

Interview With Bay Area Artist Balance

Written by Westside ID51

Saturday, 25 September 2004 10:50 -

I got a chance to ask Bay area artist Balance some questions. We spoke on the westcoast, The New Bay, his Balance The Mixtape and alot of other issues. If you haven't picked up his cd yet, I would recommend it. If you like that westcoast sound and beat, this is one that will really surprise you. I know it did me. If you would like to order it or hear a little bit of it, or if you have a comment or just want to show some love to Balance; click [HERE](#) . He has message boards he does post on there. So check him out. Here is what we talked about:

Robert - Thanks for taking time to talk with us.

Balance – no problem man thanks for the opportunity.

Robert - I won't front ya, The first I heard of you is from "Curtains" and "We Don't Stunt". "Balance The Mixtape" is really hott. I listened and I was very impressed, and I see hope for the west.

Balance – one luv homie. "we don't stunt" was a big record for us (me + frontline) a lot of dj's from the east to west really loved that record. It wasn't a diss to 50 cent it was jus saying yo out here in the bay we don't really stunt. We wear white t-shirts, nikes, and jeans. I put a lot of time into my mix cd, plus I been freestylin on mix cd's in the bay for 3 to 4 yrs before---I mean, I been on every dj's mix cd out here. So it ain't like I'm jus a new dude tryin to get in the game by copying off 50 cent.

Robert - I read where you said that the west is losing on the national level. Do you contribute that to the lack of air play or a lack of talent?

Balance – I defenately don't think it's a lack of talent. You got cats like sly boogy, frontline, crooked I, the game, etc. that are west coast mc's that could go round for round with the best of them. So its not talent. I think it's the fact that a west coast new artists needs to get on a major label that is gonna support them a 150%. When that happens and you get a label that is excited about a new artist out the west then you will see it happen. But it has to be more than one it has to be four or 5 rappers doin it from the west and then cats will be like "ohh shit the west is back".

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Robert - You also said that "we need to elevate our game in order to make our scene pop again". What artist do you see with this elevated attitude?

Balance –its a lot of artists that's elevating they game. B-legit, e-a-ski, rich rich they all are elevating they game. Then you got the godfather DR. Dre who every time he drops he elevates not only his game but the whole industries game.

Robert - Recently MTV removed The Boo Yaa T.R.I.B.E.'s "Bang On" video from rotation because of to much gang affiliation. Your album is hott but would the "radio" versions of the tracks still hold true to the tracks?

Balance – fo sho. I don't change what I do to make radio records. I may bleep a curse or change a curse word to another word, but u can't make records for radio. You have to make your records and at the end of the day if the radio wants to play it they will play it. But even if radio don't play your records it don't stop ther. Jus think NWA never had radio play, only now do rap artists get radio play.

Robert - Could the "Roughness" of westcoast rap be a contributing factor to why there is lil to no air play?

Balance – naw I think it come down to the beats. If the beat make the masses move their ass, then it has chance to get radio play. If it's a song girls will like then you may have a chance at radio play, but it don't matter what u say its usually the beat and hook that makes SINGLES.

Robert - Death Row Records was the heart of the westcoast sound in the 90's. But after some left and Tupac died they seemed to lose their standing. What are your views on Death Row today? In your eyes are they still a major player in the game?

Balance – I like death row I think death row is the biggest west coast label ever. There is so much history at that label that it will always be historic. Its like the Oakland raiders or dallas cowboys—history!! I want to see a crooked I record to me he's their biggest artist. Are they a major player in the game they could be if they get another gold or platinum album.

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Robert - Do you see the talent at Tha Row in this "elevated attitude" that is needed to bring the west back?

Balance – I defenately see crooked I and eastwood as an 'elevated attitude' I haven't heard the other artists but I'm down for all the tight west coast artists out ther' lets bring this shit back to life!

Robert - I know you are presently hooked up with the Infrared Music Group (IMG), But if the timing was different would you consider signing with Death Row if the conditions were right?

Balance – It depends on what the deal looks like, but that's the same for any label that approaches me. But yes I'm open to talk to any label thas interested to see what they can offer in helping me spread my music to the masses.

Robert - On "Balance The Mixtape" you feature alot of real good people. E-A-SKI, Sly Boogy, F.A.B., Zion 1, Frontline,Clyde Carson, and Locksmith. How long have you been hooked up with this group of talent?

Balance – well I met e-a-ski at a club in the bay and we both were fans of each others work so we hooked up. He's one of the tightest producers I've ever worked with. Zion I is a group that's cats wouldn't expect balance to work with they are a very hip-hop group but they are dope and to me its about dope music. Sly boogy I met thru sway & tech. Frontline is my dogs when me and them hooked up it became serious, we go to war together-thas my dogs. F.a.b is another bay artist who I met saw his hustle and I got down with. Clyde Carson is a cat from my neighborhood that I liked and reached out to also, I like workin wit new cats, cats who ain't been heard.

Robert - Locksmith reminds me of Easy-E for some reason. I don"t know if it is the flow or the sound , but have you and him worked alot togeather?

Balance – yeah we've done about 10 songs together and whenever me and him work together we bring the best out each other its like a contest to see who can come the doppest. We keep

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each other on our toes.

Robert - Locksmith and the others on the mixtape are great battle rappers. The Wake Up Show Intro on the Mixtape was tight. Do you find more pressure in a battle or in the studio?

