

# FOETUS

**“I’m surrounded by a black cloud.”**

**BY GEORGE PETROS  
& KYRA BURTON**

**H**ere’s a letter erroneously sent to Seconds when word got out that we were doing this feature: “Dear **JIM THIRLWELL** a.k.a. **FOETUS**, my girlfriend wants to screw you because your music is so hard, or so she says ... so I went to the store and bought Gash, and now I am very confused. I thought you were just the big daddy of remixing but then I bought Hole and it was very cool. I guess that before Industrial Music really even existed you were there, before **Ministry** or whoever ... she listens to your music during sex, and I think that’s cool. But then I found a note she wrote to you. Here is what it said:

‘My dearest Jim, It all started when I was fourteen. I heard Hole and ever since then my sexual career has gone down a dangerous path. Needless to say my love and obsession for scumbags has gone unquenched. It was never a metamorphosis. I mean, I was a virgin when I heard it. And then, after the inevitable deflowering, I came back to your sounds knowing that you would reiterate my tastes. You were my cheerleader from the pit and I thank you from the bottom of my loins (so do my boyfriends) for making me the perverted fuck junkie I am today. — Love, etc.’

First I was mad, then I started thinking, well, this is the guy who to whom an entire generation (and beyond) owes serious gratitude, who’s a founding father of Industrial Music, an innovator of the Dance remix, and a pioneer of sampling techniques. She’s right when she says that you are also noted for your distinctive graphic designs adorning each of your many albums. Of course, before the beginning of Industrial Music there was you a.k.a. **Clint Ruin** a.k.a. **Lydia Lunch**’s former boyfriend a.k.a. contemporary of **Cabaret Voltaire** a.k.a. early associate of **White Zombie** and **Einstürzende Neubauten** and later a remixer of **Nine Inch Nails** and **Red Hot Chili Peppers** and **Front 242** and **Pantera**, all while releasing thirty-five often obscure but always influential recordings of your own on such cool labels as Wax Trax and Big Cat and Thirsty Ear



JIMMY KENNER, JR.



and Columbia (and one that wasn't so cool for you — *Some Bizzare*). According to her, you were one of the few true Jazz artists around, and were creating a new way to dance and a new music to make love to, and upon your sonic anguish was based an entire musical movement of entropy and unnatural intensity, incredible percussion, but sexually speaking she says that women like your art even more than your music.

Personally I don't care whether your graphic designs really do reflect the two central aspects of your music, aggressive expansion/contraction and juxtapositioning of lightness and heaviness, like she always says. I don't care if some of your graphics were based on images from familiar propaganda posters repeating in closed groups that unfolded into self-perpetuating motifs alternating from positive to negative while changing size, as she is always so quick to point out, or about the familiarity of the images catapulting it all from the merely experimental into the realm of Pop Art — and I don't even care about the use of militaristic figures and the mixing of Communist and Fascist imagery that was always so evocative of **Escher** because of the regular interlocking of congruent shapes, or tessellation, that has always been one of the trademarks of the Thirlwell look. Granted, it was your understanding of the buoyancy and balance central to Japanese art that helped keep your designs different from your brooding contemporaries' self-indulgences (despite an Art Brut sensibility more destructive than the formal deconstruction innocently sought in Dadaism ...). Whatever. I'm sure after listening to your music and looking at your art that you are a very open-minded person. So are we. If you are ever in our town please give us a call — the number is 212-260-0440. Regards and thank you from the bottom of her loins, etc."

**SECONDS:** You say you don't have a manifesto with your art ...

**FOETUS:** I've been drawing and designing stuff ever since I can remember. The genesis of my style came about when I was in art school in Melbourne. I was doing screen prints and oil paintings in flat black, white, and red. I did a couple of portraits of **Hitler** and some real Aryan-looking things in a flat Pop Art style to piss people off. That evolved into combining elements of Chinese Revolutionary art, Russian Revolutionary art and World War II propaganda, and was always restricted to red, white, and black. Then I got bold and introduced gray at one point. Then I got even bolder and put yellow in there. As it evolved, it got more into the idea of Pop Art packaging, to the point where I'd roam the aisles looking at packaging. I juxtaposed that with Japanese cartoon imagery and started to go in that direction ...

**SECONDS:** When you painted Hitler, were you elevating a sinister character to Pop icon status?

**FOETUS:** It was basically experimentation in that style. In 1977, I thought it was a perverse thing to do. That was the extent of my shock-value Nazi stuff. I just liked the idea of it hanging on the walls. Then I did some print etchings of hooded protesters. When I started putting out records, the covers became the avenue for my designs in art. Apart from *Exit*, that's pretty much my oeuvre over the last fifteen years — my covers and the ones for **Lydia Lunch**. I've started drawing again, which I find very therapeutic. That's a totally different style ... Those repeated images I did in *Exit* I see as violent wallpaper. This is another extension of using a swastika.

