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**Thomas Wesley Pentz** (born November 10, 1978),[[1]](#cite_note-1) better known by his stage name **Diplo**, is an American DJ, record producer, rapper, singer songwriter and record executive based in [Los Angeles](/wiki/Los_Angeles), [California](/wiki/California). He is the co-creator and lead member of the electronic [dancehall](/wiki/Dancehall) music project, [Major Lazer](/wiki/Major_Lazer), and along with producer and DJ [Skrillex](/wiki/Skrillex), part of the electronic duo [Jack Ü](/wiki/Jack_U). He founded and manages record company [Mad Decent](/wiki/Mad_Decent), as well as co-founding the non-profit organization Heaps Decent. Among other jobs, he has worked as a school teacher in Philadelphia. His 2013 EP *Revolution* debuted at number 68 on the US [*Billboard* 200](/wiki/Billboard_200). The song was later featured in a commercial for [Hyundai](/wiki/Hyundai_Motor_Company) and is featured on the [*WWE 2K16*](/wiki/WWE_2K16) soundtrack.

During his rise to fame, Diplo worked with British musician [M.I.A.](/wiki/M.I.A._(rapper)), an artist who is credited with giving him exposure in his early career. Later, he and fellow M.I.A. producer [Switch](/wiki/Switch_(house_DJ)) created a Jamaican dancehall project and cartoon series titled Major Lazer.<ref name=Gordon2015>[Template:Cite news](/wiki/Template:Cite_news)</ref> Since then, Diplo has worked on production and mixtape projects with many other pop artists, such as [Gwen Stefani](/wiki/Gwen_Stefani), [M.I.A.](/wiki/M.I.A._(rapper)), [Die Antwoord](/wiki/Die_Antwoord), [Britney Spears](/wiki/Britney_Spears), [Madonna](/wiki/Madonna_(entertainer)), [Shakira](/wiki/Shakira), [Beyoncé](/wiki/Beyoncé), [No Doubt](/wiki/No_Doubt), [Justin Bieber](/wiki/Justin_Bieber), [Usher](/wiki/Usher_(singer)), [Snoop Dogg](/wiki/Snoop_Dogg), [Chris Brown](/wiki/Chris_Brown), [CL](/wiki/CL_(singer)) and [G-Dragon](/wiki/G-Dragon).[[2]](#cite_note-2)[[3]](#cite_note-3)[[4]](#cite_note-4)[[5]](#cite_note-5)[[6]](#cite_note-6) His alias, short for [*Diplodocus*](/wiki/Diplodocus), derives from his childhood fascination with [dinosaurs](/wiki/Dinosaur).[[7]](#cite_note-7) He is the co-producer of several tracks on Madonna's thirteenth studio album [*Rebel Heart*](/wiki/Rebel_Heart_(Madonna_album)) (2015).

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## Career[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=1)]

