


# PIONEER PRESS

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Friday, February 27, 2009  
ST. PAUL, MN  
191,591 (15)  
Newspaper (D)  
1E,4E  
P.O.S

## Gift Rap



Local musician **P.O.S.** is on a hot streak, but his goal hasn't changed: He still wants to give fans his very best, right down to the cover of his new CD.

Movie reviews by Chris Hewitt, 3e + Ross Raihala, 4e

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**By Ross Raihala**  
*Pop Music Critic*

Local rapper P.O.S. set a record for himself with his third album, "Never Better." After its first week on sale, it landed atop Billboard's Heatseekers chart, which tracks sales of up-and-coming acts.

"It's pretty cool," he said, laughing. "I typically don't put too much thought into that stuff, but it's great I did it on my own accord without having to make any pop jams or anything like that."

The feat did, however, impress someone who knows P.O.S. better by his birth name, Stefon Alexander.

"When (something like this happens), I show it to my mom," he said. "It makes her happy."

Alexander's mom should prepare for more accolades as 2009 looks to be a banner year for all things P.O.S. Issued on the much-acclaimed Minneapolis hip-hop label Rhymesayers, "Never Better" comes housed in an attention-getting plastic sleeve and detachable inserts that allow fans to mix and match to create their own cover art. And Alexander will follow up his current tour, which wraps up Saturday at First Avenue, by hitting the road with the Warped Tour this summer.

Here's what he had to say about the state of his career during a phone interview from a tour stop in Salt Lake City:

P.O.S., 4E >

## On his goal for "Never

**Better:** "I wanted to make a really melodic record, but I didn't want to make a bunch of easy songs. I wanted to write music that was really challenging to me and really challenging to my fans."

**On recording the new album:** "The last one, 'Audition,' was really intense, but this one took a lot longer, almost a full year from start to finish. My first recordings for the record got stolen from my van on tour last year, so I lost everything I had been working on. But it turned out to be a blessing, because I really liked the direction it ended up going."

**On the innovative packaging for "Never Better":** "It's a collaboration between myself and my favorite artist in the Cities, Eric Carlson. I gave him the record when it was done,

and he would draw pictures based on the music. I told him to go nuts with it. It's all really weird and strange and cool."

**On making the effort to create such packaging in an increasingly digital-only world:** "The overarching theme of the record is productivity — getting something done and making yourself happy. That's the whole feel of the record. So, I wanted to (give listeners) something they could grab and touch and make something out of on their own."

**On his philosophy of live performance:** "When I was younger, I hated going to a show and feeling like I wasn't cool enough. It pissed me off.

So, you're not going to see anybody posturing onstage. We don't care about looking cool, we care about putting on a good show and making everyone feel welcome. I set

**Who:** P.O.S. performing a CD-release show for "Never Better"

**When:** 6 p.m. Saturday

**Where:** First Avenue, 701 First Ave. N., Mpls.

**Tickets:** \$12-\$10

**Call:** 651-989-5151

that tone right off the bat."

**On what it's like to play the Warped Tour:** "It's like summer camp; it's totally ridiculous. It's like building a small city in a different place every morning and then tearing down that city at 10 that night. It's just as much amazing as it is a headache. It

can be a challenge to get people to stop and listen."

**On how he gets Warped kids to stop and listen:** "It's one of my favorite parts about Warped. When the crowd doesn't know me, I don't have to do the old songs. I can just cut loose and have a good time."