

# Kanye West

**Kanye Omari West** (/ˈkɑːnjeɪ/; born June 8, 1977) is an American rapper, singer, songwriter, record producer, composer,<sup>[2]</sup> and fashion designer.<sup>[3]</sup> His music draws from a range of genres, including hip hop, soul, baroque pop, electro, indie rock, synth-pop, industrial and gospel.

Born in Atlanta and raised in Chicago, West was first known as a producer for Roc-A-Fella Records in the early 2000s, producing singles for several mainstream artists. Intent on pursuing a solo career as a rapper, West released his debut album *The College Dropout* in 2004 to critical and commercial success, and founded the record label GOOD Music. He experimented with a variety of musical genres on subsequent acclaimed studio albums, including *Late Registration* (2005), *Graduation* (2007), and *808s & Heartbreak* (2008) before releasing *My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy* (2010), which was hailed by several critics as the best album of the decade.<sup>[4]</sup> He succeeded the album with the sonically abrasive work *Yeezus* (2013), and went on to release *The Life of Pablo* (2016), *Ye* (2018), and *Jesus Is King* (2019), as well as the full-length collaborations *Watch the Throne* (2011) and *Kids See Ghosts* (2018) with Jay-Z and Kid Cudi, respectively.

West's outspoken views and life outside of music have received significant media attention. He has been a frequent source of controversy for his conduct at award shows, on social media, and in other public settings, as well as for his comments on the music and fashion industries, U.S. politics, and race. His Christian faith, as well as his marriage to television personality Kim Kardashian, have also been a source of media attention.<sup>[5][6]</sup> As a fashion designer, he has collaborated with Nike, Louis Vuitton, and A.P.C. on both clothing and footwear, and have most prominently resulted in the Yeezy collaboration with Adidas beginning in 2013. He is the founder and head of the creative content company DONDA.

West is one of the world's best-selling music artists, with over 140 million records sold worldwide. He has won a total of 21 Grammy Awards, making him one of the most awarded artists of all time.<sup>[7][8]</sup> Among his other awards include the *Billboard* Artist Achievement Award, a joint-record three Brit Awards for Best International Male Solo Artist and the Michael Jackson Video Vanguard Award.<sup>[9]</sup> Three of his albums have been included on the *Rolling Stone* 2012 update of the 500 Greatest Albums of All Time list, and the same publication named him one of the 100 Greatest Songwriters of All Time.<sup>[10]</sup> West is the tied-holder for the most albums topping the

Kanye West	
<span></span> <div>West in 2009</div>	
Born	<div>Kanye Omari West</div> June 8, 1977 <div>Atlanta, Georgia, U.S.</div>
Other <span> </span> names	Yeezy <span> </span> <b><span>·</span></b> <span> </span> Ye
Occupation	Rapper <span> </span> <b><span>·</span></b> <span> </span> singer <span> </span> <b><span>·</span></b> <span> </span> songwriter <span> </span> <b><span>·</span></b> <span> </span> record producer <span> </span> <b><span>·</span></b> <span> </span> fashion designer
Years <span> </span> active	1996–present
Home <span> </span> town	Chicago, Illinois, U.S.
Spouse(s)	<span>Kim Kardashian<span> </span><span>(</span>m.<span> </span>2014<span>)</span></span>
Children	4
Awards	Full list
Musical career	
Genres	Hip hop <span> </span> <b><span>·</span></b> <span> </span> art pop <sup>[1]</sup> <span> </span> <b><span>·</span></b> <span> </span> experimental
Instruments	Vocals <span> </span> <b><span>·</span></b> <span> </span> sampler

annual Pazz & Jop critic poll with four. *Time* magazine named him one of the 100 most influential people in the world in 2005 and 2015.

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## Early life

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Kanye Omari West was born on June 8, 1977, in Douglasville, Georgia.<sup>[11][12]</sup> After his parents divorced when he was three years old, he moved with his mother to Chicago, Illinois.<sup>[13][14]</sup> His father, Ray West, is a former Black Panther and was one of the first black photojournalists at *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*. Ray West was later a Christian counselor,<sup>[14]</sup> and in 2006, opened the Good Water Store and Café in Lexington Park, Maryland with startup capital from his son.<sup>[15][16]</sup> West's mother, Dr. Donda C. (Williams) West,<sup>[17]</sup> was a professor of English at Clark Atlanta University, and the Chair of the English Department at Chicago State University, before retiring to serve as his manager. West was raised in a middle-class background, attending Polaris High School<sup>[18]</sup> in suburban Oak Lawn, Illinois, after living in Chicago.<sup>[19]</sup> At the age of 10, West moved with his mother to Nanjing, China, where she was teaching at Nanjing University as part of an exchange program. According to his mother, West was the only foreigner in his class, but settled in well and quickly picked up the language, although he has since forgotten most of it.<sup>[20]</sup> When asked about his grades in high school, West replied, "I got A's and B's. And I'm not even frontin'."<sup>[21]</sup>

West demonstrated an affinity for the arts at an early age; he began writing poetry when he was five years old.<sup>[22]</sup> His mother recalled that she first took notice of West's passion for drawing and music when he was in the third grade.<sup>[23]</sup> West started rapping in the third grade and began making musical compositions in the seventh grade, eventually selling them to other artists.<sup>[24]</sup> At age thirteen, West wrote a rap song called "Green Eggs and Ham" and persuaded his mother to pay for time in a recording studio. Accompanying him to the studio and despite discovering it being "a little basement studio" where a microphone hung from the ceiling by a wire clothes hanger, West's mother nonetheless supported and encouraged him.<sup>[22]</sup> West crossed paths with producer/DJ No I.D., with whom he quickly formed a close friendship. No I.D. soon became West's mentor, and it was from him that West learned how to sample and program beats after he received his first sampler at age 15.<sup>[25]:557</sup> After graduating from high school, West received a scholarship to attend Chicago's American Academy of Art in 1997 and began taking painting classes, but shortly after transferred to Chicago State University to study English. He soon realized that his busy class schedule was detrimental to his musical work, and at 20 he dropped out of college to pursue his musical dreams.<sup>[26]</sup> This action greatly displeased his mother, who was also a professor at the university. She later commented, "It was drummed into my head that college is the ticket to a good life... but some career goals don't require college. For Kanye to make an album called *College Dropout* it was more about having the guts to embrace who you are, rather than following the path society has carved out for you."<sup>[25]:558</sup>

## Career

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### 1996–2002: Early work and Roc-A-Fella Records

Kanye West began his early production career in the mid-1990s, creating beats primarily for burgeoning local artists, eventually developing a style that involved speeding up vocal samples from classic soul records. His first official production credits came at the age of nineteen when he produced eight tracks on *Down to Earth*, the 1996 debut album of a Chicago rapper named Grav.<sup>[27]</sup> For a time, West acted as a ghost producer for Deric "D-Dot" Angelettie. Because of his association with D-Dot, West wasn't able to release a solo album, so he formed and became a member and producer of the Go-Getters, a late-1990s Chicago rap group composed of him, GLC, Timmy G, Really Doe, and Arrowstar.<sup>[28][29]</sup> His group was managed by John "Monopoly" Johnson, Don Crowley, and Happy Lewis under the management firm Hustle Period. After attending a series of promotional photo shoots and making some radio appearances, The Go-Getters released their first and only studio album *World Record Holders* in 1999. The album featured other Chicago-based rappers such as Rhymefest, Mikkey Halsted, Miss Criss, and Shayla G. Meanwhile, the production was handled by West, Arrowstar, Boogz, and Brian "All Day" Miller.<sup>[28]</sup>

In 1998, West was the first person signed by Gee Roberson and Kyambo "Hip Hop" Joshuato to management-production company Hip Hop Since 1978.<sup>[30]</sup> West spent much of the late 1990s producing records for a number of well-known artists and music groups.<sup>[31]</sup> The third song on Foxy Brown's second studio album *Chyna Doll* was produced by West. Her second effort subsequently became the very first hip-hop album by a female rapper to debut at the top of the U.S. *Billboard* 200 chart in its first week of release.<sup>[31]</sup> West produced three of the tracks on Harlem World's first and only album *The Movement* alongside Jermaine Dupri and the production duo Trackmasters. His songs featured rappers Nas, Drag-On, and R&B singer Carl Thomas.<sup>[31]</sup> The ninth track from *World Party*, the last Goodie Mob album to feature the rap group's four founding members prior to their break-up, was co-produced by West with his manager Deric "D-Dot" Angelettie.<sup>[31]</sup> At the close of the millennium, West ended up producing six songs for *Tell 'Em Why U Madd*, an album that was released by D-Dot under the alias of The Madd Rapper; a fictional character he created for a skit on The Notorious B.I.G.'s second and final studio album *Life After Death*. West's songs featured guest appearances from rappers such as Ma\$e, Raekwon, and Eminem.<sup>[31]</sup>

West got his big break in the year 2000, when he began to produce for artists on Roc-A-Fella Records. West came to achieve recognition and is often credited with revitalizing Jay-Z's career with his contributions to the rap mogul's influential 2001 album *The Blueprint*.<sup>[32]</sup> *The Blueprint* is consistently ranked among the greatest hip-hop albums, and the critical and financial success of the album generated substantial interest in West as a producer.<sup>[33]</sup> Serving as an in-house producer for Roc-A-Fella Records, West produced records for other artists from the label, including Beanie Sigel, Freeway, and Cam'ron. He also crafted hit songs for Ludacris, Alicia Keys, and Janet Jackson.<sup>[32][34]</sup>

Despite his success as a producer, West's true aspiration was to be a rapper. Though he had developed his rapping long before he began producing, it was often a challenge for West to be accepted as a rapper, and he struggled to attain a record deal.<sup>[35]</sup> Multiple record companies ignored him because he did not portray the 'gangsta image' prominent in mainstream hip hop at the time.<sup>[25]:556</sup> After a series of meetings with Capitol Records, West was ultimately denied an artist deal.<sup>[24]</sup>

According to Capitol Record's A&R, Joe Weinberger, he was approached by West and almost signed a deal with him, but another person in the company convinced Capitol's president not to.<sup>[24]</sup> Desperate to keep West from defecting to another label, then-label head Damon Dash reluctantly signed West to Roc-A-Fella Records. Jay-Z later admitted that Roc-A-Fella was initially reluctant to support West as a rapper, claiming that many saw him as a producer first and foremost, and that his background contrasted with that of his labelmates.<sup>[25]:556[36]</sup>



West received early acclaim for his production work on Jay-Z's *The Blueprint*; the two are pictured here in 2011.

West's breakthrough came a year later on October 23, 2002, when, while driving home from a California recording studio after working late, he fell asleep at the wheel causing a head-on crash with another car.<sup>[37]</sup> The crash left him with a shattered jaw, which had to be wired shut in reconstructive surgery. The crash broke both legs of the other driver.<sup>[38]</sup> The accident inspired West; two weeks after being admitted to the hospital, he recorded a song at the Record Plant Studios with his jaw still wired shut.<sup>[37]</sup> The composition, "Through the Wire", expressed West's experience after the accident, and helped lay the foundation for his debut album, as according to West "all the better artists have expressed what they were going through".<sup>[39][40]</sup> West added that "the album was my medicine", as working on the record distracted him from the pain.<sup>[41]</sup> "Through the Wire" was first available on West's *Get Well Soon...* mixtape, released December 2002.<sup>[42]</sup> At the same time, West announced that he was working on an album called *The College Dropout*, whose overall theme was to "make your own decisions. Don't let society tell you, 'This is what you have to do.'"<sup>[43]</sup>

## 2003–06: *The College Dropout* and Late Registration

West recorded the remainder of the album in Los Angeles while recovering from the car accident. Once he had completed the album, it was leaked months before its release date.<sup>[35]</sup> However, West decided to use the opportunity to review the album, and *The College Dropout* was significantly remixed, remastered, and revised before being released. As a result, certain tracks originally destined for the album were subsequently retracted, among them "Keep the Receipt" with Ol' Dirty Bastard and "The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly" with Consequence.<sup>[44]</sup> West meticulously refined the production, adding string arrangements, gospel choirs, improved drum programming and new verses.<sup>[35]</sup> West's perfectionism led *The College Dropout* to have its release postponed three times from its initial date in August 2003.<sup>[45][46]</sup>

*The College Dropout* was eventually issued by Roc-A-Fella in February 2004, shooting to number two on the *Billboard* 200 as his debut single, "Through the Wire" peaked at number fifteen on the *Billboard* Hot 100 chart for five weeks.<sup>[47]</sup> "Slow Jamz", his second single featuring Twista and Jamie Foxx, became an even bigger success: it became the three musicians' first number one hit. *The College Dropout* received near-universal critical acclaim from contemporary music critics, was voted the top album of the year by two major music publications, and has consistently been ranked among the great hip-hop works and debut albums by artists. "Jesus Walks", the album's fourth single, perhaps exposed West to a wider audience; the song's subject matter concerns faith and Christianity. The song nevertheless reached the top 20 of the *Billboard* pop charts, despite industry executives' predictions that a song containing such blatant declarations of faith would never make it to radio.<sup>[48][49]</sup> *The College Dropout* would eventually be certified triple platinum in the US, and garnered West 10 Grammy nominations, including Album of the Year, and Best Rap Album (which it received).<sup>[50]</sup> During this period, West also founded GOOD Music, a record label and management company that would go on to house affiliate artists and producers, such as No I.D. and John Legend. At the time, the focal point of West's production style was the use of sped-up vocal samples from soul records.<sup>[51]</sup> However, partly because of the acclaim of *The College Dropout*, such sampling had been much copied by others; with that overuse, and also because West felt he had become too dependent on the technique, he decided to find a new sound.<sup>[52]</sup> During this time, he also produced singles for Brandy, Common, John Legend, and Slum Village.<sup>[53]</sup>



West performing in Portland in December 2005 as a supporting act for U2 on their Vertigo Tour.