### Early life[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=2)]

Diplo was born on November 10, 1978 in [Tupelo, Mississippi](/wiki/Tupelo,_Mississippi), the son of Barbara Jean (née Cox) and Thomas Pentz. He is of [German](/wiki/Germans) and [English](/wiki/English_people) descent.[[8]](#cite_note-8)[[9]](#cite_note-9)[[10]](#cite_note-10) The influence of home-grown rap played a key role in helping shape his production style. He spent the majority of his youth in Miami, where he got a taste for the characteristic [Miami bass](/wiki/Miami_bass).[[11]](#cite_note-11)[[12]](#cite_note-12)[[13]](#cite_note-13) He began attending the [University of Central Florida](/wiki/University_of_Central_Florida) in 1997, and then moved to Philadelphia to continue his studies at [Temple University](/wiki/Temple_University), where he first garnered attention as a DJ.[[14]](#cite_note-14) After frequently running into fellow DJ Low Budget, the two began throwing parties under the Hooked on Hollertronix moniker in 2003 as a way of maintaining control of what they were able to play during DJ gigs in Philadelphia.[[3]](#cite_note-3) The success of these parties allowed the two to release mixtapes, both separate and together, gathering acclaim across the country.[[15]](#cite_note-15) One such mixtape, *Never Scared*, was named one of the [*New York Times*](/wiki/New_York_Times) top ten albums of 2003,[[16]](#cite_note-16) and the Hollertronix name became synonymous with parties featuring guests like Maluca Mala, Bun B, Spank Rock, M.I.A., among others.[[17]](#cite_note-17) Hollertronix's sound has been described as "disparate genres to be smashed together for maximum attention-grabbing impact" an aesthetic which takes from the "organic, cohesive, whole" aesthetic of acts such as [Bun B](/wiki/Bun_B), [Lil Jon](/wiki/Lil_Jon), Drama, M.I.A., [Björk](/wiki/Björk), [Busta Rhymes](/wiki/Busta_Rhymes), and others.[[5]](#cite_note-5)[[18]](#cite_note-18) Diplo accentuated the club aesthetic of his Hollertronix music for a more reflective sound on his solo debut, [*Florida*](/wiki/Florida_(Diplo_album)), which was released on the [Ninja Tune](/wiki/Ninja_Tune) imprint, [Big Dada Records](/wiki/Big_Dada_Records).[[19]](#cite_note-19) The album *Florida* was pressed twice, first with a CD and the second with a CD and DVD. The DVD was created by [System D-128](/wiki/System_D-128), another artist who has collaborated with Diplo on some audio and video projects. Before *Florida****s DVD accompaniment, another DVD surfaced called Diplo: "Banned in Libya" which was released by Money Studies, the first label to release a solo project by Diplo under his original DJ name Diplodocus. It was a 45 rpm record called "Thingamajawn" for which there is also a music video System D-128 directed. Similar to the Florida DVD, "Banned in Libya" is an experimental audio and video mix of some of Diplo's original music blended with a number of other unidentified sources. His particular affinity for one genre of music called*** [***baile funk***](/wiki/Funk_carioca)***, or favela funk, would spawn a series of mixtapes (Favela on Blast, Favela Strikes Back), which served to bring the*** [***Brazilian***](/wiki/Brazil) ***dance music of the ghettos to the United States.***[***[15]***](#cite_note-15) It was not long before his Hooked on Hollertronix parties would provide him the success necessary to move to the next logical step and build a studio where music would become his full-time focus. With this goal in mind, Diplo built "The Mausoleum," a video studio, recording studio, record label office, gallery, and event space in Philadelphia.[[20]](#cite_note-20) Since its inception, The Mausoleum has become the home to recordings by artists like [Christina Aguilera](/wiki/Christina_Aguilera), [Shakira](/wiki/Shakira), M.I.A., [Santigold](/wiki/Santigold), Spank Rock, [Plastic Little](/wiki/Plastic_Little_(band)), Blaqstarr, Paper Route Gangstaz, and hosted concerts by Glass Candy, Skream, [Boys Noize](/wiki/Boys_Noize), Nicos Gun, and more.[[20]](#cite_note-20)

### M.I.A.[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=3)]

After hearing one of his songs in 2004, [M.I.A.](/wiki/M.I.A._(rapper)) approached Diplo when he was DJing one night at the [Fabric Club](/wiki/Fabric_(club)) in London.[[21]](#cite_note-21) Coincidentally, Diplo was playing her songs "[Galang](/wiki/Galang_(song))" and "Fire Fire" as she entered the club, which he got from a worker at [*i-D*](/wiki/I-D) magazine.[[21]](#cite_note-21)[[22]](#cite_note-22) Diplo added, "She came through and she wanted to meet me 'cause she'd heard my single and the funk mix from one of her A&Rs and she just thought I was right up her alley. Besides me being a white dude from Florida and her being a Sri Lankan girl in England, everything else was the same: [We were both] film graduates, [listened to] all the same music when we were kids, were going in the same direction right now in music, it was amazing... I always wanted to make a beat with her, but all my beats were really shitty at the time."[[22]](#cite_note-22)[[23]](#cite_note-23) The two eventually collaborated on a mixtape, [*Piracy Funds Terrorism Vol. 1*](/wiki/Piracy_Funds_Terrorism)*.*, where *Arular* track acapellas were mashed with other artists' songs and was mentioned as 'Albums of the Year' from the *New York Times* and *Pitchfork Media*.[[22]](#cite_note-22)[[24]](#cite_note-24) The two became romantically involved for five years[[25]](#cite_note-25) and continued to work together after the release and he toured as a DJ on her 2005 [Arular Tour](/wiki/Arular_Tour).

