DIARY OF A SICK MAN

BIBA KOPF UNRAVELS THE MYRIAD MYTHS OF FOETUS

LINTON KWESI JOHNSON
WOMACK & WOMACK SCOTT WALKER
PREFAB SPROUT HOT CHOCOLATE
STYLE COUNCIL AND SOFT CELL LP REVIEWS
FROM THE WOMB TO THE TOP

"Crucifixion is my addiction," confesses rock's newest saviour
Clint Ruin, the man with the Foetus On Your Breath.
Scraping Foetus Off The Wheel and other strange afflictions

SUCK ON THIS, SQUAREHEAD!

PERVERSE THOUGH it may sound, of all the sad songs emerging from this sad world the saddest song I've ever heard is written by Scraping Foetus Off The Wheel.

Exactly how you may ask, can so insensitively name an individual — whose previous moniker have been Foetus Ukiah and often refer to Frisco Fistus In Your Bed, Philip And His Foetus Vibrations, You've Got Foetus On Your Breath and Foetus Under Glass — write a song capable of provoking anything other than retching?

Well, as anyone who has taken but a small sample of this sad world will know, sickness is not only a matter of sadness and, if there is to be any accuracy in art, then it must reflect this sickness, not for facts and figures, but for those sentiments which mirror the condition of an emotion's length.

Integrity doesn't have to mean descending into an inferno of "Beaver," "Green Detonation," "If A Banana Split Is Not In The Kitchen," to the point where your only reason to exist (as this song of yours, "Dress No Name for Embarrassment," among others has made very much obvious) is to "embrace the horror of your condition."

The world exists to fill in concrete details, the morphology of funeral noise, an emotional response which is a histrionic invention of your heart, clenching the tendrils of the vulnerable psyche.

Rarely popular music has had a sense of wasted landscape, of massive displacement of peoples, of soldiers crossing a snowed continent to reconcile their families among the ruins, only to find, perhaps, that by introducing the program, they are interred. As it's here.

This is the European aftermath described in Palestrina's "Gravity's Rainbow" or Great Day Translated into sound.

F WHO DARES such a manner of wicked will and charged with megalomania, too.

However, the LP hole from which licence is not all death and destruction, but very, though its tracks a terribly steeped in our way round the pair's mutual non-aggression pact — a devastating metaphor for many a modern marriage — there was once.

It's a song about culture, music, cloyed by a sense of reaching choral-structure — "See you at your grave, baby, I'll meet you in your bed in Poland, baby" so deeply affects this is the song. Where the words fit in concrete details, the morphology of funeral noise, an emotional response which is an evolution of your heart, clenching the tendrils of the vulnerable psyche.

From this it's further to the point where your only reason to exist (as this song of yours, "Dress No Name for Embarrassment," among others has made very much obvious) is to "embrace the horror of your condition."

Is it not already a vicious drain that we have the experience of the human race as a program, as it's here.

With the benefit of hindsight I drop the following footnote into his diary: "That whole phenomenon leading up to the present frenzy of uselessness, all this frenzied rushing round to maintain a false semblance of surface calm, well, that phenomenon started by ABC and Heaven 1," which was in reaction to the psychological damage and delusion for the puftamian, who has been integrated to such an extent that there's presently no reality. Not that he wants to want to talk about it. It's totally gobbled.

Not that it worried him any more. The passing months had made it possible to keep this LP hole from which licence is not all death and destruction, but very, though its tracks a terribly steeped in our way round the pair's mutual non-aggression pact — a devastating metaphor for many a modern marriage — there was once. It's a song about culture, music, cloyed by a sense of reaching choral-structure — "See you at your grave, baby, I'll meet you in your bed in Poland, baby" so deeply affects this is the song. Where the words fit in concrete details, the morphology of funeral noise, an emotional response which is an evolution of your heart, clenching the tendrils of the vulnerable psyche.

C UTTING A bottle of Mexican rye, Clint Ruin sat in a chair facing the door listening to Fucking Scrape Off The Wheel's "In the Lap of the Gods." He had just returned from New York where he had played on a few albums with The Dictators, with whom he has been compared by folk music aficionados like Mika and Lydia Lunch. Marc Amond and Nick Cave. Since then he's further collaborated with Lydia Lunch on a project called Shitkind, which apparently conjures up the sound of dust settling on the rubat's bed. Indeed, Shitkind has an entirely different formulation of SPOFT and You've Got Foetus On Your Breath.

Later this year he intends to put together a pop group, the intention of creating a "physical, fleshy sort of music, which you have to smell, feel, it everywhere, smell, feels like you're really here. But not so obvious as a woman's place is on main floor. It'll be more

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CLINT
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IF FOETUS music has been in the past a vehicle for a bilious anger so acid it permanently scarred all those splashed by it — Marc Almond. Orange Juice, Cabaret Voltaire number among his fans — the new dimension of despair he's brought to it doesn't dull it so much as colour it more luridly.

"Just about every song on 'Hole' was a purge of the system, born of a lot of despair, aggression, anger, disgust, things like that," Ruin deadpans. "But the act of getting them out of my system gives the record such a sense of release I find it uplifting to listen to."

Better, the depth of his despair forced him to take extraordinary leaps of the imagination to find suitable expression for his condition. And best of all he's man enough to mock himself.

"Who wants to go to bed about a po faced condition?" rasps Ruin. "It's a matter of taking experiences, distending them in a funhouse looking glass and placing them in a wild and wacky context. Simultaneously glorify and flay them.

