

Word IS BOND

*Beverly Bond
is showing the world that*

BLACK GIRLS ROCK.

BY *Yvette Stines*

PHOTOGRAPHED BY *Hugo Castillo*

STYLED BY *Jewell Tracey*

It is always inspiring to learn about an individual who has made a living out of her hobby. It is even more inspiring to learn about an individual who sees that there is a need for change, does something about it, and creates a movement in the process. Beverly Bond, a world-renowned DJ and the founder of Black Girls Rock! (BGR!), is a visionary who has shined her light all over the world through her music, creativity, and philanthropy.

Now she is helping young women of color do the same.

Bond always had a passion for music, but little did she know her eclectic taste and appreciation for sound variation would lead to her becoming a famous DJ.

"I grew up on music; my mom exposed me to different types. I started to collect records. People would come over, see my collection, and ask if I was a DJ. I wasn't trying to be one. I felt it was a huge responsibility so I just did it as a hobby," Bond says.

Working as a model, she would DJ as an outlet. But soon her hobby would lead her to become one of the most sought-after female DJs in the industry.

STYLIST'S ASSISTANT: J.T. ANDREWS; HAIR: JANEL SMITH; MAKEUP: JOJO RODRIGUEZ

NOMINATE A
BLACK GIRL WHO
ROCKS, TELL US WHY
AT JONESMAG.COM.
SHE COULD WIN A
BGR HOODIE.

Stylist's own vintage military hat; **Boy Meets Girl** cargo harem pant, black sweater, tank with leather detail, and leather asymmetrical jacket; **Fortune** blue stud bow tie and multi-chain necklaces worn as belts; **Flud** watch; **Alisha Arnold** stud bracelet and bone and metal ring; **Sue Comma Bonnie** navy bow and crystal shoes.

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—BEVERLY BOND,
Founder of Black Girls Rock!

Working in the entertainment industry, Bond saw a disheartening trend in the portrayal of African-American women. Thinking of the next generation, she realized something had to change. “I always stood up for truth and justice, even when I was a little girl,” she explains.

Bond wanted to empower young women and negate the message that “Black women aren’t good enough, smart enough, or pretty enough. The images that are portrayed to our girls are destructive to their self-esteem,” she says. Her vision led her to start mentoring. “I wanted to mentor and show young women that there are educated, smart, creative women who are not relying on their physical self to make it in the world.” Along with her decision to mentor, she made a T-shirt that stated, “Black Girls Rock.” When she saw the shirt on her table, she realized how big the message and the mission could become.

In 2006, Bond started BGR!, a non-profit organization that mentors at-risk teenage women of color through encouraging and exposing the girls to positive, life-changing activities through arts, culture, and academics. The programs are designed to nurture their creativity, build self-esteem, and enhance intellectual skills. “We have a number of programs, which include a Scratch DJ Academy program, Taste the World program, summer camp, college tours, and poetry workshops,” she explains. With a growing organization, Bond is seeing the fruits of her labor in many ways. “We have two of our girls going to college,” she says excitedly. Presently the program is primarily in the New York area, but Bond is actively looking to expand. She would also like to create a mentoring program for boys. “Our youth are in a crisis and we must do something about it,” she says.

Bond understands BGR! is still a work in progress, though others are taking notice, seeing the importance of her work and creating a strong support system. Since the organization’s inception, Bond has conducted an awards ceremony celebrating women who embody the message of BGR!. This year, for the first time, the ceremony was televised, airing on BET in November. This is a wonderful accomplishment for Bond, the mentees, and the organization. As a woman who is creating positive change every day, her advice to others who want to live their dreams: “Stay the course, follow your passion, and push yourself.” ●



KERI HILSON, KEYSHIA COLE, RUBY DEE, DANIEL BONILLA, APRIL WOODARD, VV BROWN, LYNN WINFIELD, RAVEN-SYMONÉ AND BEVERLY BOND, KIM WHITLEY, JILL SCOTT, CIARA, DEBRA LEE, MIA MARCUS