

★ THE AUSTIN ★

CHRONICLE

live shots

FOETUS

The Back Room, November 21

A creeping psychosis tickles my skin before flaying me wide and bleeding. It throbs, like a parasitic growth of infested fecal matter. A horribly disfigured and gapingly tumorous noise fills my ears. I'm shivering in front of a stage that is occupied by terrifying, pus-dripping creatures. They look hungry and I feel like obvious prey. My brain is pummeled, bludgeoned, shot, cut and stomped on. I peer through the acidic tears that painfully well up in my eyes and... wait a minute... how fucking pretentious.... I was only kidding, honest. I can only be so purple before I laugh myself silly.

The above is what I figure a right-thinking Junior English major that enjoys this tripe would have written here and I did it to make a point. What you see there is a forced attempt at using words to shock the shockable, an attempt to sound ugly and dangerous on the printed page. (Okay, I did say "attempt." Twice.) When you see it from this point of view, it looks pretty goofy, definitely non-threatening.

When you listen to Foetus, in all its various forms, it seems scary, threatening, dangerous on that visceral musical level. It is produced for effect, all talk of violence and sin, depravity and derision. If you're in the right mood it can put you over that edge of decision as to whether or not you should smack your kitty cat into the wall for whining while you listen.

Onstage Jim Thirlwell (Foetus, Clint Ruin, to the uninitiated) is about as threatening as a gangly, smack-shooting Danny Partridge, which is, physically, what he appears to be. I was bored to the point of wandering. The band that backed him was as sloppy as anything I have seen on the Back Room local front and the cover of "I am the Walrus" did little more than remind me just how good the Beatles used to be — a fact that I, in my jaded, cynical music writer way, had heretofore forgotten.

Affectation is the key word here. The above prose doesn't scare anyone, because I didn't mean it. Foetus' performance lacked the force it should have had because, as a unit, it is walking on lame legs. No sense of conviction seemed to come from the stage. Not an iota of intensity in Thirlwell's movements or manner. The band seemed tired and disinterested. And everything congealed into a, dare I use the word again, thoroughly pretentious whole.

The only thing really interesting that happened this night was that while I was waiting in the back of the hall around the second to last song I happened to turn and see a pregnant woman standing at the door listening to the din. I stared at her belly, marvelling at the coincidence, glad that I was not playing with hallucinogens. On drugs, I might have been able to manufacture an entire purpose for the show, as well as Foetus' existence, based entirely upon what was growing within this woman's womb. Close call, eh?

— Garry Kirks