**SECONDS:** Why is it important to be confrontational?

**FOETUS:** I don't think it's confrontational, I think it's pure design. Maybe there's some violent imagery in there but I think it's really humorous. I think it's cool to reclaim the swastika. It's still too politically loaded.

**SECONDS:** How do you feel about that?

**FOETUS:** I like the power of it and I don't take any offense to it. I'd love to be able to exploit it more. I used to wear swastika rings. If someone with a concentration camp tattoo saw me, they wouldn't know the spirit in which I'm wearing it. I'm conscious of being insensitive. I'm not going to walk down that Hasidic street in Williamsburg with a swastika t-shirt. They don't understand the sense of irony in the image. To me, it's a stronger image than the cross because it's geometric and also circular. To me, it's a life-force, optimistic almost.

**SECONDS:** In your art, what does the black, white, yellow, and red represent?

**FOETUS:** I just like that look. If you look at my sleeves in chronological order, you totally see the evolution, and the evolution is deliberate.

**SECONDS:** Do you do the type by hand?

**FOETUS:** I do all the type by hand. All the logos and writing are done by hand.

**"I don't feel like I have to suffer for my art. Once it comes out, it's your turn to suffer for my art."**

**SECONDS:** Are there things about the Japanese sensibility that allow you to be more expressive?

**FOETUS:** Yeah. I find Japanese typography really fascinating because it's so beautiful in its graphicness. It turns abstract because I don't necessarily know what it's saying. *Gash* just came out in Japan with all the lyrics translated into Japanese. I'm fascinated to see how they're translated because there's a lot of word-play and triple entendres in my lyrics.



G. STEFF JONSON



**SECONDS:** *It's a good argument for a universal language.*

**FOETUS:** My next album's going to be in Esperanto.

**SECONDS:** *Is it really?*

**FOETUS:** No.

**SECONDS:** *You got me there. How can you give lettering that bigger-than-life feel?*

**FOETUS:** I don't know. I know how I want to do it. I don't think there's a formula because it depends on how prominent you want the image.

**SECONDS:** *Do you picture it in a record store?*

**FOETUS:** No. Well, actually ... I guess I do because with CD packaging, you've got five inches instead of twelve. You've got to think of how big and bold you can make something on a CD package.

**SECONDS:** *The world has been deprived of something special with the demise of the album cover.*

**FOETUS:** Well, I'm not giving up on vinyl. The *Null* EP came out on vinyl. It looks like it was designed for a CD size.

**SECONDS:** *That image of a person getting grabbed in the balls is violent and sexual ...*

**FOETUS:** The music mirrors that image. I did that lettering by hand.

**SECONDS:** *Have you ever gotten censored?*

**FOETUS:** Well, only to the extent of fundamentalist preachers holding up my records on cable shows, saying, "This man is a child of Satan."

**SECONDS:** *Stylistically speaking, what is the hallmark of the Atomic Age for you?*

**FOETUS:** The vision of a future from the Fifties that life in the Eighties would be like *The Jetsons* — this utopian kind of thing.

**SECONDS:** *Did you expect that when you were young?*

**FOETUS:** Absolutely. I thought there'd be monorails all around.

**SECONDS:** *Do you think the Japanese have tried to capture that?*

**FOETUS:** I think they have.



**FRAGHORN TORNADO RISING FROM EXIT MAGAZINE  
ILLUSTRATION COLLAGE 1989**

**SECONDS:** *How about space travel?*

**FOETUS:** I guess so. It's this idea that you sit on these weird triangular chairs with kidney-shaped coffee tables everywhere. In some ways, I think a marriage between that and a nature-friendly Classicist aesthetic would be some of the houses that **Frank Lloyd Wright** made. A pillow with four things coming out of it — stuff like that. That is the Atomic Age taken to a logical extension, illuminating the kitsch elements and making it nature-friendly and functional.

**SECONDS:** *Is that where the wallpaper motifs come in, to make design functional?*

**FOETUS:** No, not at all. It's more coming out of the cross between war propaganda, **M.C. Escher**, **Warhol**, whatever ... a very simplistic trompe l'oeil where you stand back from it and it just seems to blur; and the closer you get, you see more detail, and then you get right up to it and see the images of the war guys ...

**SECONDS:** *Your stuff has a political side to it —*

**FOETUS:** — and it's got many different levels to it.

**SECONDS:** *It represents both sides of the argument: it's fascistic and communistic.*

**FOETUS:** Exactly. I'm juxtaposing those two things and I like the confusion with that. The image on the cover of *Ache* is like a Chinese soldier giving a little boy a haircut and the little boy is holding a submachine gun. I think that's a really perverse image. On the first album I ever did is this image I stole from Russian propaganda. I did a cheesy job; you can see I cut it out with a razor blade.

