

HELL ON EARTH



PIC: RICHARD BELLIA

FOETUS INTERRUPTUS

Town & Country Club, London

KNOWING the Foetus phenomenon only as represented by "Hole", I went to the Town & Country Club, annexed by more spiky types than you can usually shake a stick at on a Monday, anticipating that record's considered art terrorism. The lad's popular: you have to give him that. The awesome sonic disturbances of the Tackhead Sound System provided an appropriately arse-quaking entrée, and then Foetus took the stage like . . . like, well, like Gary Glitter, to be honest.

Clouds of dry ice, strobes, portentous keyboard crashes, the whole rock theatre *bit*, as the band crash into a 90-mile-an-hour thrash metal storm. The slam-dancers down the front, right on cue, go ape, and it's hell on earth. Until he stops it with a chop of the hand. Four times in a row. Talk about discipline: it's like James Brown crossed with Freddie Starr, silencing the crowd with a gesture. And funny with it, too.

"Get Down On Your Knees" he belches through a vocoder, leaning dramatically on a convenient monitor, number one in the manual of rock posture. Much heavy breathing, on and off stage, ensues. A keyboard makes revving motorbike noises. Perhaps he's going to do "My

Gang"? Alas, no. It's a funeral power stomp, Mr Thirlwell playing SM master to an audience of willing slaves. As the odd nostalgic gob starts to fly, Foetus is aiming his band like a weapon at the audience. "You ain't NUTHIN, man," he screams at us, meaning it. We love him for it.

Song number four is a mournful, Nick Cave-ish stagger through mutant blues, edged in razor guitar and at least twice as long as even Robert Plant would push it. And after that, it kind of blurs. The metal quotient goes up in direct proportion to each number's velocity. Foetus starts going "Woah!" rather a lot: "Hallo London" can't be far away. The hirsute bass player breaks *all* his strings, a truly heroic feat, swaps instrument and starts breaking his next set, pausing only to try and pick a fight with some of the keener fans in the front row.

One of them executes an impromptu back flip over the heads of his friends and occupies the stage for about a second before being unceremoniously lobbed off again. Moments later, Foetus joins him on the floor as his monitor topples, a sublime, Cooper-esque moment, just like that. "Clothes Hoist" is tossed off at speed. There's a drum solo. And of *course* we get an encore. With dry ice, yet.

All in all, a bit of a wank, But was it good for you, too?

TONY REED