Diplo would continue to work with M.I.A. and, through her, meet London DJ Switch; together they created the Grammy nominated track "[Paper Planes](/wiki/Paper_Planes)", peaking at number 4 on the *Billboard* Hot 100.[[26]](#cite_note-26) In 2015, during an interview with [*Rolling Stone*](/wiki/Rolling_Stone), M.I.A said that Diplo resented her rise to fame in 2005, that he tried to hold her back, and fought with her about becoming successful.[[27]](#cite_note-27)

### Mad Decent[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=4)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) From this, Diplo went from an unknown DJ to taking off as a producer, landing him collaborations with artists like [Shakira](/wiki/Shakira), [Robyn](/wiki/Robyn), [Kid Cudi](/wiki/Kid_Cudi), [Bruno Mars](/wiki/Bruno_Mars), [No Doubt](/wiki/No_Doubt) and [Snoop Dogg](/wiki/Snoop_Dogg), as well as work with Maluca, [Kid Sister](/wiki/Kid_Sister), [Die Antwoord](/wiki/Die_Antwoord), [Alex Clare](/wiki/Alex_Clare), Rolo Tomassi, Amanda Blank and Dark Meat. After taking a trip to [Brazil](/wiki/Brazil) to investigate the [favela](/wiki/Favela) music scene,[[3]](#cite_note-3) and fascinated with the energy the scene had to offer, Diplo decided to import a dance-funk group [Bonde do Rolê](/wiki/Bonde_do_Rolê) from Brazil for release on his Mad Decent record label (also housed within 'The Mausoleum').[[28]](#cite_note-28) This group would serve to define [*funk carioca*](/wiki/Funk_carioca) in the United States, spawning a host of others to join the movement. Diplo also spent some time documenting the music, and the favelas of Brazil[[29]](#cite_note-29) Although favela funk remained an interest (the Favela on Blast documentary just saw release in 2009), his Mad Decent imprint would serve as a blank palette for Diplo to showcase the myriad different sounds he had come across while touring around the world.[[14]](#cite_note-14) September 2009 even saw Diplo travel to China to play with [Steve Aoki](/wiki/Steve_Aoki) at a show organised by promoters [Split Works](/wiki/Split_Works).[[30]](#cite_note-30) Diplo quickly developed a reputation for his extensive touring. In the April 2010 issue of [*Rolling Stone*](/wiki/Rolling_Stone), Diplo was touted as one of '40 Reasons to be Excited About Music'.[[31]](#cite_note-31) This kind of jet setting pushed his label far beyond the favela funk genre with which it initially began. Since its foundation in 2005[[32]](#cite_note-32) Diplo's Mad Decent label has released music by Santigold, Baauer, Lil' Jon, [Gucci Mane](/wiki/Gucci_Mane), [Peter Bjorn and John](/wiki/Peter_Bjorn_and_John), [Rusko](/wiki/Rusko_(musician)), Bosco Delrey, Buraka Som Sistema, Savage Skulls, Oliver Twizt, Jamie Fanatic, Douster, Boy 8-Bit, and Popo.[[33]](#cite_note-33)[[34]](#cite_note-34)