**SECONDS:** *Was that an extension of Punk Art?*

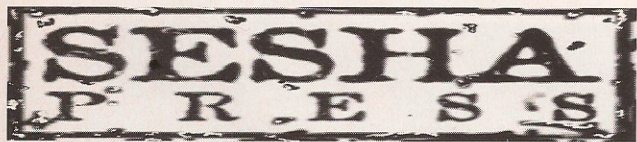
**FOETUS:** No, I don't think I was ever influenced by Punk Art.

**SECONDS:** *Did you work with stats or Xeroxes?*

**FOETUS:** Basically, a blowup of a Xerox and then I do the whole thing by hand.

**SECONDS:** *A lot of your album titles are hard-hitting attributes ...*

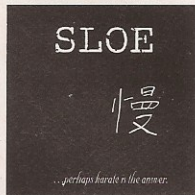
**FOETUS:** All of them are four-letter, one-syllable words which have several connotations. Like *Hole*. A lot of it's about descent into emotional hell, and there's the sexual connotation of it. *Nail* is like nailing someone, both



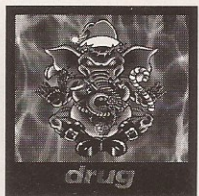
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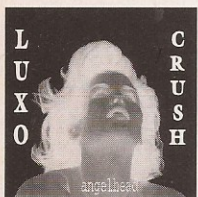
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COVER OF NULL ILLUSTRATION COLLAGE 1995

sexually and violently. *Sink*: kitchen sink and sinking downward. There's two EPs I'm putting out; one's called *Null* and one's called *Void*. The album's called *Gash*, which is about "gash" meaning a woman and a lesion.

**SECONDS:** *How about the word "Foetus" itself?*

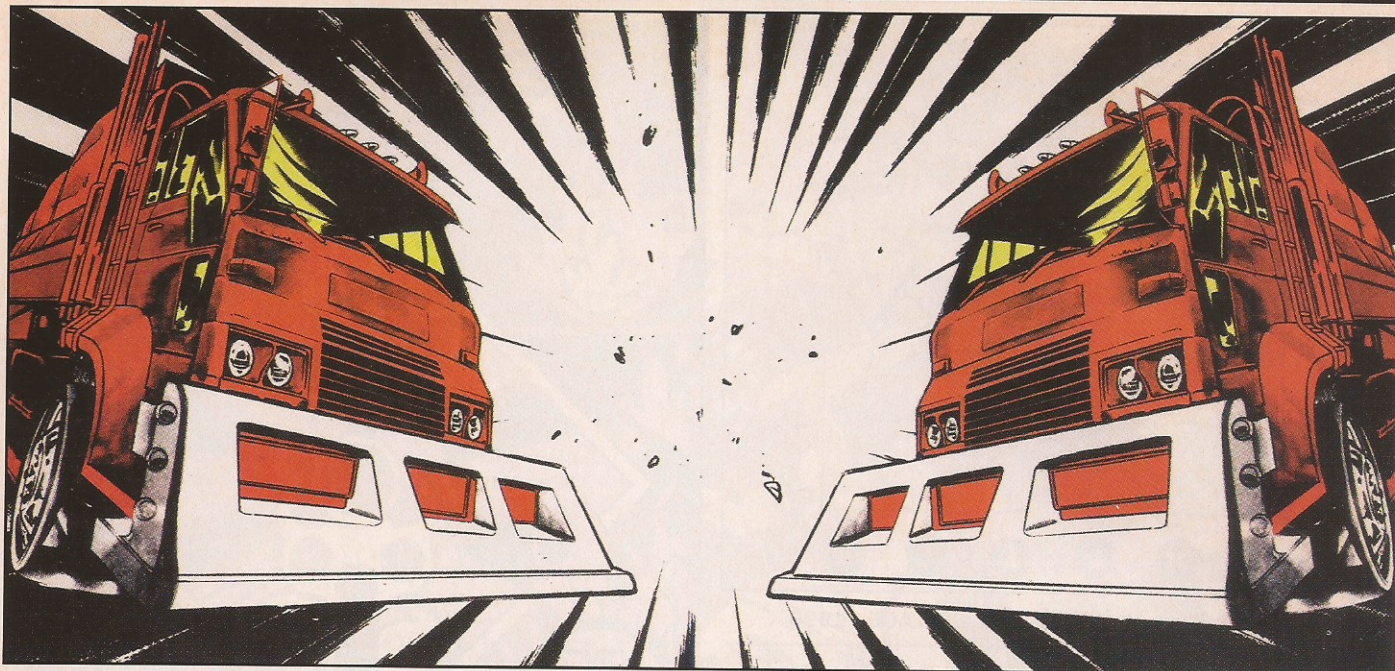
**FOETUS:** It's the lowest common denominator. It seemed good at the time and it now has a million meanings to me. It's gotten to the point where that's who I am and that's what people call me. It's probably more my name than Thirlwell.

