

# BORN free

By RANDY S. ROCHER

*Trent Reznor &  
Al Jourgensen  
can thank Jim Thirlwell  
for their nightmares.*

Thirlwell, an icon in the industrial genre, has released 32 recordings in 14 years under 19 different band names. The simultaneous release of the full length *Gash* and the six song EP *Null* marks Thirlwell's major label debut with Columbia and surfaces the first full length Foetus recording since 1988's *Thaw*. In addition to his own recording, producing, and various side projects, Thirlwell has built an impressive resume doing remixes, including Prong's "Prove You Wrong," Nine Inch Nails' "Wish," and Fight's "Nailed To The Gun."

"I write from the bowels of my soul, which is not a very easy thing to do," says Thirlwell. "My lyrics tend to be pretty rabid. I guess there's a lot of people out there who have similar grudges."

Leaning toward the bleak and oppressive side with dark tones and spewing, bitter vocals, *Gash* takes the listener on an emotional and musical roller coaster ride with angry punches one moment and big band swing the next. "The album goes from punk rock to big band noise to punk rock to world music to whatever I feel at the time," says Thirlwell. "My writing draws from a very broad palette. I'm not just restricted to bass, guitar, drums and vocals. The variety evokes more emotion."

Now that Columbia is on Thirlwell's side, Foetus may be poised for the mainstream. "A label is a label as far as I'm concerned," he says. "I don't subscribe to the maximum rock and roll mentality that you're a sell out if you're on a major label. I've had a lot of bad luck with labels, but now my music will be better distributed." Thirlwell plans to bring Foetus on the road extensively this year. A U.S. tour is slated for mid-April, followed by a tour of Europe, Japan, Australia and then back to the states again. "I never saw doing this as a career," says Thirlwell. "It's something more out of passion and self-expression than a career. Basically, if I didn't have this, I'd be a serial killer."