Beginning his second effort that fall, West would invest two million dollars and take over a year to craft his second album.<sup>[54]</sup> West was significantly inspired by *Roseland NYC Live*, a 1998 live album by English trip hop group Portishead, produced with the New York Philharmonic Orchestra.<sup>[55]</sup> Early in his career, the live



album had inspired him to incorporate string arrangements into his hip-hop production. Though West had not been able to afford many live instruments around the time of his debut album, the money from his commercial success enabled him to hire a string orchestra for his second album *Late Registration*.<sup>[55]</sup> West collaborated with American film score composer Jon Brion, who served as the album's co-executive producer for several tracks.<sup>[56]</sup> Although Brion had no prior experience in creating hip-hop records, he and West found that they could productively work together after their first afternoon in the studio where they discovered that neither confined his musical knowledge and vision to one specific genre.<sup>[57]</sup> *Late Registration* sold over 2.3 million units in the United States alone by the end of 2005 and was considered by industry observers as the only successful major album release of the fall season, which had been plagued by steadily declining CD sales.<sup>[58]</sup>

While West had encountered controversy a year prior when he stormed out of the American Music Awards of 2004 after losing Best New Artist award to Gretchen Wilson,<sup>[59]</sup> his first large-scale controversy came just days following *Late Registration*'s release, during a benefit concert for Hurricane Katrina victims. In September 2005, NBC broadcast A Concert for Hurricane Relief, and West was a featured speaker. When West was presenting alongside actor Mike Myers, he deviated from the prepared script. Myers spoke next and continued to read the script. Once it was West's turn to speak again, he said, "George Bush doesn't care about black people."<sup>[39][a]</sup> West's comment reached much of the United States, leading to mixed reactions; President Bush would later call it one of the most "disgusting moments" of his presidency.<sup>[61]</sup> West raised further controversy in January 2006 when he posed on the cover of *Rolling Stone* wearing a crown of thorns.<sup>[39]</sup>

## 2007–09: *Graduation*, *808s and Heartbreak*, and VMAs controversy

Fresh off spending the previous year touring the world with U2 on their Vertigo Tour, West felt inspired to compose anthemic rap songs that could operate more efficiently in large arenas.<sup>[62]</sup> To this end, West incorporated the synthesizer into his hip-hop production, utilized slower tempos, and experimented with electronic music and influenced by music of the 1980s.<sup>[63][64]</sup> In addition to U2, West drew musical inspiration from arena rock bands such as The Rolling Stones and Led Zeppelin in terms of melody and chord progression.<sup>[64][65]</sup> To make his next effort, the third in a planned tetralogy of education-themed studio albums,<sup>[66]</sup> more introspective and personal in lyricism, West listened to folk and country singer-songwriters Bob Dylan and Johnny Cash in hopes of developing methods to augment his wordplay and storytelling ability.<sup>[55]</sup>

West's third studio album, *Graduation*, garnered major publicity when its release date pitted West in a sales competition against rapper 50 Cent's *Curtis*.<sup>[67]</sup> Upon their September 2007 releases, *Graduation* outsold *Curtis* by a large margin, debuting at number one on the U.S. *Billboard* 200 chart and selling 957,000 copies in its first week.<sup>[68]</sup> *Graduation* continued the string of critical and commercial successes by West, and the album's lead single, "Stronger", garnered his third number-one hit.<sup>[69]</sup> "Stronger", which samples French house duo Daft Punk, has been accredited to not only encouraging other hip-hop artists to incorporate house and electronica elements into their music, but also for playing a part in the revival of disco and electro-infused music in the late 2000s.<sup>[70]</sup> Ben Detrick of *XXL* cited the outcome of the sales competition between 50 Cent's *Curtis* and West's *Graduation* as being responsible for altering the direction of hip-hop and paving the way for new rappers who didn't follow the hardcore-gangster mold, writing, "If there was ever a watershed moment to indicate hip-hop's changing direction, it may have come when 50 Cent competed with Kanye in 2007 to see whose album would claim superior sales."<sup>[71]</sup>



West performing in 2008.

West's life took a different direction when his mother, Donda West, died of complications from cosmetic surgery involving abdominoplasty and breast reduction in November 2007.<sup>[72]</sup> Months later, West and fiancée Alexis Phifer ended their engagement and their long-term intermittent relationship, which had begun in 2002.<sup>[73]</sup> The events profoundly affected West, who set off for his 2008 Glow in the Dark Tour shortly thereafter.<sup>[74]</sup> Purportedly because his emotions could not be conveyed through rapping, West decided to sing using the voice audio processor Auto-Tune, which would become a central part of his next effort. West had previously experimented with the technology on his debut album The College Dropout for the background vocals of "Jesus Walks" and "Never Let Me Down." Recorded mostly in Honolulu, Hawaii in three weeks,<sup>[75]</sup> West announced his fourth album, 808s & Heartbreak, at the 2008 MTV Video Music Awards, where he performed its lead single, "Love Lockdown". Music audiences were taken aback by the uncharacteristic production style and the presence of Auto-Tune, which typified the pre-release response to the record.<sup>[76]</sup>

808s & Heartbreak, which features extensive use of the eponymous Roland TR-808 drum machine and contains themes of love, loneliness, and heartache, was released by Island Def Jam to capitalize on Thanksgiving weekend in November 2008.<sup>[77][78]</sup> Reviews were positive, though slightly more mixed than his previous efforts. Despite this, the record's singles demonstrated outstanding chart performances. Upon its release, the lead single "Love Lockdown" debuted at number three on the Billboard Hot 100 and became a "Hot Shot Debut",<sup>[79]</sup> while follow-up single "Heartless" performed similarly and became his second consecutive "Hot Shot Debut" by debuting at number four on the Billboard Hot 100.<sup>[80]</sup> While it was criticized prior to release, 808s & Heartbreak had a significant effect on hip-hop music, encouraging other rappers to take more creative risks with their productions.<sup>[81]</sup>



West working in the studio in 2008, accompanied by mentor No I.D. (left).

West's controversial incident the following year at the 2009 MTV Video Music Awards was arguably his biggest controversy, and led to widespread outrage throughout the music industry.<sup>[82]</sup> During the ceremony, West crashed the stage and grabbed the microphone from Taylor Swift during her acceptance speech for "Best Female Video" in order to proclaim that Beyoncé's video for "Single Ladies (Put a Ring on It)", nominated for the same award, was "one of the best videos of all time." He was subsequently withdrawn from the remainder of the show for his actions. West's Fame Kills tour with Lady Gaga was cancelled in response to the controversy.<sup>[83]</sup> In 2009, West was named by Billboard as the Top Male Artist of 2009.<sup>[84]</sup>

## 2010–12: *My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy* and collaborations

Following the highly publicized incident, West took a brief break from music and threw himself into fashion, only to hole up in Hawaii for the next few months writing and recording his next album.<sup>[85]</sup> Importing his favorite producers and artists to work on and inspire his recording, West kept engineers behind the boards 24 hours a day and slept only in increments. Noah Callahan-Bever, a writer for Complex, was present during the sessions and described the "communal" atmosphere as thus: "With the right songs and the right album, he can overcome any and all controversy, and we are here to contribute, challenge, and inspire."<sup>[85]</sup> A variety of artists contributed to the project, including close friends Jay-Z, Kid Cudi and Pusha T, as well as off-the-wall collaborations, such as with Justin Vernon of Bon Iver.<sup>[86]</sup>

My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy, West's fifth studio album, was released in November 2010 to widespread acclaim from critics, many of whom considered it his best work and said it solidified his comeback.<sup>[87]</sup> In stark contrast to his previous effort, which featured a minimalist sound, Dark Fantasy adopts a maximalist philosophy and deals with themes of celebrity and excess.<sup>[51]</sup> The record included the

international hit "All of the Lights", and *Billboard* hits "Power", "Monster", and "Runaway",<sup>[88]</sup> the latter of which accompanied a 35-minute film of the same name directed by and starring West.<sup>[89]</sup> During this time, West initiated the free music program GOOD Fridays through his website, offering a free download of previously unreleased songs each Friday, a portion of which were included on the album. This promotion ran from August 20 – December 17, 2010. *Dark Fantasy* went on to go platinum in the United States,<sup>[90]</sup> but its omission as a contender for Album of the Year at the 54th Grammy Awards was viewed as a "snub" by several media outlets.<sup>[91]</sup>

2011 saw West embark on a festival tour to commemorate the release of *My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy* performing and headlining numerous festivals including; SWU Music & Arts, Austin City Limits, Oya Festival, Flow Festival, Live Music Festival, The Big Chill, Essence Music Festival, Lollapalooza and Coachella which was described by *The Hollywood Reporter* as "one of greatest hip-hop sets of all time",<sup>[92]</sup> West released the collaborative album Watch the Throne with Jay-Z in August 2011. By employing a sales strategy that released the album digitally weeks before its physical counterpart, *Watch the Throne* became one of the few major label albums in the Internet age to avoid a leak.<sup>[93][94]</sup> "Niggas in Paris" became the record's highest charting single, peaking at number five on the *Billboard* Hot 100.<sup>[88]</sup> The co-headlining Watch the Throne Tour kicked off in October 2011 and concluded in June 2012.<sup>[95]</sup> In 2012, West released the compilation album Cruel Summer, a collection of tracks by artists from West's record label GOOD Music. *Cruel Summer* produced four singles, two of which charted within the top twenty of the Hot 100: "Mercy" and "Clique".<sup>[88]</sup> West also directed a film of the same name that premiered at the 2012 Cannes Film Festival in custom pyramid-shaped screening pavilion featuring seven screens.<sup>[96]</sup>



West performing at the SWU Music & Arts Festival in Brazil, 2011

## 2013–15: *Yeezus* and Adidas collaboration

Sessions for West's sixth solo effort begin to take shape in early 2013 in his own personal loft's living room at a Paris hotel.<sup>[97]</sup> Determined to "undermine the commercial",<sup>[98]</sup> he once again brought together close collaborators and attempted to incorporate Chicago drill, dancehall, acid house, and industrial music.<sup>[99]</sup> Primarily inspired by architecture,<sup>[97]</sup> West's perfectionist tendencies led him to contact producer Rick Rubin fifteen days shy of its due date to strip down the record's sound in favor of a more minimalist approach.<sup>[100]</sup> Initial promotion of his sixth album included worldwide video projections of the album's music and live television performances.<sup>[101][102]</sup> *Yeezus*, West's sixth album, was released June 18, 2013, to rave reviews from critics.<sup>[103]</sup> It became his sixth consecutive number one debut, but also marked his lowest solo opening week sales.<sup>[104]</sup> Def Jam issued "Black Skinhead" to radio in July 2013 as the album's lead single.<sup>[105]</sup>

In September 2013, Kanye West announced he would be headlining his first solo tour in five years, to support *Yeezus*, with fellow American rapper Kendrick Lamar accompanying him as supporting act.<sup>[106][107]</sup> The tour was met with rave reviews from critics.<sup>[108]</sup> *Rolling Stone* described it as "crazily entertaining, hugely ambitious, emotionally affecting (really!) and, most importantly, totally bonkers."<sup>[108]</sup> Writing for *Forbes*, Zack O'Malley Greenburg praised West for "taking risks that few pop stars, if any, are willing to take in today's hyper-exposed world of pop," describing the show as "overwrought and uncomfortable at times, but [it] excels at challenging norms and provoking thought in a way that just isn't common for mainstream musical acts of late."<sup>[109]</sup>



In June 2013, West and television personality Kim Kardashian announced the birth of their first child, North, and their engagement in October to widespread media attention.<sup>[110]</sup> In November, West stated that he was beginning work on his next studio album, hoping to release it by mid-2014,<sup>[111]</sup> with production by Rick Rubin and Q-Tip.<sup>[112]</sup> In December 2013, Adidas announced the beginning of their official apparel collaboration with West, to be premiered the following year.<sup>[113]</sup> In May 2014, West and Kardashian were married in a private ceremony in Florence, Italy, with a variety of artists and celebrities in attendance.<sup>[110]</sup> West released a single, "Only One", featuring Paul McCartney, in December.<sup>[114]</sup>



West performing on the Yeezus Tour in 2013.

