

Los Angeles Times

FRENZIED THIRWELL

Jim Thirwell, who has issued several records under such names as "You've Got Foetus on Your Breath" and "Foetus Over 'Frisco," made a captivating local debut Friday night at the Anticlub, performing solo to the accompaniment of majestic pre-recorded backing tapes that employed everything from industrial explosions to phras-

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es from "In the Hall of the Mountain King."

Despite laryngitis that reduced his vocals to a raspy growl, the London-based New Zealander put on a hypnotic and physically exhausting display of emotional anguish, detailing the lingering maladies of a distorted world. In the best Iggy Pop tradition, he often moved into the audience when not crawling, twisting and gyrating about the stage. Even in the midst of his most brutal frenzies, however, Thirwell can appear sensitive, haunted or delicate. The result was a one-man psychodrama that resembled an LSD-soaked Broadway

musical.

Equally harrowing was the performance by musical and verbal provocateur Lydia Lunch. Lunch is an accomplished writer, but her past performances often maintained a bored, antagonistic attitude. Not so this time.

After deflecting would-be hecklers and creating a temporary air of panic in the club with a staged stabbing, Lunch proceeded with a brutal account of New York street life, ending with a graphic account of being molested by her father that had Lunch on the verge of tears. This kind of confessional display can often be self-serving, but for a former "no wave" nihilist, Lunch's soul baring was an act of bravery.

—CRAIG LEE

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