And Ruin helps make it more potent. It's not a matter of making people go ah ha ha all more of catching their attention with a joke. Mind you, once I've got a good joke I do like to kill it to death.

So it's a matter of exaggerating themes and simultaneously defeating the whole idea of wallowing in them, saying something strong in a less pathetic way, getting veheemence instead of wimpiness about your condition.

The corpuses of Hitler, Stalin, the Ku Klux Klan are ploughed over in the search for a suitable metaphor. When the James Joyce character Stephen Dedalus exclaimed "history is a nightmare from which I am trying to awake" he might have been speaking up on behalf of the Foetus family.

How far have Foetal imaginations been shaped by the events of history?

"History? Hysterie is perhaps closer," puns Ruin in a French accent. "I'm using events from history as an analogy for a personal desperation as opposed to depicting a desperation born of a particular incident. The narrator is someone who obviously hasn't experienced those events, but he is likening them to his own situation.

"It obviously involves a lot of gross overstatement," he understates.

Would he construe his version of events, or at least his use of them, as irresponsible in any way?

"Well, if people could be specific I can answer it."

Borrowing the mantles of the mass murderer and the perpetrators of genocide.

"That's an analogy for taking the weight of the world on your shoulders, trying to get inside the mind of such a figure, work out how he's thinking, feeling the desperation that might drive him to such acts.

"Perhaps it's as well to remind you here of an early Self Immolation saying: It's okay to be irresponsible so long as you know you're being irresponsible. Until you can use bits of horrific imagery as long as you know you're not just flinting with it."

Before bringing this story to a conclusion, here are a few more Self Immolation chestnuts.

POSEITIVE NEGATIVISM: A REMINDER

"Embracing negativism as reaffirmation and a tool. The opposite of escapism, dross exists already. To create you must destroy. That which may initially seem purely negative often produces positive results by its very existence. If you're never miserable you have nothing to compare happiness to."

SOME PEOPLE operate best with their backs to the wall, social breakdown bringing out hitherto untapped characteristics.

During his stay in New York, Ruin deliberately set aside real fears of muggers and other assorted thugs to launch his Stream Of Consciousness Man on the world. Part Gingerman, part Joycean, his Stream Of Consciousness Man was born of the urge to wash the bad taste of Los Angeles out of his mouth and make up for all those lost months in the studio, to amass some experience of living again in order to give him something to write about.

Regarding L.A. "The combination of shit and sun makes for a sinking team and all those flies can't be wrong. That's why they congregate in LA. Stream Of Consciousness Man is partly my reaction to that. Basically it's a matter of playing down the conflict between mind and body, being less analytical and more instinctive, striking a happy balance between the visceral and cerebral."

"Getting Foetus out of the bed and into the subway..."

"And back into bed again. Yeah, something like that. Throwing a lot of shit at the wall and seeing what sticks when you wake up in the morning. Fail it was a whole new experience going out all the time and having 'fun', this mythical 'fun' people are talking about all the time. I didn't find out what it was actually, found it a fairlyvacuous pursuit. I'm all for satisfaction and fulfilment, but I'm not a big fan of 'fun' at all."

"Anyway, the Stream Of Consciousness Man to a certain extent. But unless you keep a perspective on what you're doing you stay the same person, your viewpoints are never modified, because you're spouting them the whole time."

And there you were thinking hedonism was just a matter of letting go.

AESTHETIC TERRORISM: A FINAL RETURN

"Using the element of surprise through the usage of past cliches, knowledge and home truths being flung out of joint. And therefore used as possible weapon or subservive force."

NOT TO be confused with trash aesthetics. To my horror I made such a mistake, arousing such a bilious response from Ruin he almost bunched the Foetus out of his lap.

"Trash aesthetics? Fuck off," he spits. "Why aesthetics trash? I'm all for trashin' aesthetics! This is not the time for beautifying anything. The aesthetics of commerce, huh, that's what started popular music's living death. Why cosmetise the corpse?"

"Look at all these groups glorifying the art of lying and then having the temerity to call it the lexicon of love, only to later expect us all to sympathise with the scars of their beauty stabs. It's their eyeliner, they can go sink in it!"

That art had to be something beautiful, that it was there for the glorification of life, and that invariably means the life of some small elite, a select beautiful people, that it should ignore life outside palaces, that it should not be concerned with the sheer vulgarity of living, well all those things went out with the death of Virgil.

"Art - whichever form it's spewed forth - doesn't remind us of realities ain't worth two licks of shit. It doesn't have to awaken nightmares, it doesn't have to always be going down into the inferno just to tell us what it's like down there. But it ought to convey something of life - and life of the imagination - or stay silent. Put up or shut up!"

BRING ON THE CALVARY!

SCAN THE dull conspirators of popular art installing their brand of cultural barbarism as the reigning mediocrity. The puddle of their frozen, fixed smiles and smug smirks reflects nothing but the meanness of their ambition. It's a pity the frenzy of their frantic treading of the water doesn't send ripples across the surface calm.

Ironically, it takes a barbaric art to rip through the surface calm of cultural barbarism. The various Foetus strands have been slowly inducing catastrophe into art ever since Jim Thirlwell shelved plans to fake terrorist attacks on the Melbourne art community and came to England instead, carrying the germs of his ideas in his suitcase. Once they popped, nobody could possibly get them back into its wobbly darkness.

For Foetal art has developed into a bloody, muddy thing, grotesque and hilarious, not easily embraceable, but then its intention was never to be loved.

If one thing is absolutely certain, Foetus was not so baptised to take its place among the good guys.