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**Mochipet : Microphonepet**  
released on Daly City  
reviewed by Gaspar Oliveira for GBH.tv

Hip hop culture has grown too big for its own rhetoric. That may seem like a strange thing to say, but think about it. It's the foundation of dozens, maybe even hundreds, of local cultural scenes all over the world, and plenty of its practitioners like to say they're part of a global, singular thing. But at a variety of levels, the music's often pretty myopic. DJs and producers tend to zero in on very select musical styles, MCs mire themselves in mixtape feuds and solipsistic boasting, and these intense preoccupations make international collaborations rare. And when they do happen, the results tend to be pretty messy.

Listen to excerpts here:

"Girls and Boys and Toys"

"The Graduate"

"Rambunktion"

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This is all rather frustrating, because pretty much since hip hop was born, musical omnivores and club goers alike have been feeding on the related rhetoric of DJ culture, which promises that concerns like genre and cultural background are irrelevant to truly open ears. It's an intensely problematic (and probably naive) theory, but the right DJ can spin those would-be loose ends into sparks, generate momentum out of plurality, and create a divine, fleeting feeling that maybe it all does fit together.

Even though he flies below most radar screens, the Oakland-based DJ/producer known as Mochipet is in that elite company. His career output's nothing if not eclectic: he's made everything from breakcore and tech house to disco and hip hop, but on both the decks and self-released mixes, he brings them all together without sacrificing any fluidity. His newest album, *Microphonepet*, aspires to fit that same musical eclecticism under the umbrella of indie hip hop. Mochipet gives listeners a little of everything, from true-school-inspired neo-soul and boom bap to techno-flavored stutterers, and from track to track, the quality's consistently high. The denser, more techno-oriented tracks are his most inspired; "Get Your Whistle Wet"'s buzzing bass revs up into overdrive over synth alarms, the digital twitches and damaged breaks of "Rambunktion," and the sandpaper brushes and bleeps of "Take You Down" all work surprisingly well as both club tracks and hip hop instrumentals. But Mochipet's also digested enough music to make credible, more straightforward beats: the breezy, whistling "Lazy Days," the bare, utilitarian "The Graduate," and the summery "Ride On" all honor the foundations they're built on.

There doesn't seem to have been much thought put into the musical sequencing, but *Microphonepet*'s guest vocalists would've made the effort irrelevant anyway. A staggering 28 rappers are crammed into these tracks (some appear more than once), and when the pairings work, they really work: Jahcooz's Sasha Perera strides for stride with "Girls and Boys and Toys" (all 132BPM of it), Dubphonics adds a dash of smug arrogance to "The Graduate," 215: The Freshest Kids have fun with "Vnecks," and the Hustle Heads and Kutti MC hold their own in their respective tracks. But more than half the MCs featured on *Microphonepet* seem uncomfortable rapping over the beats Mochipet provides. There are a lot of instances where some big fish are taken out of the water they're used to (Hieroglyphics legends Opio and Casual both struggle against big, whooping UK garage basslines), but other times, the MCs just drop the ball all by themselves. RQM's clumsy ramble of verses on "PJs" is just brutal, and Eriksolo of Oakland's Meanest Man Contest hardly secures himself future guest spots with his spot on "Sharp Drest."

Most of *Microphonepet* falls between the two extremes cited above, but its overall bloat makes the solid tracks seem less appealing than they are. Mochipet's found lots to like in all of them, and when they're released as a current in one of his well-mixed streams, they sound great. But *Microphonepet* is an appropriately flawed portrait of genre that's entrenched in an awkward growth spurt.

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