



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 welds 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.