

# Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Wyclef Jean

PERSON

Jean, Wyclef

**Alternative Names:** Wyclef Jean;

**Life Dates:** October 17, 1969-

**Place of Birth:** Croix-des-Bouquets, Haiti

**Residence:** Caldwell, New Jersey

**Work:** Montebello, New York

**Occupations:** Hip Hop Artist

## Biographical Note

Hip hop artist Wyclef Jean was born on October 17, 1969 in Croix-des-Bouquets, Haiti to Yolanda Jean and Gesner Jean. His family emigrated from Haiti to Brooklyn, New York, and moved to Newark, New Jersey. Jean graduated from Vailsburg High School in Newark in 1988, and attended East Nazarene College and Five Towns College.

In 1990, Jean, Pras Michel and Lauryn Hill formed the musical group the Fugees. The Fugees released their LP *Blunted on Reality* in 1994, followed in 1996 with their most popular album, *The Score*. Achieving significant commercial success with *The Score*, and winning the 1997 Grammy Award for Best Rap Album of the Year, the Fugees disbanded in 1997, and Jean began his solo career with the release of his debut album *The Carnival*. He continued to release albums throughout the 2000s including *The Eclectic: 2 Sides II a Book*, *Masquerade*, *The Preacher's Son*, *Welcome to Haiti: Creole 101*, *Carnival Vol. II: Memoirs of an Immigrant*, *From the Hut, To the Projects, To the Mansion*, *J'ouvert*, and *Carnival III: Road to Clefication*. In 2006, Jean became widely known for his feature on singer Shakira's single "Hips Don't Lie," which topped the U.S. Billboard Charts. As a producer, Jean worked with a diverse array of artists over the years including rappers Canibus and T.I., Latin guitarist Carlos Santana, Italian singer Eros Ramazzotti, and electronic music duo the Knocks. In addition, Jean composed music for movies like *The Agronomist*, *Ghosts of Cité Soleil*, *A Place In Time*, and the song "Million Voices" for the movie *Hotel Rwanda*. Jean also was featured in several cameo roles on the NBC show *Third Watch*, and the ABC show *Nashville*.

In 2001, Jean established the charity organization Yéle Haiti, in order to provide aid

after Hurricane Jeanne, and the 2010 Haitian earthquake. He also participated in the benefit concert “America: A Tribute to Heroes” following the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. In 2010, Jean announced a run for the presidency of Haiti, but was ruled ineligible. Jean published his memoir “Purpose: An Immigrant's Story” in 2012.

Jean and his wife, Claudinette Fushard Jean, have one daughter, Angelina Jean.

Wyclef Jean was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on December 12, 2016.

## Related Entries

**Vailsburg Middle School** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Diploma**

**Eastern Nazarene College** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Berklee College of Music** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Tyme** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1990 to 1993]

**Member**

**Ruffhouse Records / Columbia Records** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1993 to 1997]

**Band Member - Tranzlator Crew/The Fugees**

**Columbia Records** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1997 to ?]

**Solo Artist**

**Various** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1998 to ?]

**Producer**

**Various** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 2002 to ?]

**Actor - Film and Television**

**All Handz On Deck** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 2013 to 2013]

**Founder**

**Heads Music** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 2014 to ?]

**Artist and Producer**

**Yele Haiti / The Wyclef Jean Foundation** [MEMBEROF]  
[from 2001 to 2012]

**Co-Founder**