

# Local CD roundup

Saccharine suckers, an engrossing emcee and potential-packed punks.

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**P.O.S.**  
**ALBUM:** "Never Better"  
**LABEL:** Rhymesayers Entertainment/Doomtree



**B**ecause he was reared on punk, it's no secret that elements of the genre bleed into P.O.S.'s hip-hop. On "Never Better," the Minneapolis emcee's third release, those elements are more pronounced than ever — and it starts with the beats. While P.O.S. has never exhibited cupcake beats on previous efforts, "Never Better's" production leaves the listener feeling like

they've been pummeled for 12 rounds and tossed out of the arena. Whether it's the chainsaw snyth of "Drum Roll (We're all Thirsty)," the machine-gun high-hats of "Purexed" or the rattling bass on "Out of Category," it's clear that P.O.S. set out to make an abrasive and harsh record.

Lyrically, P.O.S. is equally impactful with his pen. Much more stream-of-conscious soapbox than focused narrative, P.O.S. utilizes his effortless flow to dart and duck around words that serve as commentaries on society and — even more so — a call to arms to listeners to break from the shackles society puts on them. Sometimes it feels as though he's rapping for the sake of rapping (read: wordplay over substance), but his rhymes always find their weight, and he remains one of the more lyrically crafty emcees.

While it's an extremely well-rounded and cohesive record, some of the tracks do stand out and demonstrate P.O.S.'s still-lofty potential. "Purexed" is a building and downright triumphant manifesto; "Get Smokes" is a funky and sparse number with a killer Stooges reference, and the haunting title track "Never Better" is a choice cut from a record ripe with them.

Every Minneapolis rapper stands beneath a massive shadow that's cast by none other than Mr. Minneapolis himself: Slug of Atmosphere. Not to detract from Atmosphere's fine catalogue, but in terms of pure talent, it's becoming more and more clear that P.O.S.' game is every bit as polished. While his first two releases were overt nods at that fact, "Never Better" is tangible proof.

★★★★☆