JIM FOETUS HAS BEEN SHARING his anguish with the world for over five years. With songs like “Lust for Death” and EP’s like “Scraping Foetus Off the Wheel,” you’d think he’d had his lips firmly planted to 1979. Now, six years later, when ruthlessness has already become bankable, Foetus is still doing his best to remain controversial. The press kit that Zé records sent out publicizing Foetus’s latest release, , includes a poster of Jim Thrwell (his real name) nailed to a cross. The inscription at his feet reads, “If you have to get down, get down and pray.” Susan Martin, his publicist: attached a note to the poster informing me that Clint Ruiz (sic, what he calls himself now) would be the next Elvin. If it all sounds confusing, then it’s working. Part of the attraction of Ruiz’s music (everything he releases falls under the Foetus banner) is this. The most intriguing aspect of his sound, a mesh of musical phrases both vaguely familiar and unrecognizable, is that it all ends up sounding new, and that is very hard to accomplish in 1985. It is difficult to describe the Foetus repertoire without using Ruiz’s own catchphrases. Images of death, pain and self-destruction (his first label was called Self Imolation) keep creeping up. The same aesthetic carries over to other aspects of his career. “It’s the same type of thing with the crucifixion photograph, juxtaposing the crucifixion with the slogan was a bit much for some people to take.” His refusal to let go of the Foetus banner, which he uses as the alter-ego for all his releases, is one of the reasons for a more negative reaction to his music here in the States. Ruiz has spent plenty of time in New York, however, where he wrote and performed in the East Village for most of ’85. But, he says, “I’ve gotten a much better reaction in England. There’s a bit of breaking down there due to the fact I’ve done radio and TV interviews and have gotten favorable press reaction.”

Ruiz moved from Australia to England when he was twenty. He is hesitant to talk about his origins, preferring, he says, to create a mythology about that part of his life. “I don’t remember much about growing up there at all,” he says. “I sat in my room and listened to the radio. Mostly the stuff I listen to now when I’m young: the Alex Harvey band, Roxy Music, Tom Waits. I like Alice Cooper a lot.”

His music, he says, is an attempt to de-sensitize people to the sense after seeing Ruiz live. With nothing on stage but a standup makeup and a white light, he performance occurred at a recent Danceconcert gig dressed in Harley-Davidson T-shirt and black trousers. Despite this, however, it all seems subtle on stage than on vinyl. With much reverence, he waved around a bottle of the stuff he says he’s been drinking and all the agony in between. Ruiz used no musicians, utilizing a slew of backup tapes that mixed his heavy, crucifixion dirges and cowboy songs. His Davy Crockett haircut and baker/Popes anomalous seemed to hypnotize more cultists, fans, and genuinely amuse those who knew nothing about the Foetus or Ruiz. “I think people are looking for something...for themselves...for their whole cry...what a relief!” he says. “I think people are looking for something...for their whole cry...what a relief!”

“I don’t care if people like my music or hate it,” he says. “I’m not influenced by what people think. I’m not influenced by what people think. I’m not influenced by what people think.”

The Stevo, mastermind of some bizarre records—and now, with his new—contaminates the whole. We start to talk about his relationship with Ruiz, who, among other things, has been writing books and playing the guitar in the band with Ruiz. He smiles and takes the food. He tells him he has twenty minutes until another appointment and exists as quickly as he entered. Shortly embarrassed by the little dressing scene, he tracks open the soda and talks about his relationship with Ruiz instead.

“When I first met Steve I thought he was a very nice guy, but now we get along very well. By the time I started getting together with him, he was already a very nice guy. I had released six records, all self-financed. He came along and made me an offer that I couldn’t refuse. After a lot of deliberation and pacing I said yes.”

Steve, known for his brilliant publicity campaigns and anti-conformist stances, has been the target of current Kraut-pop trends, which has given Ruiz a free hand in the making of his music. “I’m very familiar with the sound of people being really nice people. I’m not too sure what to say.”

It should also be pointed out that the irresponsibility of such a statement is consistent with another Foetus theory (he has more theories than records albums). One of the first Self Imolation premieres (the first label that Foetus started) declared “It’s okay to be antihuman, as long as you know you’re being antihuman.” As Clint calmly bites into the remaining half of his Gyro, I get the feeling that he knows, “Reagan, Hitler, and Mao are all the same thing.”

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