

**Interview with The KillaQueenz**  
**By Lucy Kippist**

*Since meeting at the Olympics opening ceremony in 2000 Kween G (Gladys Namokoyi) and Belizan Bombshell (Desiree Lambey) started a journey. Young, vibrant and beautiful the killarQueenz are a true partnership - bringing a fast, fresh and female sound to their own backyard first.*

**Loop: Let's start by dispelling some myths about you guys ...are you really the first Sydney female hip-hop duo?**

**Kween G:** No! I can't believe how many people get that wrong! We are the first female Hip hop duo in Sydney to bring out a mixtape! Let's get that right!

**Loop: Ok then is it true that you change your hair style every performance? Kween G:** How did you know about that???

**Belizan Bombshell:** Of course! That's the beauty of being a black girl! We like to twist it up a lot and be creative in our look We don't want to be like dolls staying the same ...we want to see how stardom feels right now. We want to decide when we get there. It's part of our culture too, just to always flip that hairstyle, it's nice. Like Beyonce, she changes her hair color - it's a black thing I have to say!

**Loop: I read that you met at the 2000 Olympics opening ceremony. Can you tell us a bit about that?**

**Kween G:** We came from two different dance groups: I'd never seen her and she had never seen me before. We both danced on the African float and we saw each other at one of the rehearsals and started sharing our love for hip hop. We were rapping together to other people's music and then we thought, hey - we could do this ourselves!

**Loop: You have been together then for about 7 years now - when did you become interested in music?**

**Belizan Bombshell:** I was living in the Blue Mountains and there were not many colored people, like myself and there was not much of a local [music] scene. I got it from my brothers, SNOOP DOG, Tupac, LIL KIM, Mc LIGHT (that's my influence, back in the day). I pretty much had a love for it back then. Then I found my you know, my other half here Kween G and we just kind of thought we were 'it' rapping to LIL KIM's rhymes.

**Loop: For anyone who hasn't heard you, how would you describe your sound?**

**Kween G:** Our sound is hip hop but it is international. I wouldn't say that we sound Australian as in we rap with an Australian accent, but we are global in that we come from two different backgrounds so we try and bring that in and respect Hip hop in the same way. But with our production we have a lot of influences especially with our drumbeats - African style drum beats. You will find Desiree who is Belizean and they are into the whole Caribbean dance hall sound - our album will focus on our backgrounds more than just the typical Hip hop sound

**Belizan Bombshell:** Yeah, cause that's been done, you know, that whole hip hop style that's like 'put your hands up', 'put your hands up' and people have been giving us feedback. They want to know more about our culture and where we are from and how we got here and how it's like being from that ethnic background in Australia.

**Loop: What makes Australian hip hop unique?**

**Kween G:** The one thing is that it is not - and this could be a good thing or a bad thing is that it [hip hop] is not such a big thing. So people are forever going to be coming up and trying to make it better. But the problem I find here is that people don't support the music. You go to New Zealand, the States or the UK and people know the local artists name. You can go and do a survey on youth or adults and they will hardly name any Australian hip hop acts. And I think that radio and TV have a lot to do with it because they are pushing rock in this country but not hip hop. So in order for Australia to get hip hop on a more mainstream level, you know, so people listen to local artists before they listen to international artists - major sponsors need to get involved in it and make it real rather than corny.

**Loop: You recently appeared on Mornings with Kerrie Anne alongside the US choreographer Luther Brown to promote a positive side to hip hop. Why did you think that was important?**

**Belizan Bombshell:** It's very important to spin that on because you know, everyone thinks that Hip hop is basically about 'shaking that booty..'f' this and 'f' that'. But it's not about that. You know we are trying to give it to people that hip hop is coming from females and we are making it positive and we are making it so it's not all negative like: 'put up your guns I'm about to rob you.' It's all about the music. It's not about what you've got and who you are it's all about what you can spit about, how you can enlighten people with your lyrics. Us as females we are trying to let females out there know that it can be done, you know. We are strong, let's come and stick together, let's do this, let's do this right and that's basically what we are trying to do here in Sydney.

**Loop: Your debut album is yet to be released, but what stage of the process are you in now?**

**Kween G:** Well you know, it's funny - we know lots of people in the industry but we did EVERYTHING from getting the artwork together to printing up the CDs. We did all that ourselves because we were like if we are going to let people know who we are we've got to start off with a little street team so we have to get out on the streets so people - when we come out with our albums people will go oh yeah, I know these girls - instead of going straight to the international acts. When we released the mix tape we had a huge party and everything went really well and I think we expected that the very next step was that we were going to start touring. But it was funny because the month after that nothing happened for us, no calls, no nothing and we were sitting there going 'what's going on?'

**Belizan Bombshell:** Yeah we were doubting our talents!

**Kween G:** It did down us out you know, we were sitting there going, was that all worth it? And then now from February onwards it has all been really positive, going on the Kerry Anne show, doing shows all over Sydney and we realise that you have to get out there to the people in your own back yard and they have to know you first. So what we are doing now is really just promoting ourselves to the local scene.

**Belizan Bombshell:** Yeah, to the backyard blitz!

**Kween G:** Yeah and it's worth it because we are getting calls for shows and we were in the newspaper and this is all in the space of a couple of months and we are very proud considering that we did it all ourselves.

**Belizan Bombshell:** And that's what it is like if, you know, if you want to be independent and you want to do it yourself. You have to put the work in - and you have to feel the rough times. And they were rough times, you know. And you have to go through the rough times to get it good -like going on the Kerry Anne show, that was wicked.

