

Brownsilla

BOSS B

Steffi Klenz

Available on Spotify, iTunes, Amazon Music and all other streaming services.
CD available to order via Amazon Music.
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All Music produced and arranged by AJ Kwame
Vocals recorded and mixed by AJ Kwame and Adam Helal at Tileyard Studios
All music engineered by Adam Helal

AJ Kwame aka Peter Adjaye appears courtesy of
Music for Architecture records 2020



Album curated by Suzie Plumb

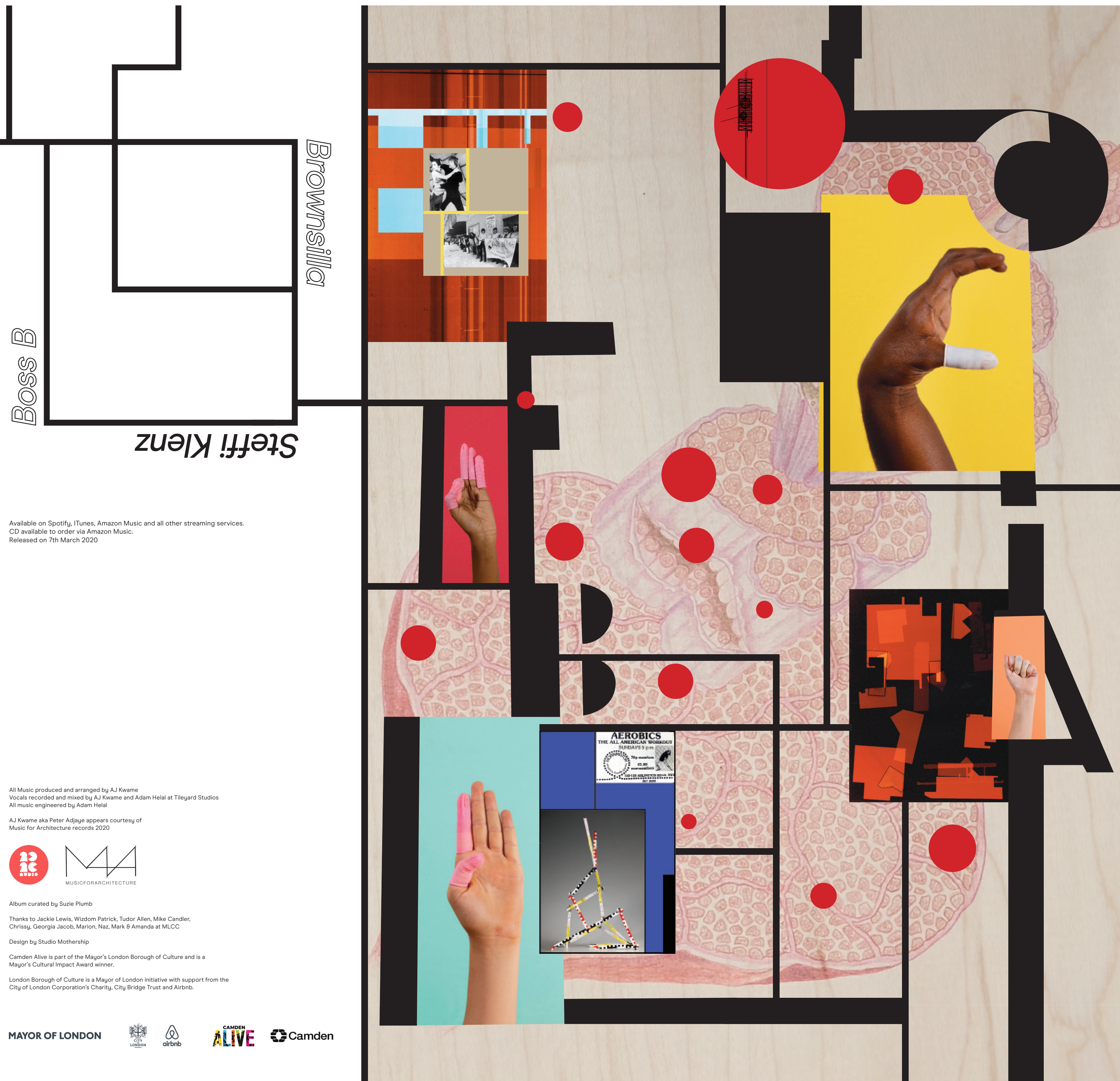
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MAYOR OF LONDON



An Album of Sound and Images

In the Spring of 2019 Maiden Lane rap artists Brownsilla and Boss B collaborated with
photographic artist Steffi Klenz. As artists in residence at the Camden Local Studies and
Archives Centre, they explored the histories of Maiden Lane, using maps, newspapers,
court reports and images.

