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from Foetus at Khyber**

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By Michael Hopkins
FOR THE INQUIRER

As classical music morphed into noise on the Khyber Pass Pub's sound system Thursday night, the godfather of industrial music — Jim Thirlwell, a.k.a. Foetus — launched his first tour in three years. He wore sunglasses, a bright white blazer and a yellow shirt that so sharply contrasted with his darkly clad, five-piece band, it made the frontman look like a psychotic, blond-haired Elvis.

The multiskilled Foetus sang as his band generated abrasive, complex sounds, highlighted by Han Rowe's precise violin work. He started with several songs from the group's latest LP, *Gash* (Columbia), including the catchy single "Verklemmt." And by the time Foetus launched into a harshly driven version of the Beatles' "I Am the Walrus," the crowd was his.

Then, just 35 minutes into the performance, Foetus/Elvis left the building, leaving his band as perplexed as the audience. Finally, the guitarist leaned into their leader's microphone, "We got to go find Jim. ... We're not sure what's going on. ... We'll be back."

Back they came, with Foetus performing two songs before he again abruptly left the stage. "Foetus don't fail me now!" shouted a fan in the audience, and back he came — again — for a final 10 minutes.

Even though the set's quirky pace had the crowd a bit ornery, it left wanting more of the enigmatic mad-genius that is Jim "Foetus" Thirlwell.

Ultra Bide — the three-piece, New York-based Japanese noise-rock unit that opened the show — kicked out a sharp set that joined dissonant sounds and fiercely pulsing rhythms.



Foetus (Jim Thirlwell) is on his first tour in 3 years.