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FOETUS: LOVE

by William Cate

Over the years Foetus, Jim Thirlwell, Clint Ruin, what ever name he is working under, has experimented musically with everything from catastrophic noise to big band, so on his new release *Love* it's no surprise that elements of Sci-Fi film scoring would find their way into the mix. Disturbed string arrangements normally associated with slasher films accompanied by French-style jazz vocals and his usual orchestra-from-hell arrangements make this one of the best Foetus albums in years.

To appreciate *Love* you need to understand where this man came from. In the 80's his various incarnations and musical experimentation have paved the way for what we now know as industrial music. Thirlwell, along with Al Jorgenson of Ministry were doing challenging work, mixing computers with noise, big band with hardcore way before the likes of Marilyn Manson or Trent Reznor knew how to push play on a drum machine. Where as Ministry went for a hardcore, speed metal sound, Foetus was far more experimental, incorporating dysfunctional jazz and sing along choruses. Thirlwell also spent a fair amount of time collaborating with fellow 'No Wave' musician and sexual terrorist, Lydia Lunch. Together the two recorded albums like *Stinkfist* and *The Crumb*, both of which pushed the limits of their medium and at times, tested the patience of their fans. Just the way we like it.

Those sides of Jim Thirlwell and a few others are present on his new release, a collection of his most ambitious and dramatic work in years. *Love* should not disappoint any old fans but once again, he may be too experimental and intelligent for a mainstream audience. *Love* is challenging, smart, aggressive music in a time when we are dominated by pointless, mindless music products.

The album's opener, (*Not Adam*), is characteristic of Thirlwell's genius. The song mixes Psycho-esque violin elements with a drum beat reminiscent of Blondie's Atomic in a way that only Thirlwell can pull off. By far the most impressive song on the album is *Aladin Reverse* which begins slowly, baiting the listener with its woozy, synth-harpsichord only to unexpectedly build up to what sounds like a death-march to Auschwitz, (and you know that Trent Reznor is bullshit he didn't write it first). This album offers many dark corners that you will just have to explore on your own.

Twenty years into his career, Foetus still sounds fresh. Like most great artists the problem he faces is that mainstream audiences are blinded by the banal, sugar coated, punk rock they have been force fed. MTV hasn't yet explained to their privileged punks how to appreciate someone like Jim Thirlwell and they probably won't anytime soon. They will never know Jim Thirlwell exists and he couldn't give a flying fuck.

On The Web | www.foetus.org

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