Weaving these stories with their own experiences of living and being in London, the artists reflect
on what has been, and of its relevance to lives today. The resulting album presents a complex view
of Maiden Lane, one of tension and frustration but also of confidence and optimism.



Tensed Muscles
Steffi Klenz

In 1971 Camden Council acquired 22 acres of land, just off York Way, London from the National
Freight Corporation and built the Maiden Lane Estate. 200 years ago the site was farmland,
with 'Midden Lane' running through it. This route into London from the north became notorious
for highwaymen and footpads until the Midland Railway took over the area and used it as a depot for
coal, cattle and sheep.

The Maiden Lane estate, designed by architects Benson and Forsyth, was a visionary, modernist
scheme which included plans for 400 new homes, shops, sports facilities, a community centre,
a primary school and open spaces. Due to financial pressures in the late 1970s the plans were not
fully realised, resulting in a split site and years of practical and social challenges.

During 2019 Steffi Klenz spent time at Maiden Lane talking with residents and immersing herself
in the architecture of the space.

Tensed Muscles explores the relationship between the architectural promise of modernist living;
of equality and opportunity, and the reality of living in Maiden Lane in the 40 years since its
inception. Klenz layers images of the neighbourhood, mixed with architectural plans, archive
material and hand-drawn medical illustration to unearth what is hidden beneath the surface of the
site. Klenz is interested in the entanglements of the poetic, political and socio-economic aspects
of the neighbourhood and uses the metaphor of the 'phantom limb' to present this. Medical
drawings and images of Maiden Lane residents' disconnected limbs signify something missing
— something missing in society relating to inequality and social-economic trauma, represented
through bodily trauma.

The use of the body in her work connects us with the site, animating modernist architectural
plans which use the body to merely populate the space. Illustrations of tensed, spasmodic muscles
suggests that these animated bodies (that society and politics might want to disappear) become
visible, real and vocal. This idea is apparent in the images of disconnected hands. These hands
are separate and disconnected from the main body politic through trauma, but are presented as
significant tools of communication. In hip hop and rap hands become gestural instruments and,
as presented in Tensed Muscles, capable of vocalising through sign language by shaping an
alphabet. Klenz further explores communication by making correlations between Scriptio
Continua (continuous writing), an early style of writing without spaces or punctuation which
was performed rather than read and the fast-paced transmission of ideas through rap and hip hop.

Klenz's complex abstract collages of images, photograms, Scriptio Continua, graph work and
line drawing disrupt the discipline of architecture as a measured, rational and ordered space;
interrupting this with human agency, interaction and the realities of life on a London estate.

TENSED

MUSCLES

01 LBC Brownsilla / AJ Kwame

(Chorus)
I'm African so
I'll hit man with a spear
Yeah, I swear we're going clear
With so much drama in the LBC
London Borough of Camden
Shout out to the mandem

I'm from Camden, I know about random.
From the crack addicts to the bandits,
Really been here from the sandpit.
Shout out to the real ones, the weirdos, they be standard.
These man are just shabanz, but that's a whole other language.
Always stay ready, my brudda, I never planned it.
Feeling like Ross, bruddas scheming on my sandwich.
They tryna bite the style but they ain't got the bandwidth.
But back to the matter at hand -
I've got African roots but I'm a Camden lad,
and I'm bringing Camden alive from NW1 to NWS.
You know, we're bringing the vibe,
and we can still rock it out like the Emos and the Goths.
How you gonna try race as a cheater and a sloth?
Double doublin' down by Camden locks,
when the blue lights come on you know the mandem are off, like

(Chorus)
I'm from Camden but I don't know N-Dubz.
But I do know man with their dome messed up.
Young Gs tryna lick a box in the ends.
There's a brudda used to roll around with a box on his head,
but there's money on my mind - hell! mountains gotta climb
Leave the funny guys, get hotted like summer time.
I can't waste my time, cah. The poverty is high and so is the tension.
Kids outside the shop tryna get someone to go buy them a Benson.
Strap is in the hedges, bunch of rough neck rough edges.
All sorts of legends.
No role models - no space for pretenders
Got more drama than Eastenders, but there still bare love shown,
even though it's snakey, even though it's cut throat.
Everybody wants to do good and come home,
but man get greedy and they want more.

