

FOETUS INC.

By Marlena Sonn

Jim Thirlwell is far more refined than anyone would ever believe. Yes, the Clint Ruin of violent yore, the goateed madman thrashing about on stage at a recent Of Cabbages and Kings show, is as genteel and charming as a ballroom dance instructor. But where did this naughty devil spring from? Who is the real Foetus?

"It was the real me," Jim demurs, "I get kind of excited. I've been known to beat people up during concerts."

Aha! And what about that famed incident on live British TV?

"I set it up. I told the girl what to ask me. You know, she said, 'Well, some people construe sexism in your lyrics.' I was wearing glasses and I took them off, looked at the camera and said, 'Well, Muriel, a women's place is on my face.' So the switchboard lights up and everyone thinks I'm the biggest asshole in the universe!"

Whether or not Thirlwell is the biggest asshole in the universe is up to some heated debate, but he is undoubtedly too busy to concern himself with such trivialities. Not including his long-running Foetus project, Jim has no less than five side projects in the works or new on the shelves in 1990. Included among them are Garagemonsters, a collaboration with notable art fiend The Pizz, a new Wiseblood single, and a new instrumental album under the name Toxico Plus, which (to name just a few) will feature Raymond Watts, Roli

Mosimann, and Away from Voivod. A dizzying array for even the most energetic collector. It would seem a bit easier if it all was just released under the name Foetus.

"Well, each project has a different intention behind it.

The Foetus stuff is just me. I keep that pure. I'm not going to do a collaboration and call it Foetus."

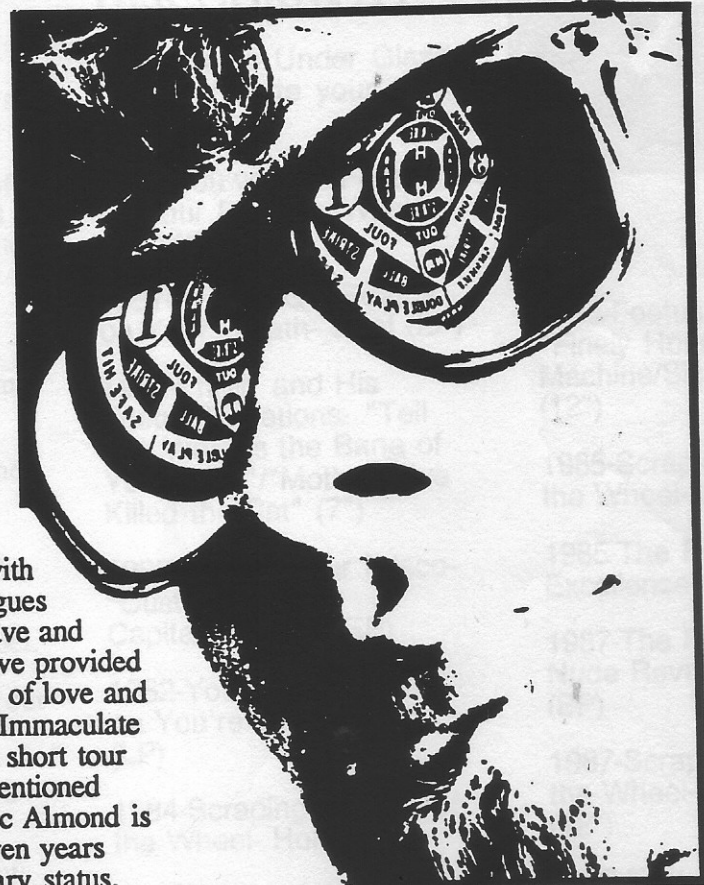
Jim continues, "Each collaboration is kind of a different permutation of people so they all have different names."

Foetus' collaborations with infamous colleagues such as Nick Cave and Lydia Lunch have provided many salty tales of love and adventure. The Immaculate Consumptive, a short tour with the aforementioned rogues and Marc Almond is now, nearly seven years later, of legendary status.