"FourFiveSeconds", a single jointly produced with Rihanna and McCartney, was released in January 2015. West also appeared on the Saturday Night Live 40th Anniversary Special, where he premiered a new song entitled "Wolves", featuring Sia Furler and fellow Chicago rapper, Vic Mensa. In February 2015, West premiered his clothing collaboration with Adidas, entitled Yeezy Season 1, to generally positive reviews. This would include West's Yeezy Boost sneakers.<sup>[115]</sup> In March 2015, West released the single "All Day" featuring Theophilus London, Allan Kingdom and Paul McCartney.<sup>[116]</sup> West performed the song at the 2015 BRIT Awards with a number of US rappers and UK grime MC's including: Skepta, Wiley, Novelist, Fekky, Krept & Konan, Stormzy, Allan Kingdom, Theophilus London and Vic Mensa.<sup>[117]</sup> He would premiere the second iteration of his clothing line, Yeezy Season 2, in September 2015 at New York Fashion Week.<sup>[118]</sup>

Having initially announced a new album entitled *So Help Me God* slated for a 2014 release, in March 2015 West announced that the album would instead be tentatively called *SWISH*.<sup>[119]</sup> On May 11, West was awarded an honorary doctorate by the School of the Art Institute of Chicago for his contributions to music, fashion, and popular culture, officially making him an honorary DFA.<sup>[120][121]</sup> The next month, West headlined at the Glastonbury Festival in the UK, despite a petition signed by almost 135,000 people against his appearance.<sup>[122]</sup> Toward the end of the set, West proclaimed himself: "the greatest living rock star on the planet."<sup>[123]</sup> Media outlets, including social media sites such as Twitter, were divided on his performance.<sup>[124][125]</sup> NME stated, "The decision to book West for the slot has proved controversial since its announcement, and the show itself appeared to polarise both Glastonbury goers and those who tuned in to watch on their TVs."<sup>[125]</sup> The publication added that "he's letting his music speak for and prove itself."<sup>[126]</sup> The Guardian said that "his set has a potent ferocity – but there are gaps and stutters, and he cuts a strangely lone figure in front of the vast crowd."<sup>[127]</sup> In September 2015, West performed *808s & Heartbreak* in its entirety two nights in a row to rave reviews at Hollywood Bowl. The performance featured a 60-person orchestra, a live band, guests from the album and 70 plus dancers.<sup>[128]</sup> In December 2015, West released a song titled "Facts".<sup>[129]</sup>

## 2016–17: *The Life of Pablo* and tour cancellation

West announced in January 2016 that *SWISH* would be released on February 11, and later that month, released new songs "Real Friends" and a snippet of "No More Parties in LA" with Kendrick Lamar. This also revived the GOOD Fridays initiative in which he releases new singles every Friday. On January 26, 2016, West revealed he had renamed the album from *SWISH* to *Waves*, and also announced the premier of his Yeezy Season 3 clothing line at Madison Square Garden.<sup>[130]</sup> In the weeks leading up to the album's release, West became embroiled in several Twitter controversies<sup>[131]</sup> and released several changing iterations of the track list for the new album. Several days ahead of its release, West again changed the title, this time to *The Life of Pablo*.<sup>[132]</sup> On February 11, West premiered the album at Madison Square Garden as part of the presentation of his Yeezy Season 3 clothing line.<sup>[133]</sup> Following the preview, West announced that he would be modifying the track list once more before its release to the public,<sup>[134]</sup> and further delayed

its release to finalize the recording of the track "Waves" at the behest of co-writer Chance the Rapper. He released the album exclusively on Tidal on February 14, 2016, following a performance on SNL.<sup>[135][136]</sup> Following its official streaming release, West continued to tinker with mixes of several tracks, describing the work as "a living breathing changing creative expression"<sup>[137]</sup> and proclaiming the end of the album as a dominant release form.<sup>[138]</sup> Although a statement by West around *The Life of Pablo*'s initial release indicated that the album would be a permanent exclusive to Tidal, the album was released through several other competing services starting in April.<sup>[139]</sup>

In February 2016, West stated on Twitter that he was planning to release another album in the summer of 2016, tentatively called *Turbo Grafx 16* in reference to the 1990s video game console of the same name.<sup>[140][141]</sup> In June 2016, West released the collaborative lead single "Champions" off the GOOD Music album *Cruel Winter*, which has yet to be released.<sup>[142][143]</sup> Later that month, West released a controversial video for "Famous", which depicted wax figures of several celebrities (including West, Kardashian, Taylor Swift, businessman and then-presidential candidate Donald Trump, comedian Bill Cosby, and former president George W. Bush) sleeping nude in a shared bed.<sup>[144]</sup> In August 2016, West embarked on the Saint Pablo Tour in support of *The Life of Pablo*.<sup>[145]</sup> The performances featured a mobile stage suspended from the ceiling.<sup>[145]</sup> West postponed several dates in October following the Paris robbery of several of his wife's effects.<sup>[146]</sup> On November 21, 2016, West cancelled the remaining 21 dates on the Saint Pablo Tour, following a week of no-shows, curtailed concerts and rants about politics.<sup>[147]</sup> He was later admitted for psychiatric observation at UCLA Medical Center.<sup>[148][149]</sup> He stayed hospitalized over the Thanksgiving weekend because of a temporary psychosis stemming from sleep deprivation and extreme dehydration.<sup>[150]</sup> Following this episode West took an 11-month break from Twitter, and the public in general.<sup>[151]</sup>



West performing during the Saint Pablo Tour in 2016.

## 2017–19: Ye and further collaborations

It was reported in May 2017 that West was recording new music in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, with a wide range of collaborators.<sup>[152][153][154]</sup> In April 2018, West announced plans to write a philosophy book entitled *Break the Simulation*,<sup>[155]</sup> later clarifying that he was sharing the book "in real time" on Twitter and began posting content that was likened to "life coaching".<sup>[156]</sup> Later that month, he also announced two new albums, a solo album and self-titled collaboration with Kid Cudi under the name Kids See Ghosts, both of which would be released in June.<sup>[157]</sup> Additionally, he revealed he would produce upcoming albums by GOOD Music label-mates Pusha T and Teyana Taylor, as well as Nas.<sup>[158]</sup> Shortly thereafter, West released the non-album singles "Lift Yourself", a "strange, gibberish track" featuring nonsensical lyrics, and "Ye vs. the People", in which he and T.I. discussed West's controversial support of Donald Trump.<sup>[159]</sup>

Pusha T's *Daytona*, "the first project out of Wyoming", was released in May to critical acclaim, although the album's artwork – a photograph of deceased singer Whitney Houston's bathroom that West paid \$85,000 to license – attracted some controversy.<sup>[160][161]</sup> The following week, West released his album, Ye. West has suggested that he scrapped the original recordings of the album and re-recorded it within a month.<sup>[162]</sup> The week after, West released a collaborative album with Kid Cudi, titled *Kids See Ghosts*, named after their group of the same name. West also completed production work on Nasir<sup>[163]</sup> and K.T.S.E.,<sup>[164]</sup>

On August 30, 2018, West released the non-album single "XTCY" which was originally slated to be included in *Ye*. On September 7, 2018, West released a collaboration with American rapper Lil Pump titled "I Love It". On September 9, 2018, West announced via Twitter that *Watch the Throne 2* would be coming soon.<sup>[165]</sup> Later that month, West also announced his ninth studio album Yandhi to be released by the end of

the month and a collaborative album with Chicagoan rapper Chance the Rapper titled *Good Ass Job*. West also announced in September that he would be changing his stage name to "Ye".<sup>[166]</sup> *Yandhi* was originally set for released on September 29, 2018 but was postponed to November 23, 2018. West later postponed the album again in November 2018 with no new release date set.

Later in 2018, West began collaborating with other new acts besides Lil Pump. West appeared as a guest feature on the tracks "Kanga" and "Mama" with Nicki Minaj on American rapper 6ix9ine's debut album *Dummy Boy*. West is also the sole feature on XXXTentacion's first posthumous album *Skins*. 6ix9ine and XXXTentacion were both slated to be included on *Yandhi*. In January 2019, West pulled out of headlining the years Coachella festival, after negotiations broke down due to discord regarding stage design.<sup>[167]</sup>

On July 18, 2019, it was reported that songs from West's unreleased album *Yandhi* were leaked online.<sup>[168]</sup> By October of the same year the whole leaked unfinished album was available for a short time on streaming services like Spotify and Tidal but were shortly taken down.<sup>[169]</sup> By October 21, 2019, West announced his Christian hip hop album *Jesus is King*, effectively changing and retitling his previously announced *Yandhi* Album.<sup>[170]</sup>



*Yandhi* was first completed in West's hometown of Chicago, but was later postponed. West went to do more recording in Uganda, but later delayed the album a second time with no planned release date.

## 2019–present: *Jesus Is King* and *God's Country*

On January 6, 2019, West started his weekly "Sunday Service" orchestration which includes soul variations of both West's and others' songs attended by multiple celebrities including the Kardashians, Charlie Wilson, and Kid Cudi.<sup>[171]</sup> West previewed a new song, "Water" at his "Sunday Service" orchestration performance at weekend 2 of Coachella.<sup>[172]</sup>

On October 25, 2019, he released *Jesus Is King*, a Christian hip hop album.<sup>[173]</sup> On the US charts, the album became the first to ever top the *Billboard* 200, Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums, Top Rap Albums, Top Christian Albums and Top Gospel Albums at the same time.<sup>[174]</sup> He also collaborated with Vanessa Beecroft on two operas, *Nebuchadnezzar* and *Mary*.<sup>[175][176]</sup> On December 25, 2019, West and Sunday Service released *Jesus Is Born*, containing 19 songs including several re-workings of older West songs.<sup>[177]</sup>

On June 30, 2020, West released the first single from his upcoming tenth studio album *God's Country*, titled "Wash Us in the Blood". It features Travis Scott and draws similarities to the sound of his 2013 album *Yeezus*.<sup>[178]</sup>

## Musical style

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### General

West's musical career is defined by frequent stylistic shifts and different musical approaches.<sup>[39]</sup> In the subsequent years since his debut, West has both musically and lyrically taken an increasingly experimental approach to crafting progressive hip hop music while maintaining accessible pop sensibilities.<sup>[179][180][181]</sup> He has introduced new musical elements and unconventional reference points into his sonic palette with each album.<sup>[180]</sup> Over time, West has explored a variety of music genres encompassing soul, baroque-pop, stadium rock, electro, house-music, indie rock, synth-pop, progressive rock, industrial, punk and

gospel.<sup>[180][182]</sup> West's approach to record production is consistently rich, nuanced and thought-provoking.<sup>[183][184]</sup> His productions are akin to musical compositions, bearing an ornate style with more depth typical of hip hop artists while making use of an ear for hooks.<sup>[185][180][181]</sup> He incorporates live instruments, manipulated vocal samples and dramatic arrangements to supplement his beats.<sup>[186][187]</sup> His later musical works increasingly relied on the application of digital audio workstations and computerized synths, bass, and drums.<sup>[186][188]</sup>

West also surveys and analyzes lyrical trends in the continuously evolving landscape of hip hop culture, often changing his approach to rhyming couplets for his songwriting and delivery.<sup>[181]</sup> Lyrically, West's wordplay generally contains a proliferation of puns and inventive, multi-syllabic rhymes.<sup>[189][179]</sup> Both his songwriting and vocal delivery rely on lines laden with transformative and slant rhymes, with West often altering the pronunciation of his words.<sup>[179]</sup> West admits his rapping ability is not as dexterous as peers Jay-Z, Eminem and Nas, so he compensates with subject matter. He elaborates, "the songs offer melody and message. That's the main goal. I saw it as a simple math project: If I can rap 70 to 80 percent as good as the beats are, I'll be successful."<sup>[181]</sup> West drew influence from mainstream rappers such as Mase and his Roc-A-Fella labelmates Jay-Z and Cam'ron in conjunction with underground hip hop artists like Mos Def, Talib Kweli and Dead Prez. Kanye stated that Dead Prez in particular helped him discover a style of making "raps with a message sound cool."<sup>[190]</sup>

