

# Foetus

The Aussie-born, Brooklyn resident Jim Thirwell is constantly in flux, a devil's advocate who often takes the heat for his fact-based fiction.

"I like pushing buttons," says Thirwell of his music, "Unfortunately, people forget that I'm not speaking in the first person. I see my material as consistently negative but with a cathartic nature."

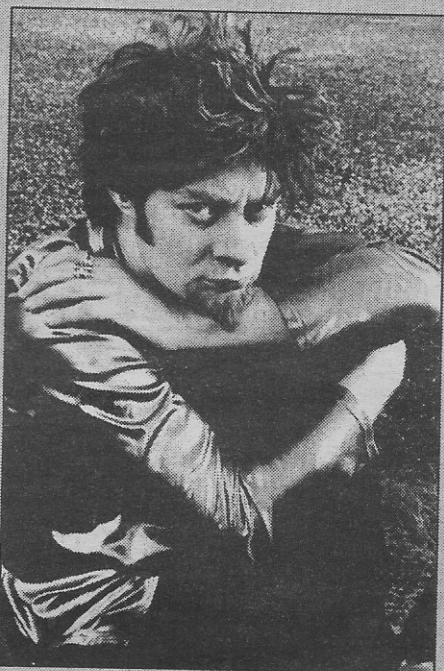
As one man show behind WiseBlood, Clint Ruin, Steroid Maximus and the many nefarious Foetus incarnations, Thirwell's currently experiencing a renaissance with CD reissues like *Gondwanaland*, *Quilombo*, *In Excelsius Corruptus*, *Hole* and *Now* (from labels Big Cat and Thirsty Ear) all coming out at the same time as his major label debut *Gash* (Columbia). The funniest thing about his oeuvre is that throughout his near 15-year tenure, the material has remained truly lush and musical as well as being sonically dense.

"I've always been pretty obsessive about any art form I've put myself in the middle of. When I draw, I draw for hours. When I read I devour: everything from Dr. Seuss to Sartre to Jim Thompson. I'd binge on certain styles."

That binging upon various styles is what Foetus used "to create a mythology" for himself. "Basically, my work started off as me writing letters to myself. Still is."

Starting in 1981, Foetus created and financed his Self Immolation label to release the first batch of his works; stuff like the plush Steroid Maximus ("the name came to me in a dream, the work mainly meant to terrorize the "sound-track" field); the near tribal WiseBlood ("it's manifesto was sick, violent and macho - the ultimate American band as devised by one guy from Australia and Rowland Howard from Switzerland"); and the first Screaming Foetus stuff like "Hole" which "now seems jolly in retrospect."

The first time I'd seen the now focused Foetus was during a two night stand at Danceteria NYC in 1983 - the Immaculate Consumptive - with oddbedmates Marc Almond, Nick Cave and Lydia Lunch. Those wild experimental nights led him to even greater focus as well as his new home and a well documented seven-year itchy relationship with Lunch - "a walking Crumb cartoon if ever there was one. She's got the butt and the attitude. Print that, she'll get a kick out of it."



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While people seems to focus on the few powerfully indicting words you can hear him screaming, it's his musical morphing - a conglomeration of noise, sampled orchestrations, and titanium percussion - that has always struck me as strangely beautiful in a strangled sort of fashion. "I've always been disappointed that people can't get beyond the "noisiness" of it. It seems almost perversely accessible."

With his newest *Gash*, Foetus is in peak form, bringing his black humor to the masses - still knocking down racism on "Mighty Whitey" and killer anti-abortionists on "Take It Outside, Godboy."

"I'm a PC guy trapped in a non-PC body."

As for signing to Columbia, there's no worry that his work will be homogenized.

"It's liberating to finally have some money behind what I do... My proudest moment was seeing my video and its graphic up on the video billboard on Times Square, every hour on the hour. All I could think was 'Ah, hell, I've sold my soul to Sony.'"

*Foetus at the Khyber Pass, 56 S. 2nd St., Thursday, July 6. Call 440-9683 for info.*  
-a.d. amorosi