

optimism isn't bound in irony or sarcasm: Healy believes in following "Pipe Dreams" ("It all boils down to the same ol' thing/Whether you win or you lose isn't going to change a single thing"); he bathes in the radiant, chiming "Afterglow" ("If you want to find peace of mind/Then you could find it any time you like"); he stares with contentment and glee at the "Flowers in the Window" ("I love you so/Let's watch the flowers grow"); and he implores the listener to "Follow the Light" ("the light being whatever you want it to be," Healy writes on [travisonline.com](http://travisonline.com), where the band reveals every intimate detail). *The Invisible Band* offers pop songs as spirituals, if only because it heals and moves at a time when most pop is bereft of honesty, depth, any hint of emotion. Travis might yet save us all.

—Robert Wilonsky

## Out & About

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### Foetus

Foetus plays Gypsy Tea Room on June 9.

Even though the power-tool bludgeoning of Jim G. Thirlwell's music may have some contemporary cohorts, it's his peculiar brand of lyrical ranting that sets the now NYC-based Thirlwell (better known as Foetus, and all of its various permutations) in a world entirely his own. Imagine a crack-powered Eric Bogosian gargling a bag of nails during one of his true horror shows, city life monologues interspersed with extemporaneous readings from De Sade's *120 Days of Sodom*, and you'll be getting close. He's not the type of guy to put on a happy face in his music, but it's that sinister vibe that gives his choice cuts—like "A

Prayer for My Death" off 1988's *Thaw*, and the feverish "The Throne of Agony" off 1985's *Nail*—their unique bite.

His latest, 2001's *Flow*, doesn't find Thirlwell breaking any new ground for himself, though it's as dense and death-obsessed as anything he's put out in the past decade. Tracks such as "Cirrhosis of the Heart" and "Victim or Victor?" display his ability to turn any genre—from smoky jazz to surf to Pink Floydian forays—into his own little cesspool of corruption. But what may prove more interesting is *Flow's* companion album, *Blow*, due out this fall. On it, *Flow's* frustrations are remixed by the likes of Amon Tobin and DJ Food. *Blow* may not turn out to be less wicked than *Flow*, but at least you'll be able to say it without making a menstrual allusion.

—B.M.