"It was pretty wild," says Jim, in his usual relaxed voice. "It was like a revue where everyone had their spot. We had collaborative things. I did something with Lydia, Lydia did some with Marc, and we each did a couple solo ones." Although there is no documentation of

the tour besides a few old NME's, most of the songs performed were recorded in one form or another.

"Lydia did 'Throw Your Heart' and 'Dead River' and we did a cover of 'Blue Turk,' the Alice Cooper song. My songs were 'Halo of Flame' and 'Hot Horse.'



Nick did 'In the Ghetto' and...well...he sung half of 'Black Paul.' Each time he kind of got bored and stopped halfway through!

"I was really pissed because you do the whole show, here's the climax and he just sort of goes like, 'Well, it goes on like that for a while

longer and then that's it.' [Then he] walks off, and we were like, 'God!!!'"

With *Toxico Plus*, Thirlwell targets a medium in which he is hardly a novice. Many sick flicks by underground film director Richard Kern feature soundtracks by Thirlwell, including Kern's most recent, "Deep Down in the Escalator."

"Yeah, that's the intention of this instrumental LP, to get me some soundtrack work. I've set up my own studio and I have the facility to do the whole thing in my place, so I'm waiting for a great film with lots of money."

Aren't we being a bit mercenary, Jim? "Well, it's like you're going to do 70 minutes of original music; that's over an LP's worth of stuff. It's quite a long, hard haul. You've got to get some kind of compensation."

1990 also marks Jim's departure from the Some Bizarre label. *Sink*, the newest Foetus double album ends a rather notable collaboration between Thirlwell and Steve-o, Some Bizarre's outspoken mastermind. "I've tried to leave for years," Jim snaps. "Steve-o, after initially saying, 'You know, if you don't want to be on our label, we'll tear up the contract,' then decided he'd squeeze out of me every ounce of blood that he could."

"I ended up delivering far more than I was contractually obligated to because he refused to count the *Wiseblood* record as part of the contract. So they ended up getting like, six albums and eight 12"s. It was great for the first couple of years, but after that our relationship soured. It's just so inefficient."

Despite his break with Some Bizarre, or perhaps

because of it, Foetus remains one of the busiest men in music. "Butterfly Potion" is the first Foetus song to be graced with a promotional video - shot in Coney Island, no less. And *Sink* has become a critical and commercial success in Britain.

"It's been really good, yeah! Like, it was number one in *NME*, the independent charts. It got really good reviews; I got quite a lot of press out of it. Lots of mileage!"

DISCOGRAPHY

1981-Foetus Under Glass- "OKFM"/"Spite your Face" (7")

1981-You've Got Foetus on Your Breath- "Wash It All Off/333" (7")

1981-You've Got Foetus on Your Breath- Deaf (LP)

1982-Phillip and His Foetus Vibrations- "Tell me, What is the Bane of Your Life?"/"Mother, I've Killed the Cat" (7")

1982-Foetus Over Frisco- "Custom Built for Capitalism" (12" EP)

1982-You've Got Foetus on You're Breath- Ache (LP)

1984-Scraping Foetus Off the Wheel- Hole (LP)

1984-Foetus Art Terrorism- "Calamity Crush"/"Catasrtophe Crunch" (12")

1985-You've Got Foetus on Your Breath- "Wash it All Off/Today I started Slogging Again" (12")



1985-Foetus Uber Fris- "Finely Honed Machine/Sick Minutes" (12")

1985-Scraping Foetus the Wheel- Nail (LP)

1985-The Foetus of Excellence (Box Set)

1987-The Foetus All Nude Revue- Bedrock (EP)

1987-Scraping Foetus the Wheel- "Ramrod" (12")

1988-Foetus Interruptu- Thaw (LP)

1990-Foetus Inc.- "Butterfly Potion"/"From James Brown (So He Can Run Me Down)" (12")

1990-Foetus Inc.- *Sink* (double LP)