(Chorus)
It's like Maiden lane raised me, but way before my day
It was one road from Kings Cross to Highgate.
Moving cattle - gotta make sure that they fly straight.
There's bare beggars and robbers just on the highway.
But, boy how have times changed.
I'm from Camden - there's not a lot that I find strange.
In this life I'm not saying there's a right way,
but morals and priorities are all going sideways.
6 hour shift - I'll tell you about my day.
Started on a Thursday finished on a Friday.
With peoples stressed out, deep wishing they could fly away.
They can't do that so they out skanking with a migraine,
Tryna mask whatever with good vibes and a nice fade.
F**k love - gimme a drink and some high grade.
Life's a bitch with a nice face,
and her attitude stinks but I'm feeling like I might stay.

(Chorus)
C'est la vie, c'est la vie,
C'est la vie, c'est la vie,
C'est la vie, Mama a dit

Came straight from Cameroon and ended up in London.
Family had nothing so you know that we were strugglin'.
Sister raised me - no mum and dad to save me.
Never letting go of my past - it's all memory
Leave my friends on the streets 'cos that's where they met me.
Point blank things where hard!

Back in the day Maiden Lane was a coal factory,
1983 they renovated it to the flats you see.
Ain't life a mystery until you learn your history.
Well my estate's the missing piece
and I'm giving you the missing speech,
Crime pays on my street,
night and day, obviously.

(Chorus)

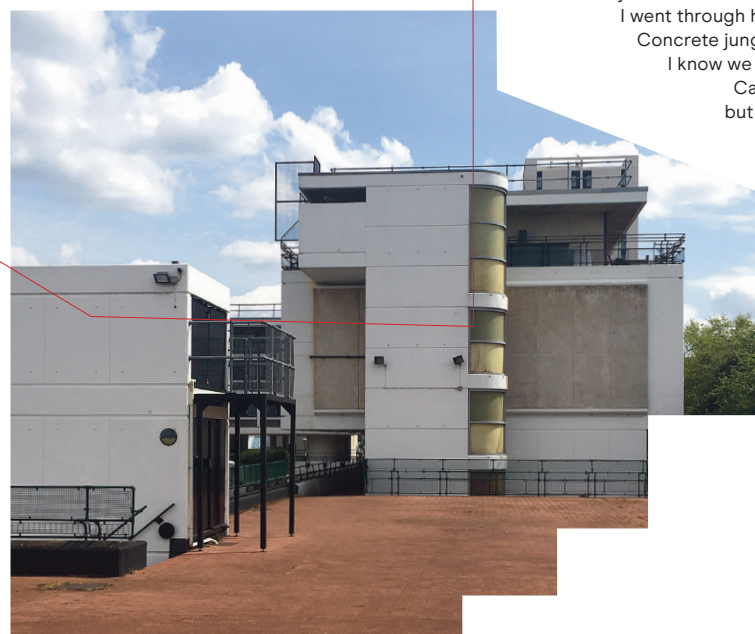
Drug deals and robberies,
crackheads and whores is all you see.
This whole game's monopoly -
no strength for the weak.
By the age of 13 I knew money was all I need.
Cut til flip til bring it back peeps.
Hustling was in my genes -
I was only 13 when I fell forth to the streets.
Nearly died twice but I prevailed - it's a blessing.
I'm destined for greatness - for greatness I'm destined.
My mind is the weapon.
Going jail was my detention, had to learn my lesson.
I was young, wild 'n reckless - the roads taught me everything.
I tried it for better things.
Maiden lane resident making changes - I'm the president.

(Chorus)

All my life I've had to keep it greezy!
Always going hard nothing came easy.
Always had it in my heart,
tell me if you can feel my beat, please.
No TV in my yard, so I was out in the streets
Had patience as a kid but all this changed when I was 16.
I realised how much Sister struggled raising me.
So it's been my dream to give her anything she needs,
but I was only young and I fell victim to the streets.
Got abused by the system but little did I listen.
From a young age I've been having these visions -
always on my own - I think I was a misfit.
Now my third eye is awakening.
9 kids I'm the King,
R.I.P. To Popz - I do this for him.
Grew up in London - the borough of Camden
never changed me - but made me into the best of me.
Mentally and physically,
emotionally and lyrically!

Came up from London - Camden town love me.
I know ain't no rich kid and know I ain't no punk.
I just love my music so I just let it rock!
I knew it from a distance that I was gonna pop!
Consistent like a 9-5, I treat it like a job,
so when I spit that fire I keep my flame on.
They say where I'm from that the good die young

02 C'est La Vie Boss B / AJ Kwame



03 Maiden Lane Boss B / AJ Kwame



(Chorus)
Camden Town Maiden Lane, this is where it all happened.
I'm talking of the past, I'm talking of the present.

