



K-Os doesn't want to change the world, he only wants to stop pretending / Photo: Christina Stefanski

K-Os: The Hip Hop Evolution comes to Dal

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Keaven Brereton's *Knowledge-Of-Self* comes from confidence and ambition—and genuine dream to redefine hip hop. Brereton, AKA K-Os, has engaged the masses, despite having only released two albums thus far—*Exit* and *Joyful Rebellion*. Currently touring throughout North America, Brereton brings with him a powerful message: a revolution needs to take place in hip hop music. The initiation of this change is not up to the individual musician, he insists, but depends upon the coming together of people who want to listen to socially conscious music.

"It doesn't matter if I exist, if I don't [change the way people think about hip hop music], someone else will."

Brereton delivered this message, in the flesh, at Dalhousie's Grawood on Jan. 13. The next night, playing the Marquee Club, Brereton demonstrated what he means by this revolution: he and his band blended rock, soul, hip hop beats and poetry in an energetic style, aptly demonstrating K-Os's talent and creativity.

Brereton says that the majority of people are manipulated by the media to like a certain type of rap music. Young adults have been "listening to lifestyles that aren't real" in popular rap music, he says, which has led them to

start looking for something more substantial. "Depending on how intelligent kids are about their revolution will dictate where it goes ... the masses are hungry for something beyond a perfect Aryan ideal on the media," he says.

Buck 65, a renowned Canadian hip hop artist known for his continuously evolving style, has influenced Brereton—who says he is "influenced by anyone who has faith or pride in their own ex-

"The Beatles weren't afraid to lose a rock audience when they did 'Revolver,' but for some reason in hip hop everyone feels that if you expand you're not 'hip hop' anymore," Brereton says. "Evolution is always a state that causes some kind of kafuffle, because not everyone evolves at the same rate." K-Os' evolution, Brereton says, is "something from my own experience.

On "Crucial," a track from *Joy-*

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periences [and] understands that it's smarter to represent yourself based on where you're from, rather than trying to gravitate to whatever is hot at the time." For some hip hop enthusiasts, appreciating Buck 65 can be a touchy subject. He has established his name in North America and Europe while experimenting in different cultures and with new sounds. At the same time, some argue that Buck 65's pursuit of discovering his own musical style has disconnected him from the North American hip hop audience—and Halifax in particular.

Is K-Os risking the danger of losing his audience, in the same way that Buck 65 perhaps has, if he does not produce what the mass public expects to hear?

ful Rebellion, Brereton sings: "I don't wanna change the world/I only wanna stop pretending." Pretending to change the world, for K-Os, has to do with "trying to go about change by criticizing the current establishment and being a reactionary revolutionary."

As far as the future of hip hop music is concerned, Brereton says the time has come to end the polarity between different categories of hip hop music. "There shouldn't be such a polarity [that classifies] 'conscious,' 'unconscious,' 'good hip hop' or 'bad hip hop.' It should be more balanced where hip hop is just like life," he says. "There are sunrises and there are sunsets of all types of music."