With his debut album, West managed to strike a balance between smart and savvy rap lyrical themes. As his songwriting injects pop melodies into raw hip hop beats, West's lyrics find him rapping about substantial issues in addition to amusing topics ranging from Jesus and weight loss in a way that resulted in widespread commercial appeal.<sup>[183][184]</sup> They successfully struck a chord with both mainstream hip hop audience as well as its alternative sector.<sup>[180]</sup> His rhymes have been described as funny, provocative and articulate, capable of seamlessly segueing from shrewd commentary to comical braggadocio to introspective sensitivity.<sup>[189]</sup> West imparts that he's conscious of the circumstances of his surroundings and strives to speak in an inclusive manner so groups from different racial and gender backgrounds can comprehend his lyrics, saying he desired to sound "just as ill as Jadakiss and just as understandable as Will Smith."<sup>[192]</sup>

Asked about his early musical inspirations in 2008, he named artists such as A Tribe Called Quest, Stevie Wonder, Michael Jackson, George Michael, LL Cool J, Phil Collins and Madonna.<sup>[193]</sup> Regarding the influence of A Tribe Called Quest producer Q-Tip, West stated, "Midnight Marauders, 'Electric Relaxation', Low End Theory — a lot of the melodies and the type of chords they would sample... was what I was going for when I did The College Dropout. When I felt like I was at my highest level was when I was closest to a Tribe record. So, a record like "Heard 'Em Say" was an accomplishment for me — to even have something that was close to what they did."<sup>[194]</sup> Other musicians West has invoked as general inspirations include David Bowie, Miles Davis and Gil-Scott Heron.<sup>[195][196]</sup> West was formatively mentored by Chicago producer No I.D., who introduced him to record production in the early 1990s, allowing a teenage West to sit in on recording sessions.<sup>[197]</sup> West has cited Wu-Tang Clan producer and leader RZA as a prominent influence on his style.<sup>[19]</sup> He stated, "Me and my friends talk about this all the time... We think Wu-Tang had one of the biggest impacts as far as a movement. From slang to style of dress, skits, the samples. Similar to the [production] style I use, RZA has been doing that."<sup>[198]</sup> On his behalf, RZA has responded favorably to comparisons between him and West. He said, "All good. Kanye West, I got super respect for Kanye. He came up to me about a year or two ago. He gave me mad praising and blessings. He had a lot to say about things I did. ... It's like when I met Isaac Hayes."<sup>[199]</sup>



West composes several of his songs utilizing an Akai MPC2000XL (pictured) done in combination with elaborate live orchestration.<sup>[191]</sup>



West's early sound was largely influenced by 1990s hip hop music, particularly that of the East Coast.<sup>[180]</sup> Despite hailing from Chicago, West expressed a preference for New York artists, tailoring both his lyricism and fashion sense after rappers such as Raekwon and Nas. He recalled, "I used to love people like Wu-Tang Clan, Biggie, and Nas—people that sold records. I liked Common okay, you know, since he was from Chicago, but I wanted to dress like Nas."<sup>[183][184]</sup> Regarding production, according to No I.D., who mentored him from age 14, West "made Puffy-style poppish beats."<sup>[183][184]</sup> Sharing similar sentiments, West's close friend and collaborator singer-songwriter and musician John Legend once described him as "the singsongy rapper/producer with the overtly pop sensibility."<sup>[183][184]</sup> West also claims that he used to make beats reminiscent of Timbaland and DJ Premier.<sup>[190]</sup> Alongside DJ Premier, the soulful nature of his early production bears an influence of Prince Paul, while the slightly off-kilter drum-machine beats he crafted for tracks reflect J Dilla.<sup>[200][201]</sup> While speaking on the late producer, West praised Dilla's ability concerning drums. He asserted, "That man was a genius. Whatever he could do to tweak that MPC the way he worked. He worked it in a different type of way."<sup>[202]</sup> West subsequently developed a hip hop production style driven by melodic and rhythmic hooks derived from samples of classic soul records.<sup>[203]</sup> He would take cues from the traditional sounds of early 1990s New York City hip hop, with an emphasis on infectious looped samples and dense drums or percussion, and channel the aesthetic through contemporary record production while polishing it to a pop sheen.<sup>[180][204]</sup>

## 1990s–2000s

Early in his career, West pioneered a style of hip-hop production dubbed "chipmunk-soul."<sup>[205][203]</sup> His method of sampling technique is reminiscent of record production from the 1990s, involving the manipulation of tempo in order to chop and stretch pitched-up samples from vintage soul songs.<sup>[206][187]</sup> According to mixing engineer Craig Bauer, the co-owner of Hinge Studios, a downtown Chicago recording and mixing facility where West has been a client, "He knew what he wanted, and he was always striving to make his beats sound like no one else's. He would lift samples and manipulate them – twist them around, turn them up an octave – until he got something fresh out of something that was made twenty or thirty years ago. He never wanted to be like someone else."<sup>[207]</sup> This is typically done on an Akai MPC or an Ensoniq ASR-10 and combined with his own instrumentation.<sup>[208]</sup> West further developed his style on his debut studio album, *The College Dropout* (2004). On the album, West formed the constitutive elements of his style: intricate hip-hop beats, topical subject matter, and clumsy rapping laced with inventive wordplay.<sup>[179][190]</sup> After a rough version was leaked, West meticulously refined the production, adding string arrangements, gospel choirs, and improved drum programming.<sup>[35]</sup> Alongside soul samples, the record was characterized by its relatable lyrics. West drew from his own experiences after leaving college to pursue music and recovering from a near-fatal car accident.<sup>[187]</sup> The record saw West diverge from the then-dominant gangster persona in hip hop in favor of more diverse, topical lyrical subjects.<sup>[40]</sup> His songs found him rapping about higher education, materialism, self-consciousness, minimum-wage labor, institutional prejudice, class struggle, family, sexuality, and his own self-doubts and personal struggles in the music industry in a manner particular to his middle-class upbringing.<sup>[209][210][180]</sup>

West progressed forward towards more musically adventurous, maximalistic production on his subsequent albums, beginning with his sophomore effort, *Late Registration* (2005).<sup>[180][187]</sup> For his second album, West collaborated with film score composer Jon Brion and drew influence from diverse influences such as English trip hop group Portishead.<sup>[55]</sup> Blending West's primary soulful hip hop production with Brion's elaborate chamber pop orchestration, the album experimentally incorporated a wide array of different genres and prominent orchestral elements, including string arrangements, piano chords, brass flecks, and horn riffs,<sup>[56]</sup> amid a myriad of foreign and vintage instruments.<sup>[211]</sup> Critic Robert Christgau wrote that "there's never been hip-hop so complex and subtle musically."<sup>[212]</sup> In addition, West's flow improved since his debut

album. He became more adept at syncing his phrases up with beats instead of merely coasting over them to deliver punch lines.<sup>[207]</sup> With his lyrics, West displayed an aptitude for personalizing what would otherwise be political, dwelling on matters close to heart.<sup>[207]</sup>

On his third album, *Graduation* (2007), West moved towards an atmospheric soundscape influenced by rock music and laced with electronics.<sup>[213]</sup> West retracted much of the soulful sampling and rich live instrumentation that characterized his previous albums and replaced them with loud, gothic synthesizers.<sup>[214]</sup> He incorporated layers of distorted synth-chords, house beats, electro-disco rhythms, and a wide array of modulated electronic noises and digital audio-effects into his hip-hop production.<sup>[63][215]</sup> West was primarily influenced by arena rock bands such as The Rolling Stones, U2 and Led Zeppelin.<sup>[64][65]</sup> Drawing his from experiences on stadium tours, West progressed to a more anthemic style of composing rap songs that would function well when performing in large arenas.<sup>[216][217]</sup> He also drew musical inspiration from European Britpop and Euro-disco, American alternative and indie-rock, and his native Chicago house.<sup>[218][215]</sup> Lyrically, *Graduation* is more introspective in comparison to predecessors.<sup>[219]</sup> West dedicated much of his songwriting towards providing inspirational messages directed at individuals while exploring personal issues surrounding his own fame and media scrutiny.<sup>[220][219]</sup>

West's fourth studio album, *808s & Heartbreak* (2008), marked a radical departure from his previous releases.<sup>[221]</sup> He largely abandoned rapping over hip-hop beats in favor of emotive, melodic singing within a stark synth-driven electropop soundscape.<sup>[222][223][224]</sup> West stripped away samples and relied almost entirely on droning synthesizers as instruments while singing with the use of Auto-Tune.<sup>[187][221]</sup> Throughout the album, he juxtaposes the electronic feel generated by Auto-Tune and distorted Roland TR-808 drum machine with lengthy strings, somber piano and tribal rhythms.<sup>[225][226]</sup> Impacted by the tragic death of his mother, Donda West, as well as the broken engagement from his fiancée, designer Alexis Phifer, he wrote more sensitive pop songs about love and relationships.<sup>[187]</sup> West was inspired to sing thanks to words of encouragement from famed pop artist Michael Jackson.<sup>[202]</sup> Prior to its release, West also cited inspiration from 1980s synthpop artists such as Phil Collins, Gary Numan, and Boy George and confessed an affinity with the work of post-punk and new wave groups such as Joy Division, The Police and TJ Swan.<sup>[227][228]</sup> He would later describe *808s & Heartbreak* as "the first black new wave album."<sup>[190]</sup> Discussing the album's subsequent influence on popular music, journalist Matthew Trammell for *Rolling Stone* described *808s* as "Kanye's most vulnerable work, and perhaps his most brilliant."<sup>[229]</sup>



The Roland TR-808, the titular drum machine which served as a primary instrument on *808s & Heartbreak*.

## 2010s

West recorded his fifth album, *My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy* (2010), with a wide range of collaborators. The album engages with themes of excess, celebrity, and decadence,<sup>[230]</sup> has been noted by writers for its maximalist aesthetic and its incorporation of elements from West's previous four albums.<sup>[231][232][233]</sup> *Entertainment Weekly*'s Simon Vozick-Levinson noted that such elements "all recur at various points", namely "the luxurious soul of 2004's *The College Dropout*, the symphonic pomp of *Late Registration*, the gloss of 2007's *Graduation*, and the emotionally exhausted electro of 2008's *808s & Heartbreak*."<sup>[232]</sup> In a positive review, Andy Gill of *The Independent* called it "one of pop's gaudiest, most grandiose efforts of recent years, a no-holds-barred musical extravaganza in which any notion of good taste is abandoned at the door".<sup>[234]</sup>

Describing his sixth studio album *Yeezus* (2013) as "a protest to music,"<sup>[235]</sup> West embraced an abrasive style that incorporated a variety of unconventional influences. Music critic Greg Kot described it as "a hostile, abrasive and intentionally off-putting" album that combines "the worlds of" 1980s acid-house and contemporary Chicago drill music, 1990s industrial music, and the "avant-rap" of Saul Williams, Death Grips and Odd Future.<sup>[99]</sup> The album also incorporates elements of trap music,<sup>[236]</sup> as well as dancehall, punk, and electro.<sup>[236][237][238]</sup> Inspired by the minimalist design of Le Corbusier<sup>[190]</sup> and primarily electronic in nature, *Yeezus* also continues West's practice of eclectic and unusual samples.<sup>[239]</sup> *Rolling Stone* called the album a "brilliant, obsessive-compulsive career auto-correct".<sup>[240]</sup> West's seventh album *The Life of Pablo* was noted for its "raw, occasionally even intentionally messy, composition" in distinction to West's previous album.<sup>[241]</sup> *Rolling Stone* wrote that "It's designed to sound like a work in progress." Carl Wilson of *Slate* characterized the album as creating "strange links between Kanye's many iterations—soul-sample enthusiast, heartbroken Auto-Tune crooner, hedonistic avant-pop composer, industrial-rap shit-talker." West initially characterized the release as "a gospel album." Greg Kot of the *Chicago Tribune* wrote in his review of *The Life of Pablo*, "West's version of gospel touches on some of those sonic cues – heavy organ, soaring choirs – but seems more preoccupied with gospel text and the notion of redemption."<sup>[242]</sup>

