

TELEVISION SOUTH 02

STERIOD MAXIMUS

'Ectopia'

IPECAC

JS Thirlwell, aka Foetus, can pretty much do as he likes. More or less inventing the entire industrial genre will be his legacy, but he got bored with it after a while, as people do. Sufficiently talented to work comfortably in most genres, his recent dabblings in experimental electronica and movie-soundtrack atmospherics have been just that - dabblings - but while rarer as primal and ruthless as *Scraping Foetus Off The Wheel*, they're more enjoyable on their own terms.

'Ectopia' is eclecticism taken to the point of virtual white-out, relentlessly melodic but perpetually disorientating, and it's possibly the best thing he's ever done, assuming you're no kind of purist. There's a superficial resemblance to the polluted orchestrations of Barry Adamson, and to Stereolab's mismatched audiophilia, but there's less sense of genre pacifism, far more visceral power, lots of tension and digital sweat. The horny string sections, slurping Krautrock synths and hints of easy listening don't totally transcend their sources, but there's real invention in the dense arrangements, and a sinuous perversity about the melodies. Where many who attempt this kind of thing just cut-and-paste clichés, Thirlwell's sense of adventure takes over; for all its queasy warmth, this is an experimental record. It's brilliant and startling, and as intense as you happen to feel.

[8] TAYLOR PERKES

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