**SECONDS:** *Did that name ever get you a negative reaction out of Pop officialdom?*

**FOETUS:** I could have signed a major deal in '83 if I

COVER OF EXIT MAGAZINE  
ILLUSTRATION COLLAGE 1989





COVER OF BUTTERFLY POTION ILLUSTRATION COLLAGE 1990

changed the name from **You've Got Foetus On Your Breath**.

**SECONDS:** *Want to mention the company?*

**FOETUS:** There were several. I'm not going to compromise. I'm not going to change my aesthetic vision for some suit. If I didn't have control of every minor detail, I wouldn't do it. I've bounced from label to label and for me, my art comes first and commerce comes second. I've had bad luck with record labels but I'm really proud of what I've accomplished.

**SECONDS:** *You've always managed to retain artistic control of your products.*

**FOETUS:** That's never been an issue with me. People know me. It doesn't even come up in conversation.

**SECONDS:** *Then why do you have bad luck with record companies?*

**FOETUS:** Because I'm surrounded by a black cloud. Believe

me, I work my ass off on this stuff.

**SECONDS:** *It's not like you haven't achieved a great deal of notoriety. You're one of the best-known —*

**FOETUS:** — one of the best-known people that no one ever heard of.

**SECONDS:** *Even if you take your own work out of the equation, you've remixed **Nine Inch Nails** ...*

**FOETUS:** I'm always astounded by the amount of musicians who are into my stuff — everyone from **Soundgarden** to **The Lounge Lizards** — so many people. I had to do a big round of interviews for *Gash* and I always try and play down this "Industrial" tag, but they keep saying, "If you listen to **Ministry** and **Nine Inch Nails**, you know where it came from" and all that sort of stuff. **Al Jourgensen**, **Trent Reznor**, and me are considered this triumvirate of Industrial Music and I hate the term "Industrial." How can you put on one of my Big Band songs from **Steroid Maximus** and say it's



COVER OF SINK ILLUSTRATION COLLAGE 1989



Industrial? It's Foetus music. I think it's lazy journalism because there's so many elements in there.

Industrial — what does that mean? I have a Musique Concrete side, I have a Big Band side, I have a Punk Rock side, I have a random noise side. To call me an Industrial artist when I've got all those other sides ... If I could sell a quarter of the records that Trent sells, I'd be a happy man. If I do say, "Yeah, I am the godfather of Industrial music" does that mean Trent fans are going to go out and buy Foetus?



**SECONDS:** *Didn't that label exist before you even began?*

**FOETUS:** That label existed concurrently with my start. When **Monty Cazazza** came up with the term, I was already making pure white noise on primitive synthesizers and hitting on metal. I was doing weird things with two cassette machines and pots and pans, overdubbing back and forth, really distorting the microphones so you'd end up with this distorted percussion track, and then I'd play noise elements on top of that. If you listen to my first 7", which came out in 1981, one side is just a white noise rant. I feel a real void for that. This song, "Downfall" on *Gash* — I'd like to do more stuff like that.

**SECONDS:** *Did Trent teach you anything?*

**FOETUS:** No, Trent didn't teach me nothing. When I do remixes, the artist is not in the studio. I've done about thirty in the last few years and the more I push the envelope, the more they like it. With producing, you're hanging around in a small room with five bratty English boys for five weeks. You have to analyze every note and tell them to shut up. With remixing, they've done that work already and they turn it over to me and I totally transform it. Sometimes I'll do a version where the only thing that remains from the original song is the beats-per-minute — and sometimes not even that. I replace everything with totally different sounds and maybe a new melody. At first, I think I was a little cautious, but then the more radical I got, the more they seemed to like it. I did two 12" mixes for **Rob Halford** and he chose the most extreme one. That told me something. Now, I throw convention out the window and laugh my ass off. It's creating a Foetus song, almost ...

**SECONDS:** *Would you do a compilation of all your remixes?*

**FOETUS:** I'm into doing that but it'd have to be a double CD. Logistically, it's kind of tough because you'd have to

license the stuff from ten record labels.

**SECONDS:** *It's a relatively new artform. We didn't hear remixes ten years ago.*

**FOETUS:** I think I invented the genre of Metal remixing with **Prong's** "Prove You Wrong." No one was really doing that at all — an Industrial/Metal crossover with big beat Dance-type stuff. People were doing that music but Rock

## "If there's good Performance Art, I haven't seen it."

people hadn't got into it. After that, the floodgates opened. If I'm the godfather of anything, I'm the Godfather of Metal Remixes, which now everyone's doing. I did **Megadeth**, **Pantera**, and produced the demos for **White Zombie** that got them signed. I've heard Metal remixes that try and co-opt exactly what I do down to the sounds and everything. One of the best remixes I did was **Front 242** and that really shaped up their act a bit.