## Other ventures

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### Fashion

Early in his career, West made clear his interest in fashion and desire to work in the clothing design industry.<sup>[39][97]</sup> In September 2005, West announced that he would release his Pastelle Clothing line in spring 2006, claiming "Now that I have a Grammy under my belt and *Late Registration* is finished, I am ready to launch my clothing line next spring."<sup>[243]</sup> The line was developed over the following four years – with multiple pieces teased by West himself – before the line was ultimately cancelled in 2009.<sup>[244][245]</sup> In 2009, West collaborated with Nike to release his own shoe, the Air Yeezys, with a second version released in 2012. He became the first non-athlete to be given a shoe deal with Nike.<sup>[246]</sup> In January 2009, he introduced his first shoe line designed for Louis Vuitton during Paris Fashion Week. The line was released in summer 2009.<sup>[247]</sup> West has additionally designed footwear for Bape and Italian shoemaker Giuseppe Zanotti.<sup>[248]</sup> In fall 2009, West moved to Rome and did an internship at Italian fashion brand Fendi where he gave ideas for the men's collection.<sup>[249]</sup> In March 2011, West collaborated with M/M Paris for a series of silk scarves featuring artwork from *My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy*.<sup>[250]</sup>



West in 2007

On October 1, 2011, Kanye West premiered his women's fashion label, DW Kanye West<sup>[251]</sup> at Paris Fashion Week. He received support from DSquared2 duo Dean and Dan Caten, Olivier Theyskens, Jeremy Scott, Azzedine Alaïa, and the Olsen twins, who were also in attendance during his show. His debut fashion show received mixed-to-negative reviews,<sup>[252]</sup> ranging from reserved observations by Style.com<sup>[253]</sup> to excoriating commentary in *The Wall Street Journal*,<sup>[254]</sup> *The New York Times*,<sup>[255]</sup> the *International Herald Tribune*, Elleuk.com, *The Daily Telegraph*, *Harper's Bazaar* and many others.<sup>[256][257][258]</sup> On March 6, 2012, West premiered a second fashion line at Paris Fashion Week.<sup>[259][260]</sup> The line's reception was markedly improved from the previous presentation, with a number of critics heralding West for his "much improved" sophomore effort.<sup>[261]</sup>

On December 3, 2013, Adidas officially confirmed a new shoe collaboration deal with West.<sup>[113]</sup> After months of anticipation and rumors, West confirmed the release of the Adidas Yeezy Boosts. In 2015, West unveiled his Yeezy Season clothing line, premiering Season 1 in collaboration with Adidas early in the year.<sup>[262]</sup> The line received positive critical reviews, with Vogue observing "a protective toughness, a body-conscious severity that made the clothes more than a simple accessory."<sup>[263]</sup> The release of the Yeezy Boosts and the full Adidas collaboration was showcased in New York City on February 12, 2015, with free streaming to 50 cinemas in 13 countries around the world.<sup>[264]</sup> An initial release of the Adidas Yeezy Boosts was limited to 9000 pairs to be available only in New York City via the Adidas smartphone app; the Adidas Yeezy Boosts were sold out within 10 minutes.<sup>[265]</sup> The shoes released worldwide on February 28, 2015, were limited to select boutique stores and the Adidas UK stores. He followed with Season 2 later that year at New York Fashion Week.<sup>[115]</sup> On February 11, West premiered his Yeezy Season 3 clothing line at Madison Square Garden in conjunction with the previewing of his album The Life of Pablo.<sup>[133]</sup> In June 2016, Adidas announced a new long-term contract with Kanye West which sees the Yeezy line extend to a number of stores and enter sports performance products.<sup>[266]</sup> The Yeezys will be seen in basketball, football, soccer, and more.<sup>[266]</sup>



Adidas Yeezy Boost "Oxford Tan"

In February 2017, West unveiled the Yeezy Season 5 collection to favorable responses from critics.<sup>[267]</sup> In May 2017, West, alongside wife Kim Kardashian, launched a clothing line for children titled "Kids Supply".<sup>[268]</sup> A second collection was released in July 2017.<sup>[269]</sup> In February, West tweeted "Yeezy is no longer a fashion company we should be referred to as apparel or clothing or simply YEEZY."<sup>[270]</sup>

West's Yeezy shoe line is considered one of the most influential sneaker brands in the world.<sup>[271]</sup>

## Business ventures

West founded the record label and production company GOOD Music in 2004, in conjunction with Sony BMG, shortly after releasing his debut album, The College Dropout. John Legend, Common, and West were the label's inaugural artists.<sup>[272]</sup> The label houses artists including West, Big Sean, Pusha T, Teyana Taylor, Yasiin Bey / Mos Def, D'banj and John Legend, and producers including Hudson Mohawke, Q-Tip, Travis Scott, No I.D., Jeff Bhasker, and S1. GOOD Music has released ten albums certified gold or higher by the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA). In November 2015, West appointed Pusha T the new president of GOOD Music.<sup>[273]</sup>

In August 2008, West revealed plans to open 10 Fatburger restaurants in the Chicago area; the first was set to open in September 2008 in Orland Park. The second followed in January 2009, while a third location is yet to be revealed, although the process is being finalized. His company, KW Foods LLC, bought the rights to the chain in Chicago.<sup>[274]</sup> Ultimately, in 2009, only two locations actually opened. In February 2011, West shut down the Fatburger located in Orland Park.<sup>[275]</sup> Later that year, the remaining Beverly location also was shuttered.<sup>[276]</sup>

On January 5, 2012, West announced his establishment of the creative content company DONDA, named after his late mother Donda West.<sup>[277]</sup> In his announcement, West proclaimed that the company would "pick up where Steve Jobs left off"; DONDA would operate as "a design company which will galvanize amazing thinkers in a creative space to bounce their dreams and ideas" with the "goal to make products and experiences that people want and can afford."<sup>[278]</sup> West is notoriously secretive about the company's operations, maintaining neither an official website nor a social media presence.<sup>[279][280]</sup> In stating DONDA's creative philosophy, West articulated the need to "put creatives in a room together with like minds" in order



to "simplify and aesthetically improve everything we see, taste, touch, and feel."<sup>[278]</sup> Contemporary critics have noted the consistent minimalistic aesthetic exhibited throughout DONDA creative projects.<sup>[281][282][283]</sup>

On March 30, 2015, it was announced that West is a co-owner, with various other music artists, in the music streaming service Tidal. The service specialises in lossless audio and high definition music videos. Jay-Z acquired the parent company of Tidal, Aspiro, in the first quarter of 2015.<sup>[284]</sup> Sixteen artist stakeholders in Jay-Z, Rihanna, Beyoncé, Madonna, Chris Martin, Nicki Minaj co-own Tidal, with the majority owning a 3% equity stake.<sup>[285]</sup> The idea of having an all artist owned streaming service was created by those involved to adapt to the increased demand for streaming within the current music industry, and to rival other streaming services such as Spotify, which have been criticised for their low payout of royalties.<sup>[286]</sup> "The challenge is to get everyone to respect music again, to recognize its value", stated Jay-Z on the release of Tidal.<sup>[287]</sup>

On June 6, 2016, West announced the Yeezy Season 2 Zine. The Adidas Yeezy Boost 750 sneakers were released to retailers the following week, on June 11.<sup>[288]</sup> They are high-top shoes with a glow in the dark sole.<sup>[288]</sup> In an interview with *Vogue*, he stated that there will be Yeezy stores, with the first located in California.<sup>[289]</sup>

In an interview with *Fader* in September 2018, West announced that he was considering plans of opening an automobile factory in Chicago with the focus of developing a flying car with the help of Tesla alumni.<sup>[290]</sup>

In July 2020, Yeezy LLC was listed in a United States Department of the Treasury log of businesses that received small business loans through the CARES Act.<sup>[291][292]</sup>

## Philanthropy

West, alongside his mother, founded the "Kanye West Foundation" in Chicago in 2003, tasked with a mission to battle dropout and illiteracy rates, while partnering with community organizations to provide underprivileged youth access to music education.<sup>[293]</sup> In 2007, the West and the Foundation partnered with Strong American Schools as part of their "Ed in '08" campaign.<sup>[294][295]</sup> As spokesman for the campaign, West appeared in a series of PSAs for the organization, and hosted an inaugural benefit concert in August of that year.<sup>[296]</sup>

In 2008, following the death of West's mother, the foundation was rechristened "The Dr. Donda West Foundation."<sup>[293][297]</sup> The foundation ceased operations in 2011.<sup>[298]</sup> Kanye West and friend, Rhymefest, also founded "Donda's House, Inc". Got Bars is the Donda's House signature music/lyric composition and performance program. Participants are selected through an application and audition process. Got Bars is a free music writing program with the goal of helping at-risk Chicago youth. It is aimed at students between 15 and 24, and includes lessons on how to write and record music. Their curriculum is based on the teaching philosophy and pedagogy of Dr. Donda West with a focus on collaborative and experiential learning.<sup>[299]</sup>

West has additionally appeared and participated in many fundraisers, benefit concerts, and has done community work for Hurricane Katrina relief, the Kanye West Foundation, the Millions More Movement, 100 Black Men of America, a Live Earth concert benefit, World Water Day rally and march, Nike runs, a Hurricane Sandy benefit concert, and an MTV special helping young Iraq War veterans who struggle through debt and PTSD a second chance after returning home.<sup>[300]</sup>

In January 2019, West donated \$10 million towards the completion of the Roden Crater by American artist James Turrell.<sup>[301]</sup> In June 2020, in wake of the killing of George Floyd and following protests, he donated \$2 million between the family of Floyd and other victims of police brutality Ahmaud Arbery and Breonna

Taylor. The donation funded legal fees for Arbery and Taylor's families, as well as establishing a 529 plan to fully cover college tuition for Floyd's daughter.<sup>[302]</sup>

## Acting and filmmaking

West made cameo appearances as himself in the films *State Property 2* (2005) and *The Love Guru* (2008),<sup>[303][304]</sup> and in an episode of the television show *Entourage* in 2007.<sup>[305]</sup> West provided the voice for "Kenny West", a rapper, in the animated sitcom *The Cleveland Show*.<sup>[304]</sup> In 2009, he starred in the Spike Jonze-directed short film *We Were Once a Fairytale* (2009), playing himself acting belligerently while drunk in a nightclub.<sup>[306]</sup> West wrote, directed, and starred in the musical short film *Runaway* (2010), which heavily features music from *My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy*.<sup>[89]</sup> The film depicts a relationship between a man, played by West, and a half-woman, half-phoenix creature.<sup>[307]</sup> In 2012, West wrote and directed another short film, titled *Cruel Summer*, which premiered at the 2012 Cannes Film Festival in a custom pyramid-shaped screening pavilion featuring seven screens constructed for the film. The film was inspired by the compilation album of the same name. West made a cameo appearance in the comedy *Anchorman 2: The Legend Continues* (2013) as a MTV News representative in the film's fight scene.<sup>[308]</sup> In September 2018, West announced starting of film production company named Half Beast, LLC.<sup>[309]</sup>

## Architecture

West expressed interest in starting an architecture firm in May 2013, saying "I want to do product, I am a product person, not just clothing but water bottle design, architecture ... I make music but I shouldn't be limited to once place of creativity"<sup>[310][311]</sup> and then later in November 2013, delivering a manifesto on his architectural goals during a visit to Harvard Graduate School of Design.<sup>[312]</sup> In May 2018, West announced he was starting an architecture firm which will act as an arm of his already successful Yeezy fashion label.<sup>[313]</sup> West announced the decision on his Twitter account, tweeting "we're starting a Yeezy architecture arm called Yeezy home. We're looking for architects and industrial designers who want to make the world better."<sup>[314][315]</sup>

In June 2018, the first Yeezy Home collaboration was announced by designer Jalil Peraza, teasing an affordable concrete prefabricated home as part of a social housing project.<sup>[316][317]</sup>

## Politics

In September 2015, West announced that he intended to run for President of the United States in 2020.<sup>[318][319][320]</sup> He later implied on Twitter that he intends to run for President in 2024 due to Donald Trump's win in the 2016 elections.<sup>[321][322]</sup> West later confirmed this in an interview in September 2018,<sup>[323]</sup> saying that his main political concern is health care in the United States.<sup>[324]</sup> On December 13, 2016, West met with President-elect Trump.<sup>[325]</sup> According to West, "I wanted to meet with Trump today to discuss multicultural issues. These issues included bullying, supporting teachers, modernizing curriculums, and violence in Chicago. I feel it is important to have a direct line of communication with our future President if we truly want change."<sup>[326]</sup>

West previously stated he would have voted for Trump had he voted.<sup>[327]</sup> In February 2017, however, West deleted all of his tweets about Trump in purported dislike of the new president's policies, particularly the travel ban.<sup>[328]</sup> West reiterated his support for Donald Trump in April 2018 in a text to Ebro Darden where he said "I love Donald Trump... I love Donald Trump."<sup>[329]</sup> West also posted a picture wearing a Make America Great Again hat alongside a series of tweets defending President Trump.<sup>[330]</sup> Trump later retweeted several of West's tweets.<sup>[331]</sup>

