

ATMOSPHERE

**“WHEN LIFE GIVES YOU LEMONS, YOU PAINT THAT SHIT GOLD”
(RHYMESAYERS ENTERTAINMENT) OUT APRIL 22nd**

Eleven years after becoming the first hip-hop act to put the Twin Cities on the map, Atmosphere has grown into one of the most accomplished MC/producer duos around. Between Slug and Ant, they've released six albums, 11 Sad Clown tour albums and various side-projects like Felt — amounting in well over a million units sold. And along the way have performed to sold-out crowds everywhere from modest sized venues in their hometown to colossal festivals in Japan. Since releasing their 1997 debut, *Overcast!*, Ant's ASR-born melodic beats and Slug's open book and observational style of rapping continues to evolve into hip-hop that's more honest — more textured. And the praise for these Rhymesayers pioneers hasn't stopped flowing in.

As Rolling Stone once gushed about Slug, “This Minneapolis indie rap hero has potential to spare, delivering taut, complex rhyme narratives with everyman earnestness.” Or as the Village Voice once wrote of Ant, “His dusty grooves are hooky and R&B-informed, and even when they back up Slug's most maniacally depressed rhymes, they never feel heavy-handed.”

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While Slug's name has become synonymous with introspective rap, the new revelatory recording process with Ant inspired the MC to open up his subject matter well beyond his own life. In fact, *When Life Gives You Lemons...* is entirely based around fictional narratives that deal with societal issues — many, which revolve around the theme of parenthood. To accompany the release, the album comes with a 40 page hard cover book that includes a children's story by Slug in addition to all of the lyrics. And this was done in part to celebrate Slug's growth as a writer.

“This time around I really did force myself to try and write these stories as if I was writing a book or short stories and just trying to figure out how to put them into music,” says Slug.

The song that got this whole album started is “In Her Music Box” — the tale of a young girl who sits in the back seat of her wannabe pimp of a father's car, absorbing the explicit raps she hears coming out of the speakers. The song is not so much about neglect as it is examining the dichotomy between a young, inexperienced father and his impressionable child. As Slug says of the track, “The main point of it was to look at and speculate on how children at that age learn the art of escapism that as adults sets up for self-medicating and self-abuse.”

Another vital track on the album is “Shoulda Known,” which also touches on parenthood in the context of examining poor decision making and how crucial it is to think beyond the present. With songs like these, Slug proves that his best work isn't necessarily the

most revealing. And if you ask him, making an album with Ant completely comprised of fictional content sure helped get all of the real life characters from his former verbal journals off his back.

“Every record I put out you can guarantee there’s going to be about five people that are going to call me and e-mail me and go, ‘I can’t believe you fuckin’ said that on your record! I can’t believe you fuckin’ told people about that!’ This time around, nobody can call me out on that.”