### Major Lazer[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=5)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|right|240px|Diplo performing live](/wiki/File:Diplo.JPG) Diplo's first collaborative full-length record was with [Switch](/wiki/Switch_(house_DJ)), this time under the guise [Major Lazer](/wiki/Major_Lazer). After landing a deal with Downtown Records before even recording a note of music, Diplo and Switch set out for Jamaica to record a project that, like most of Diplo's projects before it, would highlight the little-known subgenres, this time of Jamaica's dancehall scene.[[26]](#cite_note-26) The two received support by many already established Jamaican artists such as Vybz Kartel, Elephant Man and Ms. Thing, and the resulting record [*Guns Don't Kill People... Lazers Do*](/wiki/Guns_Don't_Kill_People..._Lazers_Do) also featured vocals from Santigold, Amanda Blank, Nina Sky, Ricky Blaze and more.[[35]](#cite_note-35) When discussing the Major Lazer project, Diplo described the dancehall sound as being " the end of the world, all the little influences—house, soca, oldies, R&B, jazz—it all ends up in Jamaica."[[36]](#cite_note-36) The track "Pon De Floor" from *Guns Don't Kill People... Lazers Do* was sampled for [Beyoncé's](/wiki/Beyoncé) single "[Run the World (Girls)](/wiki/Run_the_World_(Girls))".[[37]](#cite_note-37) Major Lazer's first album was followed up with an EP, [*Lazers Never Die*](/wiki/Lazers_Never_Die), which was released in 2010. Switch left Major Lazer in 2011, and was replaced by [Jillionaire](/wiki/Jillionaire) and Walshy Fire. A second album, [*Free the Universe*](/wiki/Free_the_Universe), was scheduled to be released in November 2012 but was delayed to February 2013, and then to April 15. It features artists such as Ezra Koenig, Bruno Mars, Ward 21, Wyclef, The Partysquad, Shaggy, Tyga, Flux Pavilion and Wynter Gordon.[[38]](#cite_note-38) On February 8, 2015, during the [Grammy Award](/wiki/Grammy_Award) ceremony, Diplo revealed details of the third Major Lazer album. He confirmed that the album would incorporate artists such as [Ariana Grande](/wiki/Ariana_Grande), [Ellie Goulding](/wiki/Ellie_Goulding) and [Pusha T](/wiki/Pusha_T). It is called [*Peace Is the Mission*](/wiki/Peace_Is_the_Mission). The first single, "[Lean On](/wiki/Lean_On)", is a collaboration with French producer [DJ Snake](/wiki/DJ_Snake) and features vocals from Danish recording artist [MØ](/wiki/MØ). The second single, "Powerful", featuring Ellie Goulding and Tarrus Riley, was released simultaneously with the album on on June 1, 2015.[[39]](#cite_note-39) On November 11, 2015, "Lean On" became Spotify's Most Streamed Song of All Time with over 800 million streams to date. Along with the streaming title, the official video for "Lean On" became one of the most viewed videos on YouTube. It currently has 1.4 billion views.[[40]](#cite_note-40) Along with the streaming and viewing milestones, "Lean On" would also go on to achieve double platinum status.[[41]](#cite_note-41) Their upcoming album, *Music is the Weapon* is set to be released in 2016 with collaborations including *Sia*, *The Weeknd* and *Ty Dolla $ign.*

### Jack Ü[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=6)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) Jack Ü is a duo made up of [Skrillex](/wiki/Skrillex) and Diplo. Jack Ü's debut performance took place at the Mad Decent Block Party in San Diego on September 15, 2013, which is a nationwide tour that record label Mad Decent puts together in order to showcase different artists signed to the label.[[42]](#cite_note-42) Diplo announced the project by releasing the Mad Decent Block Party lineup with Jack Ü playing at multiple stops on the tour. After some guessing by many of who Jack Ü was, Diplo finally came out to reveal that "Jack Ü ... means Skrillex and Diplo together".[[42]](#cite_note-42) After their New York debut at Electric Zoo was cancelled in late August, the duo would soon return to the city for something bigger. On December 31, 2014, Jack Ü sold out Madison Square Garden for one of their biggest performances to date. The duo had support from Rudimental, Yellow Claw and A$AP Ferg.[[43]](#cite_note-43) On February 27, 2015 they released [*Skrillex and Diplo Present Jack U*](/wiki/Skrillex_and_Diplo_Present_Jack_U), a co-release between their respective labels [OWSLA](/wiki/OWSLA) and [Mad Decent](/wiki/Mad_Decent). It featured tracks with [2 Chainz](/wiki/2_Chainz), [Kiesza](/wiki/Kiesza), [Justin Bieber](/wiki/Justin_Bieber), [AlunaGeorge](/wiki/AlunaGeorge) and [Missy Elliott](/wiki/Missy_Elliott). The first single "Take Ü There" featuring Kiesza was the lead single on the duo's debut album. The single was released as the lead on October 4, 2014. It reached number sixteen on the UK Dance Chart. The official second single, "Where are Ü Now," was released simultaneously with the album. The song which took both artists in a different direction, featured a collaboration with Canadian Pop Star Justin Bieber. Peaking at number 8 on the Billboard Hot 100, and number 3 on the UK Singles Chart, "Where Are Ü Now" became the duo's largest hit on both charts thus far. The song would also go on to peak at number three in Australia, which was the highest charting for the single worldwide. The song had huge success in Europe as well. Reaching the top-ten in Sweden and Finland, and the top-twenty in Norway, Czech Republic, Denmark and Slovakia. The final place it had charting success was Bieber's home country, Canada. It would end up peaking at number 6. On March 29, 2015 Jack Ü closed main stage at Ultra Music Festival in Miami.

2016 has already been a huge year for the duo. They won two Grammy awards for "Best Dance Album" for "Skrillex and Diplo present Jack U" and "Best Dance Track" for "Where Are U Now?" with Justin Bieber. They've played to sold out shows including Coachella Valley Music Festival in Indio, California and Lollapalooza in Sao Paulo, Brazil.

