FOETUS
FLOW
NOIS-O-LUTION NO NUMBER CD
BY EDWIN POUNCEY

Jim Thirlwell, aka Clint Ruin, Wiseblood, Steroid
Maximus and (more famously) Foetus, has
crawled out of the chemical hellhole he
apparently fell into some years ago. On first
hearing, Flow does as its title says and washes
over the listener, who feels he has somehow
heard it all before: the usual tightly screwed and
sampled arrangements, cranked up high and
topped with his ever present, snarling, bad boy
vocal. Granted, Flow’s torrent of words is
Thirlwell’s familiar angsty blurt of near operatic
proportions, but closer attention reveals his skill
as an arranger, producer and rhythm sampler is
now verging on the monumental. On Flow, the
jackhammer beats are superimposed over wild
and unpredictable bold, brassy big band jazz
melodies, high energy electronic ticks, mariachi
licks and Hitchcockian soundtrack snatches. A
typical Foetus blast of ‘in yer face’
confrontationalism, “The Need Machine”
subliminally wields traces of early Kraftwerk into
the jukebox undercarriage of something
resembling the giant killer chicken robot in
Robocop. Also excellent is “Kreibabe”, an Alice
Cooper-styled shock rocker, Welcome To My
Nightmare era, where various states of musical
madness (from nursery rhyme chime to full
metal mastication) ebb and flow over Thirlwell’s
treated vocal until a peak is hit and the song
crawls back into its corner. Possibly
autobiographical, “Kreibabe” is an astonishing,
frightening and moving exploration of the effects
of mental illness.-Here, Thirlwell drops his guard
— his defence wall of lyrical clichés — and
comes out fighting. Flow sees Foetus back on his
feet and ready to kick ass.