**SECONDS:** *What's the next step for you?*

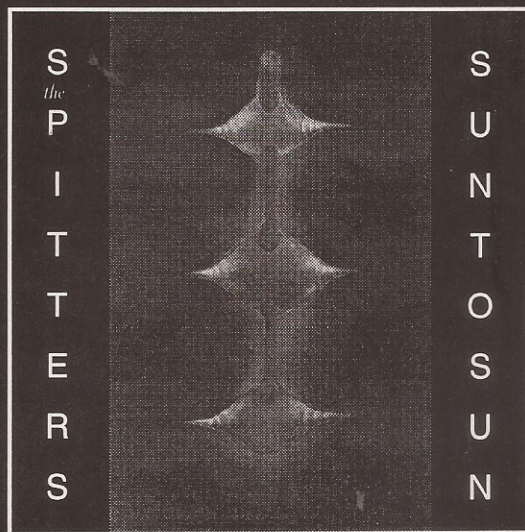
**FOETUS:** I'm planning a series entitled "Ten By Ten," which is ten bands on clear-vinyl 10" records. The tenth one is going to be Foetus live. I'll only sell as many copies as it takes to break even. I'm not making money off it; I'm making a statement.

**SECONDS:** *Is that an important part of the art statement, to not make money on it?*

**FOETUS:** For this, yeah. No one's heard of these bands and I just want to throw it out. It's like a snapshot of time.

**SECONDS:** *What's next aesthetically, beyond business and touring?*

**FOETUS:** I'm doing a CD-ROM. It's going to have all the artwork reproduced, all of my writings and unpublished



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artwork, and unreleased video chunks — a chunk of, say, "I Am The Walrus" from Salt Lake City or a chunk of the *Wiseblood* show where I cut myself open and am covered in blood.

**SECONDS:** *The next step is a fusion of the visual stuff with the music?*

**FOETUS:** Hasn't it always been?

**SECONDS:** *What's the next musical trend you'll start?*

**FOETUS:** You'll just have to wait and see. I think it's going to take years for people to catch up with *Gash*. You know me, I go off on several tangents at one time. One idea I've got is I want to do a two-night stint with a twenty-five piece Big Band doing my material. That's a big logistical nightmare with all the union fees but that's something I want to do.

**SECONDS:** *So now you're working more and more with bands?*

**FOETUS:** That's one element; then there's the white noise element. There's no reason why all those elements can't collide.

**SECONDS:** *Does working with a Big Band represent an evolution from working singularly?*

**FOETUS:** It's just a sick idea. When I come out with ideas like this "Ten By Ten" series, I tell people about them. If I just keep it to myself, I'll forget it. If I tell it to you, then I have to go through with it.

**SECONDS:** *What are you looking for in the bands?*

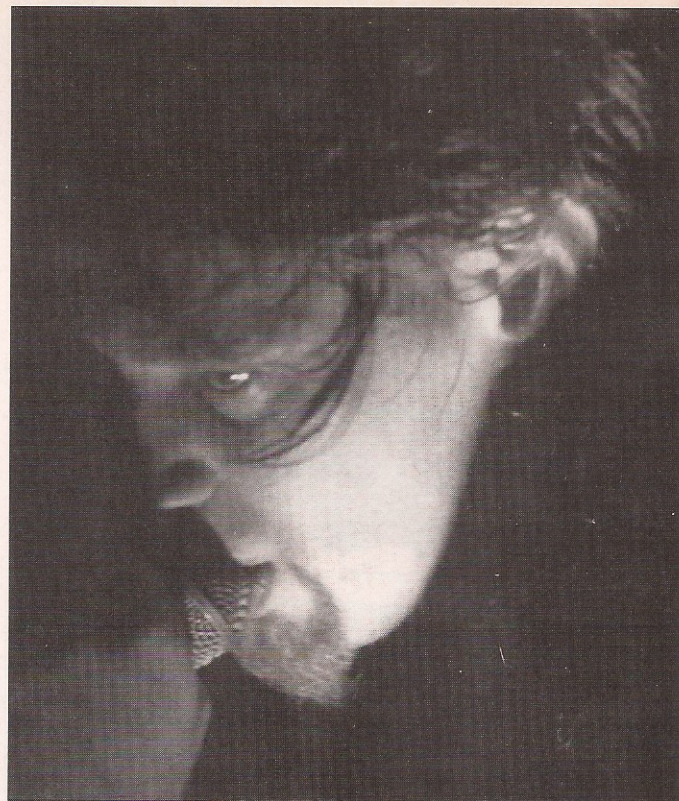
**FOETUS:** A snapshot of young New York.

**SECONDS:** *Who are they?*

**FOETUS:** *Halcion, Ultra Bidé, Chrome Cranks* ... the other bands I don't want to mention because I haven't asked them yet. Then there's *Mesomorph Enduros Volume Two*, which is eighty-five percent done. *Alex Grey* is doing the cover. I've got twelve or thirteen of the bands for that already. Volume three is going to be all Japanese bands.

