convolution reverbs , but they don ? t really work . They sound cheap . " However , he also stated that the Avid Reverb One sounded substantially better than Altiverb to him .

= = Critical reception = =

The Smeezingtons ' works have received critical acclaim from mainstream publications . From the The New York Times , reviewer Jon Caramanica , wrote that The Smeezingtons " [Ha] ve got a firm grip on the full spectrum of black pop , and white pop as well " . Randall Roberts of Los Angeles Times wrote that The Smeezingtons " [are] making some of the most cohesive yet expansive pop music today ... incredibly well @-@ versed in the language of American music and the ways in which it can still be stretched and molded " . In an analepsis , before Mars played at the Super Bowl Half @-@ time show , Idolator critic Kathy Iandoli praised The Smeezingtons ' work , in the single by Sugababes " Get Sexy " , calling them " a crew of talented fellas " . Erik Adams , music critic , of The A.V. Club , criticized the production team by saying " If The Smeezingtons want to keep synthesizing yesterday ? s favorites into today ? s hits ... I could find it within myself to stomach Mars on more than one night of the year " , referring to " their work on Cee @-@ Lo ? s " Fuck You " " as proof .

= = Discography = =

= = Awards and nominations = =

= = = Grammy Awards = = =