Camden Alive reached out 'cos they know the crisis
and we're working together to better the environment.
No, I never ever knew that this could ever happen.

Boss B Entertainments - I put that on the map and
now everybody from the globe wanna hear me rapping.
I can't believe I got this far - must be the law of attraction.
Now everything I need's stuck to me like a magnet.
Still - I got a long while, so I gotta keep a balance.

I was humble, I was broke, but I was damn active.
I was always on my own - no Dad around meh.
Still - everything I did, I did it with a passion
even though I was in school, failing my classes.
Music was just a hobby - I fell in love with rapping.
No, I never ever knew that this could be a talent.
2003 I moved up to Camden.
It was bad then, but that's where I met the Mandem.

(Chorus)

Let me take it back to the streets where you know it's peep.
I'm talking 1983 when they built these streets.
20 years later this place was a home for me.
35 years later this same estate helped me get to where I am today.
Ain't no mistake that I would change.
I'm giving you my heart, I'm giving you my brain,
I'm giving you my past, I'm giving you a taste.
Learn from your mistakes - life ain't no mistake.

If I could tell you about my estate, Camden Town was the place.
Bag a shanks in my estate, kats in alleways, YGs all movin' bait.
You know Camden had love, but watch out for the hate.
Yeah I'm still righteously givin', I'm still righteously livin',
but mind who you are giving, 'cos some man are wicked.
Still - the time is ticking, so baby mind your minutes,
and take time with it.
This life's the only one you're gettin'.

I had a talent it was music, so I started writing.
I had a dream of performing in front of thousands,
now my name's blowing up - ain't this surprisin'.
Dropping 'em with hot bangers - like I'm Tyson.

Now I'm out the storm in one piece - I can start where I left it.
Master my next flip, craft up a next script, Maiden lane is my exit,
the game was my lesson, brought me pain, then I strengthened.
All this pain - no way am I forgetting.

(Chorus)

Cut from a different cloth - I ain't the same as the block.
Still - I share what I got. I'm never changing for the GWOP.
I've spent years on the Lock - 10 years was enough.
Camden Town Maiden Lane - I shed tears when I was locked.
My only fear is not seeing my son growing up, rolling up.
I'm making positive changes before I'm gone.
So, tell the ones I love, I'm tryna give hope to the young.
Tryna break these vicious cycles from the locks.

From a young age they've been tryna hold us up.
Been tryna mould us up - but our energy is strong.
Melanin that's in my blood - divine energy from up above.
We're the key to all the locks- the real Gs of the blocks,
the ones to bring peace where it's gone.
No Black Eyed Peas, but my people where is the love?
From a young age I've been chasing them millions.
From a young age I've been active - I know what's goin' on.

From a young age I've had a mind rate of a grown up.
I'm a leader, not a follower.
I just wanna reach out to my people and bring 'em closer.
I went through hell and back, but still I kept my culture.
Concrete jungle - I grew up around rats 'n vultures.
I know we living to die, but we keep evolin'.
Camden Town Maiden Lane,
but I'm known all over London.

(Chorus)

(Chorus)
You just need to be yourself so you can free yourself.
Coming out of the mud you might need to clean yourself.
This society is f**ked, and the slavery is mental.
So I free my mind on the instrumentals, see.

When it comes to choices I only control mine.
I got love for my gugs, but it's f**ked in this life.
Everyday it's grind, grind. Can't get left behind, lord knows I try.
Before I help anyone I gotta help I.
And right now I can only help you to get high.
I be fighting demons, still tho, I gotta get mine, so I can protect mine.
Look into my sleep deprived-always-getting-high eyes on.
See the ambitions of a rider.
2pacs on me - I'm like Hail Mary - can't get caught to be chilling with the lifers.
F**k it time to wise up.
I told mummy that the way we living will be nicer.
I gotta nice her cah she the type who'll give me her drink
And just swallow her saliva.
Getting paid off these bars now - I'm just letting it pile up.
Motorway tips, white girl in the driver.

(Chorus)

Still the supplier now they just call me for a different kinda fire.
Now I'm getting hired to come bring the vibes higher.
Tracksuits still the attire - put in mad effort, not only God loves a tryer.
Fans show respect, haters hate, but it's a minor but
Bar for bar, blud - I'll get laid-out recliners.
Even if Kevin try close the gates I will never tire.
Royal with the lyrical man should call me sire.
Fickle minds talk first
You man needing a messiah I ain't preaching to no choir.
But you lot are buncha liars- talking like Danny Dyers.