**SECONDS:** *Tell me about Gash. How's it doing?*

**FOETUS:** I don't know how it's doing. It's the best thing I've ever done.



**SECONDS:** *Why is that?*

**FOETUS:** Because I'm good.

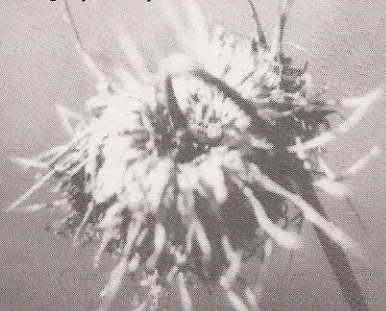
**SECONDS:** *Is your stuff getting better and better?*

**FOETUS:** Absolutely. I'm proud of anything I've done even if I cringe now. If I hadn't done *that* at the time, I wouldn't be doing what I'm doing now. The experiments I went through doing the thirty remixes made *Gash* light years ahead of the last studio album. Touring, collaborations, and what I've been through emotionally is all there in

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**"The more I push the envelope,  
 the more they like it."**

*Gash*. I think it bleeds New York and I think it's the most musically accomplished thing I've done. It's also the first Foetus studio album where I've got outside musicians on some tracks.

**SECONDS:** *How did the emotional stuff manifest itself?*

**FOETUS:** Breakdown of relationships, nervous breakdowns; "Downfall" and "Slum" were about a particularly violent relationship breakdown.

**SECONDS:** *Is it worth it to go through such experiences?*

**FOETUS:** I don't go through them to write an album, I go through them anyway. There's a very fine line between catharsis and inflaming that emotion. When I had to sing these songs live for the first time, I found myself crying a lot of the time and I was hoping people wouldn't notice. In Philly, I broke down and ran off stage halfway through the set. I was having a nervous breakdown onstage. They forced me back on and I broke down in tears quite a few times. Certain songs, I know what the incident's about but I put it in more poetic terms. Say a song like "I'll Meet You In Poland Baby" — I wrote it in 1983 and I was doing it on this last tour. It's still one song I was breaking down during because it's about deceit and emotional conflict. That can apply to so many different things because it's written as an analogy to the Nazi invasion of Poland and



breaking the Versailles Treaty, which can be anything from relationship breakdown to an altercation of other means. It's emotional intensity, and putting that across — if it means having a nervous breakdown onstage and ending up in the hospital afterwards and getting stitches in my head — so be it. I talk the talk and walk the walk.

**SECONDS:** *Do these issues resolve themselves or is it like a carrot in front of you that's always elusive?*

**FOETUS:** Believe me, I don't put myself through emotional hell just to write a fucking record. There's never any resolution. Damned if I do, damned if I don't. If it ain't one thing it's another.

**SECONDS:** *But then there's good moments in there too, right?*

**FOETUS:** The thing is, I've got such a lack of self-esteem that I may spend two-and-a-half years writing an album and be really proud of it, have ten minutes worth of satisfaction and then come down again and move on to the next thing. Maybe that's why I'm such an overachiever. I don't feel like I have to suffer for my art. Once it comes out, it's your turn to suffer for my art.

**SECONDS:** *What kind of audience participation do you want?*

**FOETUS:** I kind of like them to be there when I stagedive and not part like the Red fucking Sea. I don't think that's too much to ask. That's about it. Buy, buy, buy and tell your friends.

**SECONDS:** *How do you score for the Big Band?*

**FOETUS:** Previously, I've done it sort of piecemeal with a mixture of samples and live stuff. On *Gash*, **Steve Bernstein** — he's in The Lounge Lizards and also has a group called **Spanish Fly** — approached me at **Max Fish** one night and told me how much he liked Steroid Maximus and if I ever needed a trumpet player and arranger to let him know. I'd written "Slum" — which is an eleven-and-a-half-minute Big Band opus on *Gash* — and decided I should bring him in. If I'd just taken the demos I'd done and re-recorded them ... I wanted to take it further. Same with the cover: I broke away from the red, white, black thing because I felt like I'd taken it as far as I could. So he came over and I played him the song. He took it and scored it for a four-piece brass section. I had to bump it up to forty-eight tracks because there's so many parts going on. I had them do twelve different sections, then sampled those sections, and then composed the played parts around the drumbeats, and I changed the drumbeats around. That's how that came about.

**SECONDS:** *Is working with trumpets and flutes liberating?*

**FOETUS:** No, I always have done that. On *Hole and Nail*, people assume the drums are sequenced but they're not at all. I played them all live, but in layers because I'm not that good a drummer. The first time I used horns was on *Ache*, my second album in 1982. The idea comes first and then I work out how to realize it. I'm self-taught on everything. I had a song which I really wanted to have a brass section on. So I borrowed a saxophone and had a person show me where to put my fingers, and I found it a really easy instrument to learn. Next thing you know, I became in demand as a session sax player. I played with **Marc Almond** and **The Virgin Prunes** and live with **The Birthday Party**.

