

TALK TALK

Spirit of Eden (Parlophone LP/Cassette/CD)

OH GOD. Art. Six meandering, aimless tracks. 16 musicians mixing the Mexican bass, dobro and shozygs with trad rock'n'roll essentials such as the oboe and clarinet, PLUS a cathedral choir – Mike Oldfield, come on down! 'Spirit of Eden' can only be a wretched excretion from the bowls of conceptualism. (O)

Easy eh, kids? Far too bloody easy. From the sleeve's lyrical scrawls to the record's tremelous drawls – a handwriting analyst's nirvana and Art Garfunkel on valium respectively – Mark Hollis sets himself up. Ripe for ridicule, waddling across the journalists' firing range. Maybe he's got bullet-proof feathers, or perhaps I'm just too fond of ducks – either way I can't bring myself to pierce his plumage.

Talk Talk have extended the atmospherics of 'The Colour Of Spring', their last LP. They've multiplied its morosity, further exploited the sound of silence. Once a drinking man's Duran Duran, they're now experimenting with freaky orchestral manoeuvres.

The hooklines of old curve up from tranquil shadows, flurried but no longer hurried. 'Inheritance' is impudently dischordant with brushed drums, wind collective and wayward piano. 'Eden' is liquid, almost vapid, until speared by a jagged guitar. It's nigh-on inhuman: not in any cold, callous sense, but in the unfamiliar pattern and uninhibited formation. When so desired, 'Spirit of Eden' simply stands still, as expansive and elusive as a tropical dawn.

Talk Talk straddle the thin line between painful and pathetic, between attempted comprehension and sneering dimissiveness. Yet they're resolute and determined, flaunting commercial rules with fascinating disregard for understanding or acceptance. 'Spirit of Eden' is the very antithesis of a Top 40-obsessive A&R man's best friend. And that's enough. So (7)

Simon Williams

FOETUS INTERRUPTUS

Thaw (Self Immolation/ some Bizzare LP/Cassette, CD)

MANY A Foetus has washed under the bridge since the emergent J G Thirlwell announced: 'Mother, I've Killed The Cat!'

But there is none so furious as the Foetus Interruptus. Oh sure, we've stripped down to the Foetus of Excellence T-shirt and pulled from the Foetus box such feisty corkers as F Uber Frisco, Scraping Foetus Off The Wheel, the Foetus All-Nude Revue, Wiseblood, F Art Terrorism, and 'You've Got Foetus On Your Breath.

But whereas as the All Nude Revue 'Bedrock' 12" might've led us to think that ol' brown-eye was back but bland, the Interruptus interrupts us with Thirlwell's sickest excesses yet. (And that's 'sick' as in gross black humour, enough to overflow the anal-canal brains who hope that a little Foetus might rub off on them).

Yessir, every bar here is a Tet offensive of the senses. Jimbo lays waste to his brief Las Vegas career ('Bedrock') with a single scythe of his pigsticker on the opening 'Don't Hide It, Provide It'. He want meat on a plate – NOW – to the accompaniment of various bad motorcycles, machine gun rounds, and the jackhammer Furo-disco that he has co-opted into a devilish trademark. Except this time it turns tighter, like a noose on the ankles. Because Foetus is hopping mad, and still no vegan.

'English Faggot' would appear to be the first publication of a hitlist, and the one who abandoned him on the Blackpool pier – "I don't like being left in the sun" – is risking dismemberment even just by listening to this cut. Thirlwell apparently hates England, as it applies to his work (biz spoonfeeding the music public with slush), so he reserves particular fury for this enemy. One of the essential Foetus statements is "I see no reason to take responsibility" – part of his avowed 'positive negatism', whereby he takes the opposite stance to please and nobody else. Spurning the charity free-for-all, the Foetus diverts his energies into attempting to repel those who might offer *him* a little charity.

Like the horrifically detailed 'Haus-On-Fire', whereby he relates a first-person Klansman loot'n'burn fairytale just to see who sticks a head over the parapet to yell: "Sick! SICK!!!" Oh yes. And response is inevitable. So Foetus digs in a little deeper.

Big deal? Maybe, but it'd still be nice to see him flogging a few of those 'Hole' posters outside showings of *The Last Temptation of Christ* (he starved himself for six weeks to 'look right' on The Cross).

The going gets weirder on Side Two. And Mr Weird gets going, 'Chingada', screamed in Spanish, backed by a punjabi-sounding raga with hammering drums overhead. All preceded by such scene-setting instrumental pieces as 'Fratridice Pastorale' and 'Barbwire Tumbleweed'.

And he rounds it off with 'A Prayer For My Death', one way outta here with only a "napalm aftershave headache" for comfort. "Bullshit is obligatory / daily life is dysentery . . . I need a release / say a prayer."

The Foetus has landed, shit-faced, sweating, raw and alive. Give him a good home and keep smiling. (8)

David Swift