Ay someone pass me a lighter - wait this is mine - you try claim it
Tryna take my shine, well I'm sorry blud, you can't have this.
Make your own shit, Why you always gotta cat shit?
100 guys on instagram with the same caption.

(Chorus)

They be like I'm all about that action, you know I stay active.
Everyday stacking - higher than a captain - Blud, you're all catfish who chat shit,
And youngsters growing up, fully tryna match it, or take it further cah they don't know no better.
No role models in the hood - we ch so fed up - make it work with what you got -
Might be a solo venture - just stay on the horse, like a polo sweater.
But they still talking, just cease to exist. You fight women - I can see through your deviousness.
I be lurking like 67 ft GIGs. I'm too much sauce - like ain't enough meat with this dish.
You're too much talk like when you're tryna beat but she kicks,
You hover round like waiters when they fiending for tips.
I make the whole crowd move like they needing a piss - I'm chasing dreams
but in ends bruddas still need the assist.
I ain't one to say I'm as real as it gets, cah my actions speak louder - bruddas know what it is.
So keep your opinions - I ain't bothered if there's 2 or 3 people throwing shade,
cah there's nothing you can do to me - it's me on the computer screen,
Hold the mic beautifully - taking it to new degrees.

(Chorus)



They say nothin' ain't changed
Maiden lane they say nothin' ain't changed

Maiden lane they say nothin' ain't changed
I give thanks, 'cos we're the ones to make a change.
1982 was the birth of my estate.
From sheep pens, to soap works, to railways,
from footpads, who used the flats as a getaway,
to new flats which gave life to a social change.
37 years later, now you got to see
how two young black brothers spoke for the streets.

Brownzilla Boss B - we're The Prophecy
It took us time, it took us patience, but we got too see.
I feel the love, I see the hate and the animosity.
I came up from a place where it's hard to leave.
It's in my blood, it's in my veins, it's in my arteries.
I took the scars, I took the blame, I took the suffering.
You gotta keep a cool - even though there's heat.
Never hope and expect work for your dreams.

(Chorus)

The saga continues, we've all got problems - the dramal
We've all got issues.
The saga continues, we've all got problems - the dramal
We've all got issues.

And it's never gonna stop, swear man, we're going to the top
I don't know why they wanna see me flop
and we never gonna stop, swear man, we're going to the top
I don't know why they wanna see me flop.

Try tellin' me calm down now, I don't want to, I start monkey flippin' bruddas like I know Kung-Fu
This that Class A crackpot, I ain't got food, I'm rain on your set like an Asian monsoon.
I got African blood and European attitude and when I talk a lot of Caribbean words get used.
They bought an extinguisher 'cos there's I'm fire in the booth.
'Cos this is Camden someone told Charlie come through.
Never been a sloth though, gotta get it pronto, I'm hard to ignore like a baby with a crossbow. Maiden Lane I was raised
in a drug drop-zone, where you can call the line anytime like Monzo.

Little boy, big guns, long-noe Gonzo.
Born and raised in UK, my family's from the Congo, but we can get shaking anytime, Alfonso.
Uncle Phil's house, won't stop until we get those.

(Chorus)

And it's never gonna stop, swear man, we're going to the top
I don't know why they wanna see me flop
and we never gonna stop, swear man, we're going to the top
I don't know why they wanna see me flop.

I came from hopeless place where it's full of fiends.
They say never bite the hand that feeds
so I'm tryin' a make it right and feed my peeps,
inspire my youngsters coming from the streets.
Maiden Lane resident, African origin.
Still tryna make it out, still tryna beat the system.
I think I had a dream, Martin Luther King,
hard work pays off if you be consistent.

And ignorance is bliss - that's not an excuse for you to not know shit.
No pizzeria, gotta make this go flip, like f**k all the stuntin' man, it's about owing.
These people like to judge, that they ain't got no sin.
They probably talk about others 'cos they ain't got their own thing.
S I double L A goes in - and keep talking about slaves when we coming from kings.

(Chorus)

And we never gonna stop, swear man, we're going to the top
I don't know why they wanna see me flop
and we never gonna stop, swear man, we're going to the top
I don't know why they wanna see me flop.

04 Out the Mud Brownsilla / AJ Kwame

05 Zut Alors! Boss B / Brownsilla / AJ Kwame