**SECONDS:** *Do you still play it?*

**FOETUS:** Some years ago I stomped on my saxophone on

stage and fucked up all the valves.

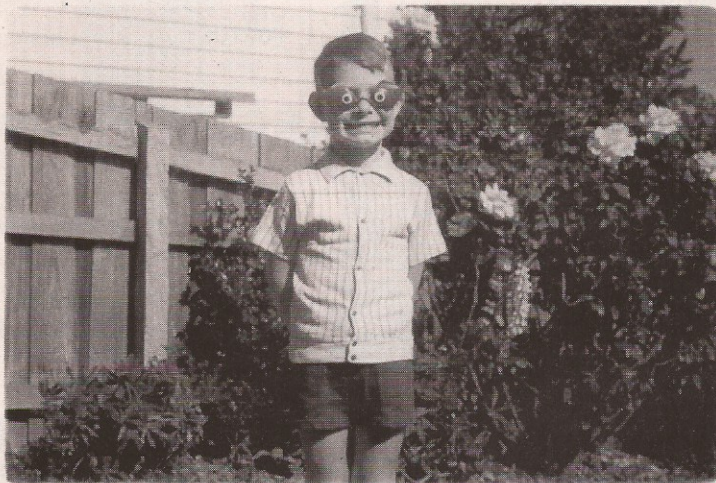
**SECONDS:** *Let me ask you about a couple of bands that are noted as coming out of your Foetus thing. One of them obviously is **Cop Shoot Cop** ...*

**FOETUS:** I totally respect Cop and I think **Tod** is a great songwriter. He acknowledges the fact that certain songs have a heavy Foetus influence. We're close buddies and we collaborate.

## "I think I invented the genre of Metal remixing."

**SECONDS:** *Did he play with you as a band-member?*

**FOETUS:** He played on a few songs on *Gash*, but he wasn't in the band. No, him and **Jon Spencer** hooked up at **Rhode Island School Of Design**. Him and Jon had this band called **Shithaus** and then he had a band called **Dig That Hole**. I mixed the **Black Snakes** album before *Cop Shoot Cop*. I have to admit, one *Cop Shoot Cop* show I had to walk out of because of the Foetus-ness of it. I couldn't handle it when they were playing "Ten Dollar Bill" ... *Cop Shoot Cop*



are one of my favorite bands and I think **Tod** is an amazing songwriter. He's a great friend of mine.

**SECONDS:** *How about **Motherhead Bug**?*

**FOETUS:** They're great but I don't see a Foetus thing there. You're the journalist; I can't tell. Maybe there's a bit of me in there. It's all a melting pot. **Dave Quimet** really respects my work and I really respect his work. It's like saying to **Sonic Youth**, "Don't you think **Pavement** rip off a lot of your stuff?" I don't hear a lot of **Sonic Youth** in **Pavement** but that's what journalists say. However, **Sonic Youth** totally support **Pavement**. I see Foetus as a totally different identity, without any contemporaries. I would say I really respect **Tod's** songwriting, and **Michael Gira** as well.

**SECONDS:** *Is there a Drug scene analogous to your work?*

**FOETUS:** If you read my lyrics, there's a light motif of Alcohol abuse throughout them. There's a lot of Alcohol references and references to being a physical wreck. I don't see it as an inspiration, though. I talk about my life. It's a living diary. I think my manic depression has a lot to do with the content as much as any chemical intake or as much as any paranoia, violent feelings, or sexual lust. Those are all elements in my work. The only other thing is a lust for death.

**SECONDS:** *Is there a death wish expressed in your music?*

**FOETUS:** Absolutely. Sometimes I refer to it flippantly. There's a humorous element in my stuff, but it's not ha-ha funny. It's not stoic either, like **Trent**.

**SECONDS:** *His stuff is more about helplessness and you're more about problem-solving —*

**FOETUS:** The problem-solving thing is the dichotomy between catharsis and picking a scab. Sometimes it works for me and sometimes it doesn't. I'd probably go into a



# "Some of the songs just go so deep into the bowels of my soul that I can't listen to them anymore."

**McDonalds** with an AK-47 if I wasn't doing this.

Some of the songs just go so deep into the bowels of my soul that I can't listen to them anymore. I almost didn't do the song called "New Year Pump" on *Gash*. I almost thought it was too poignant. When I actually formed it on tape, it was almost too much for me. When I did "Downfall" on *Gash*, I did the vocal on that a day after I had a restraining order taken out against me. When I listen to my lead vocal, it's like, "I do not want to meet that guy" — and it was me.

**SECONDS:** What was the restraining order concerning?

**FOETUS:** It was about a relationship that was breaking down. "Mortgage," the first song on *Gash*, is also pretty tough for me — but they're all pretty tough. I'm proud of that.