Following his return to Twitter in April 2018, West tweeted "I love the way Candace Owens thinks."<sup>[332]</sup> Owens, who promotes black conservatism, praised President Trump as the savior of the Free World and criticized the Black Lives Matter movement. The tweet was met with controversy among some of West's fans.<sup>[333]</sup>

In May 2018, West said in an interview with radio host Charlamagne tha God that he had been asked by a friend "What makes George Bush any more racist than Trump?"<sup>[334]</sup> – possibly alluding to his previous controversial condemnation of Bush as not caring about black people.<sup>[39]</sup> West said "racism isn't the deal breaker for me. If that was the case, I wouldn't live in America."<sup>[334]</sup>

During an interview with *Fader* in September 2018, West said he was visiting Chicago mayor Rahm Emanuel to possibly start a school building project.<sup>[290]</sup>

On October 11, 2018, West visited the Oval Office for a meeting with President Trump to discuss a range of issues. He and several other musicians watched Trump sign the Music Modernization Act.<sup>[335]</sup> His support for Trump led to the creation of a "Donye" parody by famous artist Lushsux who painted Kanye with Trump's hair.<sup>[336]</sup> Later in October 2018, West and his wife visited the president of Uganda, Yoweri Museveni, a noted Trump supporter, and said they held "fruitful discussions" about promoting tourism and the arts.<sup>[337]</sup>



President Donald Trump and Kanye West in the Oval Office, on October 11, 2018

The same month, West donated \$73,540 to progressive Chicago mayoral candidate Amara Enyia. The donation was the exact amount Enyia needed to pay a fine she received for not filing campaign finance reports during her abbreviated 2015 mayoral run.<sup>[338]</sup>

In October 26, President Trump praised West during his speech at the Young Black Leadership Summit, adding "I think Kanye may be the most powerful man in all of politics", referring to a story on West's effect on African-Americans.<sup>[339][340]</sup>

In October 2018, West was reported to have given his support to the Blexit movement, a campaign by Owens to encourage black Americans to abandon the Democratic Party and register as Republicans. Media reports suggested West had advised on the design of the campaign's logo, and branded merchandise, including T-shirts.<sup>[341][342]</sup> However, West denied being the designer and disavowed the effort, tweeting "My eyes are now wide open and now realize I've been used to spread messages I don't believe in. I am distancing myself from politics and completely focusing on being creative !!!"<sup>[343]</sup>

In January 2019, West re-affirmed his support for President Trump.<sup>[344]</sup> In the same year he expressed his opposition to abortion,<sup>[5][345]</sup> and condemned those who wish to remove religion from the public square.<sup>[346]</sup> In an interview with *GQ* in January 2020, West implied he'd be voting for President Trump.<sup>[347][348]</sup>

## 2020 U.S. presidential campaign

On July 4, 2020, West announced on Twitter that he would be running in the 2020 presidential election,<sup>[349][350]</sup> although it appears that he has not made any official moves towards a candidacy, such as filing official paperwork with the Federal Election Commission.<sup>[351]</sup> On July 7, West was interviewed by *Forbes* about his presidential run, where he announced that his running mate will be Wyoming preacher Michelle Tidball, and that he would run as an independent under the "Birthday Party", "because when we

win, it's everybody's birthday".<sup>[352]</sup> West also said he no longer supported Trump because he "hid in [a] bunker" during the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>[353]</sup> Various political pundits have speculated that West's presidential run is a publicity stunt to promote his upcoming music.<sup>[354]</sup>

## Controversies

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### General media

West has been an outspoken and controversial celebrity throughout his career, receiving both criticism and praise from many, including the mainstream media, other artists and entertainers, and two U.S. presidents.<sup>[39][97]</sup> On September 2, 2005, during a benefit concert for Hurricane Katrina relief on NBC (*A Concert for Hurricane Relief*), he deviated from the prepared script to criticize the media's portrayal of, and the federal response to, black victims of the hurricane. He criticized President George W. Bush for not "car[ing] about black people".<sup>[355][356]</sup> Bush stated in an interview that the comment was "one of the most disgusting moments" of his presidency.<sup>[61]</sup> In November 2010, in a taped interview with Matt Lauer for the *Today show*, West expressed regret for his criticism of Bush. Reactions were mixed, but some felt that West had no need to apologize. "It was not the particulars of your words that mattered, it was the essence of a feeling of the insensitivity towards our communities that many of us have felt for far too long," argued Def Jam co-founder Russell Simmons.<sup>[357]</sup>

In 2008, he said he will go down in history as "the voice of this generation", a comment that was widely ridiculed, notably in the *South Park* episode "Fishsticks".<sup>[358][359][360]</sup>

In September 2013, West was widely rebuked by human rights groups for performing in Kazakhstan, which has one of the poorest human rights records in the world, at the wedding of authoritarian President Nursultan Nazarbayev's grandson.<sup>[361]</sup> Other notable Western performers, including Sting, have previously cancelled performances in the country over human rights concerns.<sup>[362][363]</sup> West was reportedly paid US\$3 million for his performance.<sup>[363]</sup> West had previously participated in cultural boycotts, joining Shakira and Rage Against the Machine in refusing to perform in Arizona after the 2010 implementation of stop and search laws directed against potential illegal aliens.<sup>[364]</sup>

During a November 26, 2013, radio interview, West explained why he believed that Barack Obama had problems pushing policies in Washington: "Man, let me tell you something about George Bush and oil money and Obama and no money. People want to say Obama can't make these moves or he's not executing. That's because he ain't got those connections. Black people don't have the same level of connections as Jewish people...We ain't Jewish. We don't got family that got money like that." In response to his comments, the Anti-Defamation League stated: "There it goes again, the age-old canard that Jews are all-powerful and control the levers of power in government."<sup>[365]</sup> On December 21, 2013, West backed off of the original comment and told a Chicago radio station that "I thought I was giving a compliment, but if anything it came off more ignorant. I don't know how being told you have money is an insult."<sup>[366]</sup>

In February 2016, West again became embroiled in controversy when he posted a tweet seemingly asserting Bill Cosby's innocence in the wake of over 50 women making allegations of sexual assault directed at Cosby.<sup>[367]</sup>

In May 2018, West caused controversy when he said, "When you hear about slavery for 400 years ... for 400 years? That sounds like a choice. You were there for 400 years and it's all of y'all. It's like we're mentally imprisoned." during an appearance on TMZ.<sup>[368]</sup> West responded to the controversy on Twitter stating, "Of course I know that slaves did not get shackled and put on a boat by free will. My point is for us to have stayed in that position even though the numbers were on our side means that we were mentally enslaved" and "The reason why I brought up the 400 years point is because we can't be mentally imprisoned for



another 400 years. We need free thought now. Even the statement was an example of free thought. It was just an idea. Once again I am being attacked for presenting new ideas".<sup>[369]</sup> Later on August 29, 2018, West offered up an emotional apology for his slavery comment during a radio interview with 107.5 WGCI Chicago.<sup>[370][371][372]</sup>

Over the course of his career, West has been known to compare himself to various influential figures and entities in art and culture, including Kurt Cobain, Leonardo da Vinci, Walt Disney, Thomas Edison, Google, Jimi Hendrix, Thierry Hermès, Howard Hughes, Michael Jackson, Steve Jobs, Ralph Lauren, Michelangelo, Jim Morrison, Nike, Pablo Picasso, Axl Rose, William Shakespeare, Socrates, David Stern, Donald Trump, William Wallace, Andy Warhol, Anna Wintour, and Willy Wonka.<sup>[373][374][375]</sup>

## Award shows

In 2004, West had his first of a number of public incidents during his attendance at music award events. At the American Music Awards of 2004, West stormed out of the auditorium after losing Best New Artist to country singer Gretchen Wilson. He later commented, "I felt like I was definitely robbed [...] I was the best new artist this year."<sup>[59]</sup> After the 2006 Grammy nominations were released, West said he would "really have a problem" if he did not win the Album of the Year, saying, "I don't care what I do, I don't care how much I stunt – you can never take away from the amount of work I put into it. I don't want to hear all of that politically correct stuff."<sup>[376]</sup> On November 2, 2006, when his "Touch the Sky" failed to win Best Video at the MTV Europe Music Awards, West went onto the stage as the award was being presented to Justice and Simian for "We Are Your Friends" and argued that he should have won the award instead.<sup>[377][378]</sup> Hundreds of news outlets worldwide criticized the outburst. On November 7, 2006, West apologized for this outburst publicly during his performance as support act for U2 for their Vertigo concert in Brisbane.<sup>[379]</sup> He later spoofed the incident on the 33rd-season premiere of Saturday Night Live in September 2007.<sup>[380]</sup>

On September 9, 2007, West suggested that his race had something to do with his being overlooked for opening the 2007 MTV Video Music Awards (VMAs) in favor of Britney Spears; he claimed, "Maybe my skin's not right."<sup>[381]</sup> West was performing at the event; that night, he lost all five awards that he was nominated for, including Best Male Artist and Video of the Year. After the show, he was visibly upset that he had lost at the VMAs two years in a row, stating that he would not come back to MTV ever again. He also appeared on several radio stations saying that when he made the song "Stronger" that it was his dream to open the VMAs with it. He has also stated that Spears has not had a hit in a long period of time and that MTV exploited her for ratings.<sup>[382]</sup>

On September 13, 2009, during the 2009 MTV Video Music Awards while Taylor Swift was accepting her award for Best Female Video for "You Belong with Me", West went on stage and grabbed the microphone to proclaim that Beyoncé's video for "Single Ladies (Put a Ring on It)", nominated for the same award, was "one of the best videos of all time". He was subsequently removed from the remainder of the show for his actions.<sup>[82][383][384]</sup> When Beyoncé later won the award for Best Video of the Year for "Single Ladies (Put a Ring on It)", she called Swift up on stage so that she could finish her acceptance speech.<sup>[383]</sup> West was criticized by various celebrities for the outburst,<sup>[82][385][386][387]</sup> and by President Barack Obama, who called West a "jackass".<sup>[388][389][390][391]</sup> In addition, West's VMA disruption sparked a large influx of Internet photo memes with blogs, forums and "tweets" with the "Let you finish" photo-jokes.<sup>[392]</sup> He posted a Tweet soon after the event where he stated, "Everybody wanna booooo me but I'm a fan of real pop culture... I'm not crazy y'all, I'm just real."<sup>[393]</sup> He then posted two apologies for the outburst on his personal blog; one on the night of the incident, and the other the following day, when he also apologized during an appearance on The Jay Leno Show.<sup>[386][394]</sup> After Swift appeared on The View two days after the outburst, partly to discuss the matter, West called her to apologize personally. Swift said she accepted his apology.<sup>[395][396][397]</sup> In September 2010, West wrote a series of apologetic tweets addressed to Swift including "Beyonce didn't need that. MTV didn't need that and Taylor and her family friends and fans

definitely didn't want or need that" and concluding with "I'm sorry Taylor." He also revealed he had written a song for Swift and if she did not accept the song, he would perform it himself.<sup>[398]</sup> However, on November 8, 2010, in an interview with a Minnesota radio station, he seemed to recant his past apologies by attempting to describe the act at the 2009 awards show as "selfless" and downgrade the perception of disrespect it created.<sup>[399][400]</sup>

On February 8, 2015, at the 57th Annual Grammy Awards, West walked on stage as Beck was accepting his award for Album of the Year and then walked off stage, leaving the audience to think he was joking. After the awards show, West stated in an interview that he was not joking and that "Beck needs to respect artistry, he should have given his award to Beyoncé".<sup>[401]</sup> On February 26, 2015, he publicly apologized to Beck on Twitter.<sup>[402]</sup> On August 30, 2015, West was presented with the Michael Jackson Video Vanguard Award at the MTV Video Music Awards. In his acceptance speech, he stated, "Y'all might be thinking right now, 'I wonder did he smoke something before he came out here?' And the answer is: 'Yes, I rolled up a little something. I knocked the edge off.'"<sup>[403]</sup> At the end of his speech, he announced, "I have decided in 2020 to run for president."<sup>[404][405]</sup> At the 2016 MTV Video Music Awards, West was given four minutes to do "whatever he wanted". He chose to debut his new music video for "Fade", but first, delivered a speech in which he discussed recent shootings in Chicago, why he included Ray J and Donald Trump in his "Famous" video, the Taylor Swift situation, his love of Beyoncé and Steve Jobs amongst others.<sup>[406]</sup>

