

Foetus (In Excelsis Corruptus Deluxe)-- Male (Big Cat 31)

First things first: J.G. Thirwell (a.k.a. Foetus, a.k.a. Clint Ruin) is the musical underground's premiere proponent of deviant excess.

He is the nocturnal pervert lecherously sniffing at pop's fetid crotch; he is the self-desiring transvestite gaudily parading about in rock music's cast of intimates.

Over the past ten years Thirwell has established himself as an underground saint (and, needless to say, our saints no longer mortify themselves in the name of any fatuous deity), both by producing a series of alternative music masterpieces for such bands as Cop Shoot Cop and by making numerous outstanding records of his own in his various Foetus (or Ruin) incarnations. Perhaps what best unifies his work (or functions with it like a continually-recurring leitmotif) is the brilliant and subversive use of irony (an irony that subsequently makes obscure the musician's intentions, i.e. makes it impossible to know exactly where he-- Thirwell-Foetus-Ruin, that is-- is coming from).

Therefore, while he has made some of the most consistently interesting and unique records of the past decade-- crafting a distinctive and, to some, repellent body of work-- his albums often display the same genius for what might be called "textual citation" and musical parody that characterize such erstwhile (and considerably less overtly licentious) rock deities as the Beatles and Frank Zappa.

Foetus' work is reminiscent of that done by the above-mentioned innovators for its suggestive use of musical (not to mention cultural) clichés, its adaptation of various genres to serve its producer's (usually incendiary) purposes and its liberal incorporation (and, more importantly, bastardization) of "quotations" from the work of others.

In fact, in many instances, Foetus' songs (and "songs" seems an outmoded word here) function on the level of a pastiche in which the sardonic turning of various musical or lyrical phrases is combined with a bizarre intermingling of styles to produce a complexity that extends well beyond mere jocosity or sarcasm. Certainly Thirwell freely exploits elements from the entire corpus (or *corpse*) of modern music (country, jazz, cheesy movie themes, top-forty pop, etc.) and, because of this, his records (to a certain extent) do violence to the very music they draw upon; more than that, however, through his strange incorporation of various popular