Balance – both. Its pressure in battles cus when u get challenged u have to show ur a game everytime its like a sport. If u have a bad night the fans be like "damn what happened tonight". If u have a good night they like "yeah he did it". When I'm in the studio its also pressure because u have to make songs and songs it what people will treasure. Good songs and good albums are more important to me than being the battle king.

Robert - Now the underground scene seems to know and except you well. What do you see as the major struggles ahead in breakin into major markets and reachin outside the underground market?

Balance – well money is always a issue but I'm a hustler and I will find a way to spread my music. And I think with time my music will spread like a disease from speaker to speaker, city to city, state to state, and around the world. But one of the major struggles will be tryin to find a good distributor for my album that will get my album in the stores where my fans can buy them or it. How many times do u hear people say "I can't find his album anywhere". So thats why I started my website: www.balanceskillz.com this way if a fan can't get my album in the store they can get it off my website.

Robert - Lyrically the flows from all the New Bay are tight; the beats are distinctive - Did all the beats on the Mixtape come from Omen or do you work with alot of different producers?

Balance – I worked with a lot of different producers. I try to find producers, and I always listen to beat cd's but I'm real picky. I worked with Omen, Bedrock, Malik Ameer, Amp live, E-a-ski, Left.

Robert - Where there some artist you wanted to hook up with for the Mixtape that it just didn't happen? And are there any artist who are trying or would like to hook up with?

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Balance – all the artists I wanted to work with made the cd. I would like to hook up with crooked I again. I wanna work with Dr. Dre, Jay-z. for real on sum other shit I would want to work with the d.o.c. I want him to write me a song. Don't get me twisted I write all my own lyrics but to me d.o.c was one of the tightest rappers ever and it was a tragedy that he only got to make one album with his voice. So I would luv to be a voice for his lyrics. Imagine on my album if I had a song called "DOC returns" and it was 3 verses written by d.o.c. rapped by BALANCE thas crazy!!!

Robert - I guess with bootlegs it's hard to tell, but is there anyway to chart sales of The Mixtape? How is it doing?

Balance – its number 15 out of 50 at 7 local stores out here. No way to track the sales but f-it. At this point it ain't about the sales its about spreading my music and letting people know that "you balance got sum hot shit if u want more hit me up"

Robert - With the wide acceptance of music like Westside Connections "Terrorist Threats" and the Boo Yaa T.R.I.B.E.'s West Koasta Nostra, and the success of underground artist like Mitchy Slick, Sly Boogy, Roscoe and others - why do you think the major companies have not tapped this resource? Seems people are starved for the westcoast sound, it looks like just good business to look in the west.

Balance – I think the labels are starting to come back west. I've been contacted by a lot of labels and they are all looking here. They belive this is the next spot to blow. I think it will take one rap artist to blow reppin the west and it is on again!!!!

Robert - With all the great talent that seems to just be sittin in the west, do you feel that you can make a good impression in the major markets?

Balance – I think I can. I think my music can be felt nation wide (east, west, south). Its not local its jus good music. Dope west coast music. I think good music is needed in a industry that is in need for sumthin new and good. The rap game is like fast food, yeah its rap (and its over 1 million served) but is it good. I'm hear to make good music, and like 50 cent said good music is like drugs to rap fiends.

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Robert - When you see all the talent that is available in the west, and you look at the state of rap and hip hop today, what would your comment to the major record companies and outlets be?

Balance – take a chance, quit trying to sign the same shit over and over. They're can't be 2 ja rules, they're can't be another outkast, they won't be another jay-z. go sign good music and put money behind good music. Come to kali now before the shit blows up cuz the price will go up fast!!!!

Robert - What would your advice or comments to the fans be?

Balance – my advice to rappers out there is to hustle and read and learn about the game. Find out what u do good and what u do bad and work on both. Get a job save sum money and invest in your self. To the fans I'm workin hard on my album "the day kali died" I want it to be a classic. To those who haven't heard of me go to my website and take a listen: www.balanceskillz.com.

Robert - Well the summer brings us "The Day Kali Died", your new album. What can we expect from it?

Balance – Raw west coast hip hop. The best beats, hooks, lyrics and ideas. You can expect an album that has many different subjects and levels. Not jus a guy rapping all day over different beats.

Robert - Any featured artist on it that we should know about?

Balance – E-a-ski and I got a song called "come see us" that is fire!!! Frontline is on the album. Mostly my family the new cats from the bay that the nation will be hearing about soon.

Robert - Will this be a national push thru Infrared Music Group?

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Balance – we are working on that now but it will be a AYINDEMUSIC/IMG project.

Robert - Well if it is anything like the Mixtape I see nuttin but good things for it. Any shows , shout outs or any info we need to know?

Balance – it will be 2 times better than the mix tape. The mixtape is preseason compared to the album. I'd like to shout out the bay area, and the west coast. We comin back harder than ever. Shout out e-a-ski and cmt, the frontline, and get rady for another mix cd before my album and after my album I will be doing a compilation called "WESTERN CONFERENCE" where I get to showcase my favorite up & coming rappers from the west.

Robert - I see that Frontline has just signed with Infrared Music Group. That's ur homies Locksmith and Left. Can yu tell us what they have coming up thru IMG?

Balance – FRONTLINE has a album called "who r u" and they shit is fire, they jus like me raw mc's out the west comin to bring this shit back!

Robert - Well I wish you all the best and I know that we will be hearing alot more of ya and from ya in the near future. I hope the Bay Area is willing to share ya, they have kept ya to theirsself long enough.Keep us up on whats poppin in the New Bay, and Keep Doing Ya Thang - Thanks Again----One

Balance – thanks homie and I appreciate the support

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