

# HYPE

NYC  
#7

## FOETUS

by Yurgos

HYPE Music Editor

*One of the most influential rock musicians of all time, Australian born legend Foetus has been making records under the Foetus, Wiseblood, and Steroid Maximus names for over ten years. He has settled down in Brooklyn, New York where he feeds off of the Lower East Side noise scene as well as the city's entire ambience: crime, psychotic behavior, corruption, excessiveness, beauty. His music is hard, deep, and beautiful, while being minimal and complex at the same time. This is the ultimate form of hard rock poisoned with art. His music would and should make a great sound track to an American monster movie, or a crime movie. He is expected to release new material shortly under Foetus and Steroid Maximus. Look for more collaborations in the studio with the great American post punk bands as well.*

**Yurgos:** What inspired you to start making records?

**Foetus:** I'm pretty much self taught. One of the people I was living with at the time got me into it. We played for about ten months, but the democratic environment was not for me. Foetus came about as a reaction to that, where I would play all the instruments. I was the only one responsible, every iota was myself.

**Y:** Did you buy a four track and go from there?

**F:** No, I rented a big studio, and I didn't necessarily know how to play, but over a period of time I got to know how to play and make sounds that I wanted.

**Y:** You've created this whole genre of computer assisted noise.

**F:** When I started that technology didn't even exist. What I was doing was a lot like sampling, but I didn't have a sampler. It was sampling in a much cruder way. When sampling came along it was a better way compositionally to organize the music. But I was doing in essence the same thing with tape loops, random elements, and spinning of tapes. But of course this is not the only instrument I use.

**Y:** How did you discover that this is the type of sound that you wanted and the mood that you wanted to create?

**F:** I don't think I have a particular sound. A lot of it is like a public diary, an evolution. By process of elimination I guess.

**Y:** But who did you listen to that got you interested in the type of sound that you make?

**F:** Well, when I look back on the early stuff I see the Residents and also Cage and Stockhausen. And that filtered through everything. I could be inspired by anything, a T.V. commercial perhaps. A lot of stuff goes through my filter and comes out the other end until it's at the point

where I'm influencing myself. My music may be in a genre, but whatever genre I'm touching on may not be anything that I've done before or know anything about or even listened to. The style I've chosen may be conducive to the point I want to get across.

**Y:** You bring up a lot of images of very desperate situations and characters.

**F:** Yeah, I don't know where the imagery comes from, I don't watch horror movies that much. I'm interested in true crime and the psychology behind it. The criminal gene. Sometimes I put myself in another position just to get a point across.



photo by Michelle Taylor

Thirwell, continued from previous page

a half dozen songs and about a half dozen more and I'll be filtering through and filling in the gaps. Then I can sort of stand back from it and get an overview of it. Some of the songs are more finished than others. Some of them I'll be taking to another studio and mixing (them) in a bare bones form. Others are pretty much completed and I'll just be replacing things.

Indie File: I know you do artwork on occasion. I have a copy of *Exit* magazine from maybe last summer or the summer before. When do you find time to do the artwork? You seem so busy in the studio all the time.

Thirwell: Well, I do all the artwork for the Foetus records and that's pretty much as much of an outlet as I want to create artwork, in terms of time and getting around to it. It's the old roll-up-the-sleeves progression as well. The *Exit* thing, you know, I was approached by them about that and it seemed to come in a good form especially since I get to do the covers. Just working in that format (is good) because I am interested in creating a graphic fist-in-face and it being a large format and cover and also the colors I like to use, it's just the right form. Also, I like the people inside, some of them anyway.

Indie File: That magazine is still being published, isn't it?

Thirwell: They're doing a "best of..." They're doing a compilation. I don't know if they're doing another issue of new stuff.

Indie File: That's a shame if they're not because that magazine was just incredible, I felt.

Thirwell: Well, he's (George Petros) starting another magazine, I think.

Indie File: What's that going to be called?

Thirwell: I can't remember what it's called but it's going to be similar in content but maybe steering away from some of the pitfalls of the previous issues, like flogging that Manson/Hitler type stuff to death, which I think is really pretty tired.

Indie File: I can see your point. The Nietzsche work was really interesting, I felt. Guest artists illustrated different Nietzsche quotes...

Thirwell: There was a lot of good stuff in there.

Indie File: That's all the questions I have right now. Is there anything you'd like to add?

Thirwell: I think that about covers it. All my energies are pretty much going into the Foetus thing right now. Mesomorph II will be out probably in September or October. I'll continue to do the odd remixes here and there, which will be cropping up. The latest one I did for Front 242. I don't know if it's coming out here or not. There'll be a few more of those. I've talked to a couple of people about remixes.

Indie File: Have you done any remixes for people other than Front 242 recently?

Thirwell: That's the latest one I did. Before that I did one for Pantera. The last few ones I did were for The The, Pantera, Daniel Ash and the Cult. Those are the most recent ones I've done. I'll probably be doing a remix for Silverfish and talking to a couple more bands about stuff. We'll see.



Y: The music that you make is very intense, but I've noticed that your music is getting a lot more sophisticated. It's not for shock value anymore.

*"I like playing live. I like to create an environment where I have all these ideas in my head, ... I can adjust the horizontal ... adjust the vertical, the spontaneity, ... a chance to reinterpret my music. The songs become brand new."*

F: Well, I have a lot of elements that are stripped out. Each element means a lot more on its own, like I don't have 24 tracks of guitar, I have one but it stands on its own. I have set up my own studio and that helps a lot. Also the Steroid Maximus music I make which is all instrumental allows me to try different things and concentrate on the music more.

Y: What music do you listen to these days?

F: Well I just got **Tony Bennet's "Perfectly Frank"**, I like that. And also the **Jim Neighbors** Christmas album. Exotica, and various rock stuff like **Jesus Lizard, Cop Shoot Cop, American Bands** that I like. I'm putting out a compilation record of American bands that I like: **Helios Creed, Unsane, Cop Shoot Cop.**

Y: What are you doing in your live shows?

F: I like playing live. I like to create an environment where I have all these ideas in my head, and I can adjust the horizontal and adjust the vertical, the spontaneity, and a chance to

reinterpret my music. The songs become brand new.

Y: You have a lot of devout fans. What do you think of them?

F: I don't really care. Well I want people to listen to my music and buy it so I can do my next record.

Y Do you get fan mail?

F: Yeah.

Y: You've influenced a lot of people, like the **Cranes, Neubauten.**

F: Wonderful. But I have heard people who have done blatant rip offs of one element of my music and it misses the point completely. I find it unlistenable and embarrassing. My music comes from a deep spot. It is instinctive, but I come back to it and rework it.

*"What I was doing was a lot like sampling, but I didn't have a sampler. It was sampling in a much cruder way."*

HYPE



photo by Michelle Taylor