



FOETUS' HOME

"MY LOFT is my greatest work of art," says Jim Thirlwell, a.k.a. Foetus, referring to the kitsch palace he has fashioned on the Brooklyn side of New York's Manhattan Bridge, across the street from a bleak cemetery of public housing projects. "It reflects my aesthetics and my life—especially one aspect that I'm not too proud of: the fact that it's totally filthy."

Pleasantly cluttered would be a more apt description, one that also fits the Australian industrial-rock producer's schedule. Having most recently finished his umpteenth LP plus a new EP, titled *Gash* and *Null* respectively, Foetus was in between a Times Square album-cover photo shoot and remixing a stray Pop Will Eat Itself single when we ventured into his home studio. This is where he does all of his pre-production work and even the occasional album.

"I hate people assuming that all my music is samples," he complains, pointing out that he is conversant in jazz and classical music as well as layers of crunching guitars. "I play guitar (a **Fender Squire** 1 and **Ibanez Roadstar II** 2), drums, violin and horn (namely a **Dearman** alto sax 3). Whatever I need, I learn. Sampling is just another piece in the jigsaw." Nevertheless, the heart of his rig is a trio of samplers that are fed by a **Sony DiscMan** 4 or a **Shure SM-57** mike: an **Akai S900** 5 and **S1000** 6 plus an **Electro-Harmonix Super Replay** 7—one of the first-ever sampling devices. Other sounds are generated by **Kawai K1** 8, **Roland JX-3P** 9 and **E-mu Proteus** 10 synths—sequenced using an **Atari 1040ST** computer 11 running **Steinberg Creator** software—as well as an auto-harp 12 and a **SanoVox** accordion 13. He uses the large hollow wooden "X" 14—left over from a Lydia Lunch performance—for drum sounds, and he keeps his **Oberheim DX** drum machine 15 around for old times' sake.

Foetus submixes the instruments through a **Tascam M-208** eight-channel mixer 16 on their way to an **Akai 1214** 12-track tape deck 17 and **Casio DA-2 DAT** 18. Effects are supplied by a **Yamaha SPX900** 19 and **SPX90** 20 and a **DigiTech Time Machine 7.6** delay 21, and by a batch of ancient stomp boxes: **Boss Turbo Overdrive** 22 ("I lean on it a lot," he says, "sometimes for drums or vocals"), **Boss Octave** 23, **ProCo Rat**, **Ibanez Sonic Distortion** 24, **Crybaby Super Wah** 25 and **Vox Super Phase**. He dubs his DAT mixes to a **Denon DM M10 HR** cassette 26 from which a **Ramsa WP-9055** power amp pumps them through **Yamaha NS-10M** monitors 27 or **AKG K141-2** headphones 28.

"I heard a quote once, 'a studio grows until it dies,'" Thirlwell says philosophically. As he tries to live up to that dictum, his studio constantly vacillates between one condition and the other: "I blow things up all the time."

BY NATHAN BRACKETT

PHOTOGRAPH BY JOSEPH CULTICE



STUDIO