**Kween G:** She was cool, I was surprised! I thought she would be really anal and that but she was genuinely interested in Hip hop you know and she didn't pay it out or anything even though she was like 80!

**Belizan Bombshell:** [laughs] And that's the thing you know there are people out there who are not getting noticed, and people want to be interested but who is going to be the person to say 'OK we are going to have this on channel 7, 9 and 10. Let's have something for the youth, let's do something for the youth who doesn't listen to rock who doesn't listen to techno, let's have something different', you know. And that's what we need, that's what we really need.

**Loop: What are you most looking forward to on the approach of your album?**

**Kween G:** That's a deep question! I'm looking forward to touring - to do what we do and share the music with everyone. I am excited to do a film clip and to go on TV. I am also really looking forward to different countries and getting influences from different artists that you meet that are not the usual people that you are used to seeing. As much as I love this country I think that we really need to go out and see the world and really bring that back here to Australia.

**Belizan Bombshell:** Yeah and refresh it. Because I mean we have the talent but we could always really grow the talent. And that really makes us more special, if we experience something else - go out there and experience it and bring it back - then that is some talent right there and you've got to pursue it.

**Loop: If it's fair to say that males have dominated the local hip hop scene, how have you found their response to you as a young and female?**

**Kween G:** Yeah, they dominate. They say, oh yeah, you are female you can't rap. So you have to be tough, you do actually have to be better than the guys..

**Belizan Bombshell:** You don't have to be better than the guys, you just have to come in with respect and basically say, 'I am here to do what you do, but at the end of the day, I intend to take your trophy and go home with it! Because I am here to put in the work and I'm here to tell you that we are doing the same thing but I think that personally I am better than you and that's just how the game goes, you know what I mean. Everyone can rap but at the end of the day, the true talent shows. And it shows here!

**Loop: How would you describe your relationship? How do you get through the tougher moments together?**

**Belizan Bombshell:** We haven't really fought yet. I think we know each other really well. She's [Kween G] an Aries and I'm a Leo. And basically Leos and Aries get on tight. I mean I'm a bit of a hot head – I've got my mama inside me! (laughs) And Kween G is kind of like the white flag, you know. She's like, peace; she knows how to calm me down. She's like, 'be calm, and breathe.' And we have each other's back, I mean we have known each other since we were 14 and we used to get up to no good! (laughs)

**Kween G:** Yeah, she used to come over from the mountains and stay at my house and we used to go out clubbing. We'd sneak out of my house and we never used to do anything bad we just wanted to grow up quick. You know everyone goes through that stage where they just want to grow up quick. I was 14 and she was 16 and we used to go there and freestyle.

**Belizan Bombshell:** Yeah us two, we've got each other's back you know. You don't really find friendship like that. Friendship for seven years - living together, doing music together, trying to succeed together, you know not many girls could do that. And we've grown up from being young ladies to women. Now we are grown women and we are maturing and we are understanding and we are constantly growing you know and she's like my best friend!

**Loop: Who gives you the greatest source of support behind the scenes? Is it your families, do you have partners?**

**Belizan Bombshell:** My mum! (laughs) My mum is my personal manager and she has connections in the Blue Mountains for me -she tries to hustle!

**Kween G:** (laughs) she rings Desiree up and to make sure that she is still rapping!

**Belizan Bombshell:** (laughs) Yeah, she is like - no kids, no marriage, not until I get my house by the beaches! Yeah so my family has to be number one, and her brothers.

**Kween G:** Yeah, my brothers come to every gig. And then we have just the Djs and the local people as well they are all doing the same thing we are doing.

**Loop: You spoke before about how important it is to promote a positive side to hip hop and what it's like to be women in hip hop. What would you say your most important message?**

**Belizan Bombshell:** Respect yourself. I reckon that is the biggest message. Respect yourself and keep your head up high.

**Kween G:** And express. Expression. Everything you do has to come from the heart. Don't speak like your something that your not. If you've never had no hardship don't talk about it. So we really talk about what's real.

**Belizan Bombshell:** Cause Kween G came from Uganda and that's a struggle, you know what I mean, that's the truth. That's what she came from. And for me, I didn't come from a war but I was poor. But I am not going to go on the mike and talk about my experiences, that's my business really. But I am going to talk about how it's like eating the same type of food and not having certain things: books and pens and stuff like that, wearing shoes with holes in it. Because that is not the same, people don't experience it. Because you know we are very lucky, we are the lucky ones here. You know it's about having respect and showing respect for yourself on the mike so then people will respect you and have no other choice but to respect you. You know people get up on the mike and they say I've got my Mercedes and I've got my bling on. I've got my grills! Australia doesn't have none of that, you know. If you try and be like someone else it's just more phony. If you want to go up on the mike and spit about how you were the biggest nerd well go ahead, because that is just showing who you are.

**Kween G:** And the other thing is that I came here as a refugee and a lot of Africans are coming here as a refugee. Our people get influenced a lot from what happens in the States or outside and we just try to put that message through that when you come to this country, take advantage of it. Go take their education, get their good paying jobs because there are people in our own countries who would do anything to come here and take advantage of

the system. The last thing we want is for the black people of Australia to turn into gangs. So when you come to Australia, take advantage of the system. Stay in school, get educated.

**Belizan Bombshell:** Yeah, so then you can go back and develop your own, cause it is always important to have something to fall back on. It's all positive we just like the good vibes. It's 2007 we need to step forward.

**Kween G:** The world is already messed up.

**Belizan Bombshell:** We don't need to bring it down. We need something bright and refreshing.

**Kween G:** And music is one thing that should not start and has not started war.