## Petitions

Music fans have turned to Change.org around the globe to try to block West's participation at various events. The largest unsuccessful petition has been to the Glastonbury Festival 2015 with 133,000+ voters stating they would prefer a rock band to headline.<sup>[407]</sup> On July 20, 2015,<sup>[408]</sup> within five days of West's announcement as the headlining artist of the closing ceremonies<sup>[409]</sup> of the 2015 Pan American Games, Change.org user XYZ collected over 50,000 signatures for West's removal as headliner,<sup>[410]</sup> on the grounds that the headlining artist should be Canadian. In his Pan American Games Closing Ceremony performance, close to the end of his performance, West closed the show by tossing his faulty microphone in the air and walked off stage.<sup>[411]</sup>

## Personal life

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### Relationships and family

West began an on-and-off relationship with designer Alexis Phifer in 2002, and they became engaged in August 2006. The pair ended their 18-month engagement in 2008.<sup>[412]</sup> West subsequently dated model Amber Rose from 2008 until the summer of 2010.<sup>[413]</sup> In April 2012, West began dating reality star and longtime friend<sup>[414]</sup> Kim Kardashian.<sup>[415]</sup> West and Kardashian became engaged in October 2013,<sup>[416][417]</sup> and married on May 24, 2014, at Fort di Belvedere in Florence, Italy.<sup>[418]</sup> Their private ceremony was subject to widespread mainstream coverage, with West taking issue with the couple's portrayal in the media.<sup>[419]</sup> They have four children: North "Nori" West (born June 2013),<sup>[420][421]</sup> Saint West (born December 2015),<sup>[422]</sup> Chicago West<sup>[423]</sup> (born January 2018 of a surrogate pregnancy),<sup>[424]</sup> and Psalm West (born May 2019 of a surrogate pregnancy).<sup>[425][426]</sup> In April 2015, West and Kardashian traveled to Jerusalem to have North baptized in



West's wife Kim Kardashian, pictured in October 2018

the Armenian Apostolic Church at the Cathedral of St. James.<sup>[427][428]</sup> Kim, Saint, Chicago, and Psalm were all baptized four years later on October 7, 2019, at Holy Etchmiadzin, the mother church of the Armenian Church.<sup>[429]</sup>

The couple's high-profile status and respective careers have resulted in their relationship becoming subject to heavy media coverage; The New York Times referred to their marriage as "a historic blizzard of celebrity."<sup>[430]</sup>

In September 2018, West announced that he will be permanently moving to Chicago and will establish his Yeezy company headquarters in the city.<sup>[431][432]</sup>

## Mother's death

On November 10, 2007, West's mother Donda West died at age 58.<sup>[433][434]</sup> In January 2008 the Los Angeles County coroner's office said that West had died of coronary artery disease and multiple post-operative factors from, or as a consequence of, liposuction and mammoplasty".<sup>[435]</sup>

West played his first concert following the funeral at The O2 in London on November 22. He dedicated a performance of "Hey Mama", as well as a cover of Journey's "Don't Stop Believin'", to his mother, and did so on all other dates of his Glow in the Dark tour.<sup>[436]</sup>

California governor Arnold Schwarzenegger subsequently signed the "Donda West Law", legislation which makes it mandatory for patients to receive medical clearance through a physical examination before undergoing elective cosmetic surgery.<sup>[437]</sup>



Donda West in August 2007

## Legal issues

In December 2006, Robert "Evel" Knievel sued West for trademark infringement in West's video for "Touch the Sky". Knievel took issue with a "sexually charged video" in which West takes on the persona of "Evel Kanyevel" and attempts flying a rocket over a canyon. The suit claimed infringement on Knievel's trademarked name and likeness. Knievel also claimed that the "vulgar and offensive" images depicted in the video damaged his reputation. The suit sought monetary damages and an injunction to stop distribution of the video.<sup>[438]</sup> West's attorneys argued that the music video amounted to satire and therefore was covered under the First Amendment. Just days before his death in November 2007, Knievel amicably settled the suit after being paid a visit from West, saying, "I thought he was a wonderful guy and quite a gentleman."<sup>[439]</sup>

In 2014, after an altercation with a paparazzo at Los Angeles Airport, West was sentenced to serve two years' probation for a misdemeanor battery conviction, and was required to attend 24 anger management sessions, perform 250 hours of community service, and pay restitution to the photographer.<sup>[440]</sup>

## Religious beliefs

After the success of his song "Jesus Walks" from the album The College Dropout, West was questioned on his beliefs and said, "I will say that I'm spiritual. I have accepted Jesus as my Savior. And I will say that I fall short every day."<sup>[441]</sup> In a 2008 interview with The Fader, West stated that "I'm like a vessel, and God has chosen me to be the voice and the connector."<sup>[442]</sup>

In a 2009 interview with online magazine Bossip, West stated that he believed in God, but at the time felt that he "would never go into a religion."<sup>[443]</sup>

In 2014, West referred to himself as a Christian during one of his concerts.<sup>[444]</sup>

In January 2019, West re-affirmed his Christian faith on Twitter.<sup>[344]</sup> His wife Kim Kardashian described West's Christian new birth experience in September 2019: "Kanye started this to really heal himself and it was a really personal thing, and it was just friends and family... He has had an amazing evolution of being born again and being saved by Christ."<sup>[3]</sup> In October 2019, West said with respect to his past, "When I was trying to serve multiple gods it drove me crazy" in reference to the "god of ego, god of money, god of pride, the god of fame",<sup>[445]</sup> and that "I didn't even know what it meant to be saved" and that now "I love Jesus Christ. I love Christianity."<sup>[6]</sup> During a surprise appearance at Jimmy Kimmel Live! to discuss his album Jesus Is King, West was asked by Kimmel if he would consider himself to be a Christian music artist now that he had committed himself fully to Christianity, and he replied, "I'm just a Christian everything".<sup>[446]</sup>

## Mental health

In his song "FML" and his featured verse on Vic Mensa's song "U Mad", he refers to using the antidepressant medication Lexapro, and in his song "I Feel Like That", which has not been officially released, he mentions feeling many common symptoms of depression and anxiety. These songs had all been recorded during West's recording sessions for The Life of Pablo.<sup>[447]</sup>

On November 20, 2016, soon before abruptly ending a concert prematurely, he said, "Jay-Z—call me, bruh. You still ain't called me ... Jay-Z, I know you got killers. Please don't send them at my head. Just call me. Talk to me like a man."<sup>[448]</sup> The following day, he was committed to the UCLA Medical Center with hallucinations and paranoia. Contrary to early reports, however, West was not actually taken to the hospital involuntarily; he was persuaded to do so by authorities.<sup>[449]</sup> While the episode was first described as one of "temporary psychosis" caused by dehydration and sleep deprivation, West's mental state was abnormal enough for his 21 cancelled concerts to be covered by his insurance policy;<sup>[450]</sup> he was reportedly paranoid and depressed throughout the hospitalization,<sup>[451]</sup> but remains formally undiagnosed.<sup>[452]</sup> Some have speculated that the Paris robbery of his wife may have triggered the paranoia.<sup>[453]</sup> On November 30, West was released from the hospital.<sup>[454]</sup>

In an interview in 2018, West declared that he became addicted to opioids when they were prescribed to him after he got liposuction. The addiction may have contributed to his nervous breakdown in 2016.<sup>[455]</sup>

West said he often has suicidal ideation.<sup>[456]</sup> In a 2019 interview with David Letterman, West stated he has bipolar disorder.<sup>[457]</sup>

## Influence

West is among the most critically acclaimed artists of the twenty-first century, receiving praise from music critics, fans, fellow musicians, artists, and wider cultural figures for his work.<sup>[458][459]</sup> Over the course of his career, West has been responsible for cultural movements and musical progressions within mainstream hip-hop and popular music at large.<sup>[182]</sup> Jon Caramanica of The New York Times said that West has been "a frequent lightning rod for controversy, a bombastic figure who can count rankling two presidents among his achievements."<sup>[97]</sup> Nieson elaborates, "He is talented enough that he has made the calculation that

Mr. West has had the most sui generis hip-hop career of the last decade. No rapper has embodied hip-hop's often contradictory impulses of narcissism and social good quite as he has, and no producer has celebrated the lush and the ornate quite as he has. He has spent most of his career in additive mode, figuring out how



you can dislike him and you will still listen to his music. That's kind of a rarified space for a mainstream musician: someone who can almost willfully turn his fan base off at some moments and still know that in all likelihood, they will be there for his next release."<sup>[187]</sup> West has been called "America's Mozart" by David Samuels of *The Atlantic*, a sentiment which Ed Ledsham from *PopMatters* found indicative of how "West's work has received canonisation from critics in a manner previously almost unknown to rap music." In Ledsham's opinion, "West's melding of multiple genres into the hip-hop fold is a complex act that challenges the dominant white notions of what constitutes true 'art' music."<sup>[460]</sup>

to make music that's majestic and thought-provoking and grand-scaled. And he's also widened the genre's gates, whether for middle-class values or high-fashion and high-art dreams.

– Jon Caramanica, *The New York Times*<sup>[97]</sup>

Erik Nielson, a *University of Richmond* professor who teaches courses on hip-hop culture, opines that West is a "mediocre rapper, but an extraordinary producer."<sup>[187]</sup> Nielson states, "He is willing and able to experiment in ways that many people either don't or can't. He will take a concept to an extreme, and flesh it out and explore it in some sort of depth," with a "broad, eclectic range of sounds that he draws on that has opened up new possibilities for artists who came after him."<sup>[187]</sup> In 2013, Julianne Escobedo Shepherd of *Spin* described West as fronting a "new art-pop era" in contemporary music, in which musicians draw widely on the visual arts as a signifier of both extravagant wealth as well as creative exploration.<sup>[461]</sup>

West's middle-class background, flamboyant fashion sense, outspokenness, and ability to reinvent himself on each of his albums set him apart from other hip-hop artists.<sup>[39][97][187]</sup> *Rolling Stone* encapsulated West by calling him "as interesting and complicated a pop star as the 2000s produced—a rapper who mastered, upped and moved beyond the hip-hop game, a producer who created a signature sound and then abandoned it to his imitators, a flashy, free-spending sybarite with insightful things to say about college, culture and economics, an egomaniac with more than enough artistic firepower to back it up."<sup>[462]</sup> *AllMusic* editor Jason Birchmeier writes of his impact, "As his career progressed throughout the early 21st century, West shattered certain stereotypes about rappers, becoming a superstar on his own terms without adapting his appearance, his rhetoric, or his music to fit any one musical mold."<sup>[39]</sup> Early in his musical career, he was among the first rappers to publicly criticize the preponderance of homophobia in hip-hop culture.<sup>[463]</sup> Meanwhile, he maintained a preppy fashion sense that helped expand hip-hop's definition of masculinity.<sup>[187]</sup> Nielsen concedes that West "definitely made it OK to be a little bit of a weirdo. He said when he came out that he wasn't a thug. He was the kid who went to school, his mom was a college professor. He definitely challenged some of the authenticity that had to be there at the moment."<sup>[187]</sup>

*Rolling Stone* credited West with transforming hip-hop's mainstream, "establishing a style of introspective yet glossy rap."<sup>[462]</sup> West has been attributed to the commercial decline of the gangsta rap that once dominated mainstream hip-hop.<sup>[464]</sup> The outcome of a highly publicized sales competition between rapper 50 Cent's *Curtis* and West's *Graduation* marked a turning point in the music industry.<sup>[465]</sup> With its emotive raps and confessional details, the album altered the direction of hip hop and helped pave the way for new rappers who did not follow the hardcore-gangster mold find wider mainstream acceptance.<sup>[466][467][468][71]</sup> West's victory proved that rap music did not have to conform to gangsta-rap conventions to be commercially successful.<sup>[468]</sup> According to Ben Detrick of *XXL* magazine, West effectively led a new wave of artists, including Kid Cudi, Wale, Lupe Fiasco, Kidz in the Hall, and Drake, who lacked the interest or ability to craft lyrical narratives about gunplay or drug-dealing.<sup>[71]</sup> Rosie Swash of *The Guardian* deemed the sales competition a historical moment in hip-hop, because it "highlighted the diverging facets of hip-hop in the last decade; the former was gangsta rap for the noughties, while West was the thinking man's alternative."<sup>[469]</sup> It was West's fourth studio album *808s & Heartbreak* (2008), that may stand as his most influential work.<sup>[187]</sup> According to *Billboard* senior editor Alex Gale, "That album is the equivalent of (Bob) Dylan going electric, and you still hear that all the time, in hip-hop and outside of hip-hop."<sup>[187]</sup> Though *808s & Heartbreak* polarized listeners upon release, the album was a commercial success and impacted

popular music stylistically.<sup>[39]</sup> It laid the groundwork for a new wave of artists who generally eschewed typical rap braggadocio for confessional, intimate subject matter and introspection, including Drake, Frank Ocean, Future, J. Cole, Kid Cudi, Childish Gambino, The Weeknd and Tyler, the Creator.<sup>[470][187][471][472]</sup>

