

BABY TALK!

YOU'VE GOT FOETUS ON YOUR BREATH

Ache (Self Immolation)

FROM THE moment the needle hits the record, 'Ache' seizes you by the lapels and shakes you all the way through to the dying echoes of the run-off groove. Foetus notwithstanding, it's the proverbial breath of fresh air.

YGFOYB's first album 'Deaf' came out last year and there followed a succession of shorter vinyl works by various Foetus permutations, masterminded by San Francisco based Frank Want, and I'll be searching them out. But on the evidence of 'Ache' alone, Mr Want is a Major Talent . . . as in Frank Zappa ('66-'69), The Fall, The Residents and Chrome. Their records never soothed and reassured, but harangued, amused, amazed and enlightened. Frank Want and the mysterious others who comprise Foetus are visionaries to the same degree.

From the Onward March of Sino-Soviet Socialism circa Korean War style sleeve design, one might conclude this album to be a hotbed of Un-American Activity. You'd be only half right. Other institutions in for a rough ride include religion, power, ambition, the bourgeoisie, puritanism and mediocrity. Soft, familiar targets, to be sure, but such is the overwhelming venom of Foetus' derision that you feel they are seen as mere manifestations of a deeper flaw in man's soul.

'Ache' is possessed by a bristling, maniacal intelligence which spews out a jostling, surreal collage of subverted musical and verbal clichés, wired word associations, epigrams and sheer invective with frantic urgency and gleefully black humour.

'Ache' is one of the most violently original and compelling records I've heard in ages. It would make an ideal Christmas present.

Mat Snow



Foetus

Pic: Peter Anderson