**SECONDS:** Are the lyrics poetry?

**FOETUS:** I guess it's poetic and it could be perceived as that but I just have a stigma about the phrase "poetry." I'm not really into poetry and spoken word, except Lydia does it really good. If there's good Performance Art, I haven't seen it. That pretty much leaves music, film and visual arts. I guess I do write poetry but I just hate the phrase "poetry." If you want to use the term "poetry," I write tons of it. I've got books worth of stuff. It's really emotionally unraveling stuff. It doesn't have to be a narrative thing; it's more of a snapshot of time. I guess I do write poetry, but could you think of a new word for poetry?

**SECONDS:** What would you like your entry in a music encyclopedia to say?

**FOETUS:** "He wrote his epitaph everyday."



## JIM THIRLWELL SELECT DISCOGRAPHY

### As Foetus:

1996	<i>Void EP</i>	Columbia
1996	<i>Null EP</i>	Columbia
1995	<i>Gash</i>	Columbia
1993	Foetus In Excelsis Corruptus Deluxe, <i>Male</i>	Big Cat
1990	Foetus Inc, "Free James Brown" EP	Wax Trax
1990	Foetus Inc, <i>Sink</i>	Self-Immolation/Some Bizzare *
1988	Foetus Interruptus, <i>Thaw</i>	Self-Immolation/Some Bizzare *
1987	Scraping Foetus Off The Wheel, "Ramrod" EP	Self-Immolation/Some Bizzare
1987	The Foetus All Nude Revue, <i>Bedrock</i>	Self-Immolation/Some Bizzare
1985	Scraping Foetus Off The Wheel, <i>Nail</i>	Self-Immolation/Some Bizzare *
1985	Foetus Uber Frisco, "Finely Honed Machine"/"Sick Minutes" 12"	Self-Immolation/Some Bizzare
1985	You've Got Foetus On Your Breath, "Wash"/"Slog" 12"	Self-Immolation/Some Bizzare
1984	Foetus Art Terrorism, "Calamity Crush"/"Catastrophe Crunch" 12"	Self-Immolation/Some Bizzare
1984	Scraping Foetus Off The Wheel, <i>Hole</i>	Self-Immolation/Some Bizzare *
1982	You've Got Foetus On Your Breath, <i>Ache</i>	Self-Immolation
1982	Foetus Over Frisco, "Custom Built For Capitalism" 12"	Self-Immolation
1981	You've Got Foetus On Your Breath, <i>Deaf</i>	Self-Immolation

### J.G. Thirlwell in other incarnations:

1992	Wiseblood, <i>PTTM</i>	Ectopic/Big Cat
1992	Steroid Maximus, <i>Gondwanaland</i>	Ectopic/Big Cat
1992	Steroid Maximus, <i>Quilombo</i>	Ectopic/Big Cat
1992	Clint Ruin And Lydia Lunch, <i>Don't Fear The Reaper EP</i>	Ectopic/Big Cat
1989	Clint Ruin And Lydia Lunch, <i>Stinkfist</i>	Widowspeak
1988	Flesh Volcano, <i>Slut EP</i>	Some Bizzare
1986	Wiseblood, <i>Dirtish</i>	K422/Some Bizzare *
1986	Wiseblood, "Stumbo" 12"	K422/Relativity
1985	Wiseblood, <i>Motorslug/Death Rape 2000</i>	K422/Wax Trax

\* reissued on Self-Immolation/Thirsty Ear

### as producer:

1993	Various Artists, <i>Mesomorph Enduros</i>	Big Cat
1992	Silverfish, <i>Organ Fan</i>	Columbia
1992	The Beyond, <i>Chasm</i>	Harvest
1992	Lydia Lunch/Rowland Howard, <i>Shotgun Wedding</i>	Triple X
1985	Coil, <i>Scatology</i>	K422/Wax Trax

### as remixer:

1994	Nine Inch Nails	"Mr. Self Destruct"
1994	Pop Will Eat Itself	"Kick To Kill"
1993	Cranes	"Clear"
1993	The Cult	"Sanctuary"
1993	Pantera	"Walk"
1993	Megadeth	"Angry Again"
1993	Front 242	"Religion"
1993	Ethyl Meatplow	"Ripened Peach"
1993	Carla Marshall	"Fire In The Mountain"
1993	Curve	"Ten Little Girls"
1993	Fight	"Nailed To The Gun"
1992	Red Hot Chili Peppers	"Higher Ground"
		"If You Want Me To Stay"
1992	Murder Inc.	"Murder Inc."
		"Mania"
1992	Daniel Ash	"Get Outa Control"
1992	The The	"Dogs Of Lust"
1992	EMF	"Lies"
1991	EMF	"I Believe"
1991	Nine Inch Nails	"Wish"
1991	The Beyond	"Empire"
		"One Step Too Far"
1991	Jarboe	"Red"
1990	Prong	"Prove You Wrong"

Further work in some capacity or another for: Marc Almond, Swans, Boss Hog, White Zombie, Cop Shoot Cop, and Motherhead Bug.