### Additional work[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=7)]

Beyond Major Lazer and Mad Decent, Diplo has continued to show support for 'all the little influences', the lesser-known music scenes around the globe. Most recently his focus shifted to the ‘Bounce’ scene in New Orleans, Louisiana for a television piece commissioned by Current.tv.[[44]](#cite_note-44) Diplo was nominated for Non-Classical Producer of the Year at the [55th Grammy Awards](/wiki/55th_Grammy_Awards) and [58th Grammy Awards](/wiki/58th_Grammy_Awards) .[[45]](#cite_note-45) As of 2014, Diplo has a late night show on BBC Radio 1 / 1Xtra on Sundays 0400 – 0600 called 'Diplo and Friends' where he curates mixes from some of biggest names in dance music.[[46]](#cite_note-46) Diplo also has several syndicated Diplo and Friends shows in the United States in Boston, Bakersfield, Cleveland, Columbus, Las Vegas, Spokane, Albuquerque, Lafayette, Denver, and most notably on Los Angeles' 98.7 every Sunday at 9pm.[[47]](#cite_note-47) Beginning on October 2, 2015, Diplo, Jillionaire, Walshy Fire and Eric Hamilton debuted "Lazer Sound" on Apple Music's Beats 1. The newest radio show, curated by Diplo, and the Major Lazer crew, consists of interviews, moments on tour and brand new music. The show is on the air every other Saturday of the month.[[48]](#cite_note-48) Throughout 2015 and 2016, Diplo performed with Major Lazer and Jack Ü on numerous live TV and award shows. He performed on The Tonight Show starring Jimmy Fallon, Good Morning America, The iHeart Radio Music Festival, The NRJ Music Awards, The 2015 Latin Grammy Awards and The 2016 Grammy Awards.

## Personal life[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=8)]

Diplo dated British-Sri Lankan singer and rapper [M.I.A.](/wiki/M.I.A._(rapper)) from 2003 to 2008.[[49]](#cite_note-49) He has two sons : Lockett Pentz (2010) and Lazer Lee Louis Pentz (2014).[[50]](#cite_note-50) Diplo is an avid soccer fan and supporter of the US Men's National Team.[[51]](#cite_note-51) He also supports [AS Roma](/wiki/AS_Roma) and has attended to [Tigres UANL](/wiki/Tigres_UANL) matches.[[52]](#cite_note-52)[[53]](#cite_note-53) He created a Mix for the [2014 World Cup](/wiki/2014_FIFA_World_Cup).[[54]](#cite_note-54) Diplo purchased a minority share of [Arizona United SC](/wiki/Arizona_United_SC) of the [United Soccer League](/wiki/United_Soccer_League) on January 27, 2016.[[55]](#cite_note-55)[[56]](#cite_note-56) He stated: "I’ve been really fortunate to travel all over the world and experience different cultures through music. Wherever I am, Jamaica, Spain, England, China, etc., soccer is a social constant. I see soccer the same way I see music, as a connective tissue linking the world's cultures."

Diplo is also an active fan of the Los Angeles Clippers, showing support via Snapchat and Instagram whenever he's at their games. He performed with Skrillex and Kai at the Staples Center during half-time at a Clippers game in 2015.

On February 24, 2016, Diplo endorsed [Bernie Sanders](/wiki/Bernie_Sanders) as the [Democratic presidential nominee](/wiki/Democratic_Party_presidential_primaries,_2016). Sanders' ad "It's A Revolution" is soundtracked by Diplo's 2013 track "Revolution."[[57]](#cite_note-57)

## Discography[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=9)]

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## Awards and nominations[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=10)]

In 2009, he was nominated for his first Grammy Award for Record of the Year for "Paper Planes" shared with M.I.A., Switch.[[58]](#cite_note-58) He was then nominated for a second Grammy Award in 2012, for Best Rap Song for "Look at Me Now" shared with Chris Brown, Lil Wayne and Busta Rhymes.[[59]](#cite_note-59) Diplo was nominated for a Grammy Award in 2013 and 2016 in the category Producer of the Year, Non-Classic. In 2016, he was also nominated for Best Dance/Electronic Album, *Skrillex and Diplo Present Jack U*.[[60]](#cite_note-60) Along with the nomination for Best Dance/Electronic Album in 2016, he was also nominated for Best Dance Recording. Both of which, his duo Jack Ü won.[[61]](#cite_note-61)

### Grammy Awards[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=11)]

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