

# Burni has a way with words

LILLIAN AMOS

It took three years for Bernadette Amansure, better known by her stage name Burni Aman, to produce her first solo album *Sweet Science* but the hip hop artist said it was well worth the wait.

Burni grew up in Lavender Hill and Sheraton Park but has been jetting to Switzerland frequently to produce her album.

She is in the process of relocating to Switzerland where she will try to build her international music career.

Music was always her passion but it was at the age of 16, after "accidentally" going to a hip hop club that the fervor was entrenched.

"It was quite different from any other genre of music and I was inspired. The fact that there weren't many females rapping at the time also motivated me," said Burni.

Before that Burni was penning poems so it was a natural progression to start writing spoken word pieces and hip hop rhymes.

"I remember the first time I was on stage and performed my very first rap, it was life-changing," she said – but it was only later she considered taking up music as a profession.

Burni is familiar with the music industry, though. She is the co-founder of the SA-Swiss hip hop band, the Rogue State Alliance, and



■ Burni Aman doing what she does best.

was part of the all woman hip hop group, Godessa. She's also worked with a host of artists both locally and internationally.

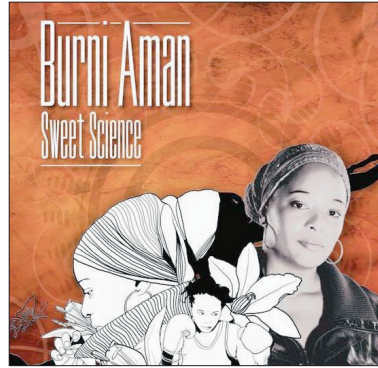
"The exposure performing with Godessa helped. It then became something I could make an income from," she said.

Burni had several previous jobs, including as a cleaner and as a receptionist at a marketing company.

"I always wanted to be writer.

When I finished matric I wanted to study journalism but I wasn't financially able to do so. When the Godessa opportunity came along and I actually made a bit of money and travelled, I knew it was meant to be.

"It was difficult in the beginning, going from a stable income to an artist's income, but I wanted to share something with people through my music. I wasn't getting that form of expression from my



■ The cover for Burni Aman's first solo album Sweet Science.

permanent job," said Burni.

The album features vocalists, musicians and producers from Switzerland, Africa and America and is a fusion of hip hop, Afro beat, rock, soul, funk and some spoken word.

Producer Jan Grundbacher said they worked "intensely" to get the album released.

"We worked hard to make it sound good. It wasn't always easy because she travelled back and forth between South Africa and Switzerland but we are very pleased with the outcome.

"It's the type of album you could listen from the beginning to the end and would want to listen to it over and over again," he said.

Burni's main motivation was the support from her family and

friends. "My family, friends and colleagues encouraged me all the way.

"At the time I told my mother I wanted to go into music as a profession, she didn't discourage me. It was a difficult decision because it was during a very rough time financially.

"I want to thank her and my brothers for the support they've given me over the years," said Burni.

Her advice to youngsters is to stay positive.

"If you really have a passion, doors will always open for you. Not everyone always has the same level of success but don't give up, don't get discouraged when you fail. Also surround yourself with people who have your best interest at heart. Be thankful, be grateful and be respectful."

To prospective music artists: "Collaborate with as many people as you can and that will give you the exposure you need. That's how I got to where I am today," she said.

● The launch of the album is on Saturday February 28, at The Imperial in Long Street, Cape Town.

The album will be on sale at the special once-off price of R100, which includes the entry fee.

Entry without the CD is R50.

It's also available on iTunes, Amazon and Bandcamp.

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