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Stargazer

Review: Poor Majesty's new record *Dreamer* is hip-hop with a potent message

BY OLIVIA MONAHAN



PHOTO COURTESY OF POOR MAJESTY

Dreamer's album cover is appropriately surreal.

A musical representation of light and dark created through experimentation and intimate lyrics, *Dreamer* offers a balance of hard and soft vibes that speak to real-life issues.

That balance is perfectly illustrated in songs such as "S.O.S (Same Old S--t)." The music ensnares you immediately with its rapid succession of high-hats and head bobbing, and keeps you hooked while telling the stories of Stephon Clark, Darrell Richards, Joseph Mann and other police killings across the country.

It's represented in "Roses," which speaks to the importance of letting those we love know before it's too late. The song also speaks to Gilmore's life as a corporate worker, father, husband and activist constantly trying to find the balance between reach-

ing for his dreams and supporting the dreams of those around him.

"I think hip-hop is missing something integral right now, and that's the ability to create music that talks directly about what is happening, but makes it palatable to those who might not be ready for the message," Gilmore says. "If the music catches you, if the beat takes you, then it's stuck in your head. Which means you go back and play it over again. Which means that message is settling in your cerebral."

With the melding of hip-hop beats that sound as if Lucy Pearl and Kanye West had a baby, powerful R&B vocals provided by Sene, Sydney Rane and Stevie Nader, and poignant features from Reflective Intelligence, Nome Nomadd and Mahtie Bush, the album makes space for local artists.

Like Gilmore, we are all the dreamers in search of the finish line. □

"I've been making music in Sacramento for a long time, running this race to achieve a dream, while being chased by those who were trying to stop me."

Adrian Gilmore,
aka Poor Majesty

Slow and steady wins the race, and Poor Majesty is ready to pull ahead of the pack.

The Sacramento hip-hop artist, also a member of the local group Tribe of Levi, is elevating his solo presence with a new album. *Dreamer* releases June 29.

"I've been screaming 'turtle power' for a long time now, and I think folks thought I was talking about the Ninja Turtles," Poor Majesty (real name Adrian Gilmore) tells SN&R with a laugh. "But in reality, I mean it more in that old school way of the tortoise and the hare. I've been making music in Sacramento for a long time, running this race to achieve a dream, while being chased by those who were trying to stop me."

"I feel like this album is the culmination of that race I've been running," he adds. "Like I'm coming out of the darkness and finished in the light."

With an album release party the same night at Groundswell gallery on J Street, Gilmore says he's ready to present a new vision of his music, one that takes listeners outside of hip-hop normalcy.

Check out Poor Majesty at 6 p.m. on Saturday, June 29 at Groundswell Art for the release party of *Dreamer*. No cover. 2508 J St. Follow Poor Majesty: facebook.com/poormajesty.