Village Voice Media senior editor Ben Westhoff dubbed West the greatest hip-hop artist of all time, writing, "he's made the best albums and changed the game the most, and his music is the most likely to endure."<sup>[473]</sup> Billboard senior editor Alex Gale declared West "absolutely one of the best, and you could make the argument for the best artist of the 21st century."<sup>[187]</sup> Sharing similar sentiments, Complex called West the twenty-first century's "most important artist of any art form, of any genre."<sup>[474]</sup> The Atlantic writer David Samuels commented, "Kanye's power resides in his wild creativity and expressiveness, his mastery of form, and his deep and uncompromising attachment to a self-made aesthetic that he expresses through means that are entirely of the moment: rap music, digital downloads, fashion, Twitter, blogs, live streaming video." According to Samuels, "He is the first true genius of the iPhone era, the Mozart of contemporary American music, intent on using his creative and emotional gifts to express the heartbreaks and fantasies of his audience."<sup>[475]</sup> Joe Muggs of The Guardian compared West to David Bowie within the "modern mainstream" following Bowie's death in 2016, arguing that "there is nobody else who can sell as many records as West does [...] while remaining so resolutely experimental and capable of stirring things up culturally and politically."<sup>[476]</sup>



West has influenced countless artists and is regarded as one of the greatest musicians of the twenty-first century.<sup>[187]</sup>

A substantial number of artists and other figures have professed admiration for West's work, including hip hop artists Rakim,<sup>[475]</sup> RZA of Wu-Tang Clan, Chuck D of Public Enemy,<sup>[477]</sup> and DJ Premier of Gang Starr.<sup>[478][479]</sup> Velvet Underground founder and experimental-rock pioneer Lou Reed said of West that "the guy really, really, *really* is talented. He's really trying to raise the bar. No one's near doing what he's doing, it's not even on the same planet."<sup>[480]</sup> Musicians such as Paul McCartney<sup>[481]</sup> and Prince<sup>[482]</sup> have also commended West's work. SpaceX and Tesla CEO and inventor Elon Musk complimented West in a piece for Time's 100 most influential people list, writing that:

Kanye West would be the first person to tell you he belongs on this list. The dude doesn't believe in false modesty, and he shouldn't [...] He fought for his place in the cultural pantheon with a purpose. In his debut album, over a decade ago, Kanye issued what amounted to a social critique and a call to arms (with a beat): "We rappers is role models: we rap, we don't think." But Kanye does think. Constantly. About everything. And he wants everybody else to do the same: to engage, question, push boundaries. Now that he's a pop-culture juggernaut, he has the platform to achieve just that. He's not afraid of being judged or ridiculed in the process. Kanye's been playing the long game all along, and we're only just beginning to see why.<sup>[483]</sup>

Drake, Nicki Minaj, Lil Uzi Vert and Casey Veggies have acknowledged being influenced directly by West.<sup>[484][485][486][487]</sup> He has been cited as a direct influence by artists and musical groups outside of hip-hop including English singer-songwriters Adele and Lily Allen,<sup>[488][489]</sup> R&B singer-songwriter Daniel Caesar,<sup>[490]</sup> New Zealand pop artist Lorde,<sup>[491]</sup> American electropop singer Halsey,<sup>[492]</sup> English rock band Arctic Monkeys,<sup>[493]</sup> Sergio Pizzorno of English rock band Kasabian<sup>[494]</sup> and the American indie rock bands MGMT,<sup>[495]</sup> the Yeah Yeah Yeahs,<sup>[496]</sup> and Fall Out Boy<sup>[497]</sup> have cited West as an influence. Experimental and electronic artists such as James Blake,<sup>[498]</sup> Daniel Lopatin,<sup>[499]</sup> and Tim Hecker<sup>[500]</sup> have also cited West's work as an inspiration. A Boogie wit da Hoodie has also cited West as his inspiration to start music.

Outside of his music career, West's success in the fashion industry has led to him being recognized as one of the most influential popular culture figures of his generation.<sup>[501][502]</sup>

## Achievements

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West has won an assortment of awards, these include; a Webby Award for Artist of the Year,<sup>[503]</sup> an Accessories Council Excellence Award for being a stylemaker,<sup>[504]</sup> International Man of the Year at the GQ Awards,<sup>[505]</sup> Shoe of the Year at the Footwear News Achievement Awards,<sup>[506]</sup> a Clio Award for The Life of Pablo Album Experience,<sup>[507]</sup> and an honour by The Recording Academy.<sup>[508]</sup> West is one of eight acts to have won the Billboard Artist Achievement Award.<sup>[509]</sup> He has won the Brit Award for Best International Male Solo Artist a joint-record three times, in addition to being one of three artists to have won the award in consecutive years. In 2011, he became the first artist to win Best Male Hip-Hop Artist at the BET Awards three times, he's the male artist with the most wins for Video of the Year at the ceremony, and the only person to have been awarded the Visionary Award at The BET Honors.<sup>[510]</sup> West has received the most nominations for Best Hip-Hop Video at the MTV Video Music Awards (9), along with, the second-most nominations for Best Male Video (7). In 2015, he became the third rap act to win the Michael Jackson Video Vanguard Award.<sup>[9]</sup> West has won 21 Grammys, he has the second most wins (21) and nominations (68) for a rapper (both behind Jay-Z). He has been the most nominated act at five ceremonies,<sup>[511]</sup> and won the most Grammys by a male artist, and fourth most overall in the 2000s decade.<sup>[512]</sup> In 2008, West became the first solo artist to have his first three albums receive nominations for Album of the Year.<sup>[513]</sup> Only Eminem (6) has won Best Rap Album more than West (4), additionally, West and Eminem are the only acts to have won the award in successive years. West has the most wins and nominations for Best Rap Song.



West speaks after receiving an honorary doctorate from SAIC

West is one of the best-selling digital artists of all-time. He's the 7th highest certified artist in the US by digital singles (69 million).<sup>[514]</sup> He had the most RIAA digital song certifications by a male artist in the 2000s (19),<sup>[515]</sup> and was the fourth best-selling digital songs artist of the 2000s in the US.<sup>[516]</sup> In Spotify's first ten years from 2008 - 2018, West was the sixth most streamed artist, and the fourth fastest artist to reach one billion streams.<sup>[517]</sup> West has the joint-most consecutive studio album to debut at number one on the Billboard 200 (9).<sup>[518]</sup> Between August 2005 - June 2008, West had the two highest first week album sales in the US, and was the only act to sell more than 800,000 in an opening week.<sup>[519]</sup> Graduation and Watch the Throne, both broke US first week digital and iTunes albums sales.<sup>[520][521]</sup> West has the joint-fifth most number one singles in New Zealand (6), and the third most number one singles on the Hot Rap Songs chart (9). He has the third-most top-ten singles in the UK by a rapper (20), and the joint-second most platinum singles in the UK by a rapper (8). West is one of seven acts to have 100+ Billboard Hot 100 entries.

West's albums have received numerous acclaim and accolades; Entertainment Weekly named The College Dropout the best album of the 2000s decade,<sup>[522]</sup> Late Registration (118) was the highest charting 21st century album on Rolling Stone's 500 Greatest Albums of All Time (2012),<sup>[523]</sup> Complex named Graduation as the best album released between 2002-2012,<sup>[524]</sup> 808s & Heartbreak was named by Rolling Stone as one of the 40 most groundbreaking albums of all time,<sup>[525]</sup> My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy was named by The A.V. Club as the best album of the 2010s decade,<sup>[526]</sup> Yeezus was the most critically acclaimed album of 2013,<sup>[527]</sup> and The Life of Pablo was the first album to top the Billboard 200, go platinum in the US, and go gold in the UK, via streaming alone.<sup>[528][529]</sup> West's singles have also obtained adulation and prestige;

"Heartless" was amongst the top-ten selling singles worldwide in 2009,<sup>[530]</sup> "Stronger" is one of the most downloaded songs of all time on iTunes,<sup>[531]</sup> "Gold Digger" was the ninth biggest Hot 100 song of the 2000s.<sup>[532]</sup> "Runaway" was named the best of song of 2010 by The *New York Post*,<sup>[533]</sup> "All of the Lights" was named the best single of 2011 by *Slant Magazine*,<sup>[534]</sup> *Consequence of Sound* named "Power" the best song of 2010,<sup>[535]</sup> *Time* listed "New Slaves" first on its list of the top 10 songs of 2013,<sup>[536]</sup> *XXL* ranked "Ni\*\*as in Paris" as the best song of 2011,<sup>[537]</sup> *Spin* named "Mercy" the best song of 2012<sup>[538]</sup> *Pitchfork* named "Ultralight Beam" as the best song of 2016,<sup>[539]</sup> "Monster" topped *Gigwise*'s best 50 songs of 2010 list,<sup>[540]</sup> and "Runaway" appeared in *The Telegraph*'s list of "The 100 Greatest Songs of All Time".<sup>[541]</sup>

West is regarded as one of the greatest hip-hop producers of all time.<sup>[542]</sup> He made the most appearance on *Complex*'s "Best Producers of every year since 1979" list (5).<sup>[543]</sup> On *Billboard*'s 2000s decade-end charts, West was third on the list of top producers.<sup>[544]</sup> West has made more appearances (4) than any other act on *The Guardian*'s "The Best Albums of the 21st Century" list,<sup>[545]</sup> having topped the annual Pazz & Jop critic poll the joint-most times (4 albums).<sup>[546]</sup> In 2009, he became the first non-athlete to have a shoe deal with Nike.<sup>[547]</sup> In 2014, *NME* named him the third most influential artist in music.<sup>[548]</sup> In 2015, West became only the second rapper to headline Glastonbury Festival.<sup>[549]</sup>

## Discography

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- *The College Dropout* (2004)
- *Late Registration* (2005)
- *Graduation* (2007)
- *808s & Heartbreak* (2008)
- *My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy* (2010)
- *Watch the Throne* (with Jay-Z) (2011)
- *Yeezus* (2013)
- *The Life of Pablo* (2016)
- *Ye* (2018)
- *Jesus Is King* (2019)

## Filmography

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- *The College Dropout Video Anthology* (2004)
- *Late Orchestration* (2006)
- *VH1 Storytellers* (2010)
- *Runaway* (2010)
- *Jesus Is King* (2019)

## Tours

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### Headlining tours

- School Spirit Tour (2004)
- Touch the Sky Tour (2005)
- Glow in the Dark Tour (2008)
- Fame Kills: Starring Kanye West and Lady Gaga (cancelled) (2009–2010)
- Watch the Throne Tour (with Jay-Z) (2011–2012)

- The Yeezus Tour (2013–2014)
- Saint Pablo Tour (2016)

## Supporting tours

- Truth Tour (with Usher) (2004)
- Vertigo Tour (with U2) (2005–2006)
- A Bigger Bang (with The Rolling Stones) (2006)

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- *Glow in the Dark* (2009)

## Notes

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- a. West also said the following about the treatment of African American people in the U.S.:

I hate the way they portray us in the media. You see a black family, it says, 'They're looting.' You see a white family, it says, 'They're looking for food.' And, you know, it's been five days [waiting for federal help] because most of the people are black. And even for me to complain about it, I would be a hypocrite because I've tried to turn away from the TV because it's too hard to watch. I've even been shopping before even giving a donation, so now I'm calling my business manager right now to see what is the biggest amount I can give, and just to imagine if I was down there, and those are my people down there. So anybody out there that wants to do anything that we can help—with the way America is set up to help the poor, the black people, the less well-off, as slow as possible. I mean, the Red Cross is doing everything they can. We already realize a lot of people that could help are at war right now, fighting another way—and they've given them permission to go down and shoot us!<sup>[60]</sup>

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## Further reading

- Kanye in Oxford: The #YeezOx highlights (<https://web.archive.org/web/20150504222524/http://oxford.tab.co.uk/2015/03/02/kanye-oxford-yeezox-highlights/>). Retrieved April 27, 2015

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## External links

- Kanye West (<https://twitter.com/kanyewest>) on *Twitter*
- Kanye West (<https://www.allmusic.com/artist/p353484>) at *AllMusic*
- Kanye West (<https://www.imdb.com/name/nm1577190/>) on *IMDb*
- Kanye West (<https://musicbrainz.org/artist/164f0d73-1234-4e2c-8743-d77bf2191051>) discography at *MusicBrainz*
- Appearances (<https://www.c-span.org/person/?kanyewest>) on *C-SPAN*

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