WISEBLOOD
The Master Of Disguise
Unmasked In Berlin

BAD
On the Belfast streets with the Jones gang

BRUCE
We open the box on ten years of live Springsteen

NOVEMBER 15, 1986
SKINNED ALIVE!

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LIVE: BON JOVI • COCTEAUS • GANCE • NUN

ALBUMS: KILLING JOKE • KATE BUSH • BEASTIE BOYS

VERY THINGS • EUROPE • THE BIBLE • L’AMOURDER • PAULINE MURRAY

WISEBLOOD PHOTO BY GREG FREEMAN
A BOMB goes off in a club, somewhere in Western Germany.

Big News: Wireheads everywhere. People pour out onto the street in a state of shock. The only casualty – the guy who set it off – is taken away to be stitched back together. His name is Jim Thirwell.

Apparently he and his accomplice, ex-Swan Ralph Moosman, have been exploding the same bomb all over Europe for some time now. A Wirehead performance like no other; people who wander in expecting just another rock show are in for a surprise.

First on the menu is a taste of steel, in the shape and spout of a Mark Pauline video in which gladiators hammer each other to death from behind braided braid. Next up is Lydia Lunch, who stuffs venous visual and verbal meat down her propped by cocain's collective gizzard. Her 'Meat, Meat, Meat' rap/ijie and Fingered film cruelty, yet with purpose, open up old wounds and dig in pointed fingernails.

Mentally Bayed, open-mouthed and weakened, the crowd are ready to take the bone that's loosely hung with the new flesh. The stage thickens with smoke, the Fairlight begins to howl, and the sinewy phantom of Clint Ruin suddenly takes shape. The blood begins to pour.

The NEW flesh, in the guise of Jim Thirwell, nurses a freshly gashed finger – the result of an accident with a Perrier bottle at a previous night's performance – and digs out a bloody T-shirt with the legend 'Killer Coupe' stretched across it. This gory rag was used to soak up the two pints of red which leaked out of Jim's slashed digit to the astonishment, disgust, and later delight of both performer and audience.

The grisly mementos of that particular evening which he's proudly displaying will soon, he hopes, be duplicated across a million chests as a Wireblood T-shirt.

But I think it's great, very concise in what it puts across. 'Motorslug' is one chunk of what we're doing, one finger of the monster we've created. It's a multi-faceted beast.

Is 'Motorslug' the heart of the beast?

"All we do is the heart of it, because there's not one intention. I say those words, Sick, Macho, Violent... I mean, that is a very broad and flat thing to say, there are a thousand ways that you can interpret those three words. Hopefully we are using all thousand plus another ten thousand on top of that.

At the same time that is only this manifestation of it, and 'Motorslug' is but one part of the influence which goes to make up Wirehead.

Have you a headful of visual images which you fuel into the Wireblood project?

"Not so much visual as visceral imagery. I can feel the textures, I can reach out and touch them. I don't see it in terms of a deliberation of me performing live, because that is a limitation.

"The way that I write is in my head, that is transmitted onto paper and later, hopefully, translated onto magnetic tape, retaining the balance between creativity at the time of recording, and the original intention.

"A great amount of the art is retaining that balance. I've found that over the years I've done songs which have been unsuccessful because I've gotten too far away from the original intention."

...around its new world.

Catching sight of something that moved, it shot out a claw. Nourishment was what it needed now. Something to feed on to make it stronger both in mind and body. Something pure, something slightly crazy.

What it hungered for wasn't on the surface, however. Silently and eagerly it burrowed back underground.

"I wasn't really conscious about this stuff... about underground comics in general. I think it was in LA earlier this year and I walked into a comics shop. The thing that really drew me in was this cover of Weirdos with a Robert Crumb drawing of this weird frog with..."
UNDERGROUND, THE new flesh can hear the tramp of the dinosaurs lumbering above.

It takes a lungful of the stale subterranean air and winces at the sharp pain it delivers. The pain feels somehow good, almost a reward, reminding it of the fact that it's alive.

Alive and kicking.

"I had glandular fever for about a month and I just wanted to die. My body was covered in a really itchy rash, the itch was like scorching my skin. I was just willing myself to die because I felt so bad. I sat at the top of the stairs and felt worse, so I sat in the middle of the stairs, and the closer I got to the ground floor, the more pain I was in.

"I ended up on the sidewalk, doubled up, writhing around, hardly able to breathe and people were walking past me going, Disgusting, assuming I was some kind of crazed drug addict.

"I just couldn't breathe because a hole had formed in one of my lungs, the air had escaped and was trapped between my lungs and my stomach lining and I couldn't inflate my lungs. They were going to slit me between the ribs and stick a tube in. I was very squeamish about that and managed to talk them out of doing it eventually.

"After a couple of weeks the oxygen dispersed into my blood stream, it was like a really gross experience, it just knocked me out... it was terrifying.

"That really makes me squeamish about lungs. Last year I quit smoking after smoking heavily for ten years. It was a really traumatic experience, I was a real smoker, but my paranoia about cancer and the pains in my chest made me decide to say, F*** this, I can't do this anymore, it's just too scary."

Is your work a way of getting the fear out of yourself?

"Ah yes, I mean it's an attempt to. Fear, greed and jealousy are to me very destructive emotions, ones that I would like to purge from myself. Things that I'm fearful of do crop up in my lyrics but the whole catharsis seems to be a roundabout kind of thing, whereby it starts with an attempt to purge something and then turns into something that plagues me so that, instead of getting rid of it, I end up riddled with it. After I've been so riddled with it I can come to terms with it, I can suppress it and shed it but it's not sort of cut and dried."

Do you secretly enjoy it when things get out of control?

"I welcome that stuff because the majority of my performances are based on backing tapes. You've made so many decisions in the first place and then you're carrying on from there, so a lack of control can happen. I think to see our show at this point is like having a suppository, it's like an enema because it is so pure, so forthright, so violent and demented and great. It just projects rays right through you and I feel that it does that. It's very strong and it's got a lot to give out, it's a very tangible thing."

Sick, Violent and Macho are the words that come into my mind."

people who hold their hands up in horror to what Wiseground are trying to radiate?

"Obviously I'm horrified by their horror. I've been a victim of censorship all along and I think that it's absolutely gross that people should infringe on my right to say whatever I want.

"There was a review of 'Hole' in the New York Times where they edited out the words Scraping Foetus Off The Wheel. It was a glowing review but it didn't say that the record was by Scraping Foetus Off The Wheel. Why did they bother to print it? The only point of it was advertising - what else do I need it for, my ego? They might as well have left off the word 'Hole' as well. I'm not going to change my name for these lily-livered idiots."

Has it ever been your intention for your work to corrupt?

"To me it's the least corrupt... it's never corrupt, it's the purest stuff and that's the whole intention. Corruption doesn't come into it, it's totally pure, honest and good. I think it's morally excellent. I don't see any need to defend it because it is a pure statement from myself."

THE NEW flesh peels open a fresh white eye which watches and waits. Given time it will have all the followers it wants, supporting and adding to its strength, fuelling the power. One day everybody will be screaming, 'LONG LIVE THE NEW FLESH!' But, by the time that day comes, it will be far different.