Seeing *Foetus* perform live was something I’d been debating over for a couple weeks, but the thing that finally made me go was the fact that I had a ticket voucher in hand and a strong desire to just get out and do something. And *Foetus* was just the thing to rouse any half-hearted artgeek into semi-bliss. *Mama Kinn*’s was a swirling pool of people who were actually there to see *Foetus* and those who hadn’t a clue. I hooked up with some dweeby cynic like me and we hung out and made comments about the crowd, the bands and music in general, but despite our seething sarcasm, it was a pretty good night for music, but an incredible night for *Foetus*. The man himself, Jim Thirwell, was standing at the front of the crowd taking in the bands wearing his fly-shades and his Saturday Night Fever suit looking like he just rolled out of an El Camino with Tom Waits at the wheel. He was diggin’ the tunes along with everyone else and no one seemed to know it was even him. (We had guessed it might’ve been him and I even gave him a SPUN promo thing just in case.)

The first band on, *Ultra Bidé* was a trio of Asian guys playing off-kilter alterna-rock with a huge amount of gusto. They had this one song that had something to do with Africa that was truly incredible... Hard, raging, nearly flawless playing by all three and the bassist (whose sole expression was that of either pure anger or he was about to keel over) played his bass with the side of a beer bottle...

The second band, *Halcion*, I wasn’t exactly crazy about mostly because they filled in too many checks on the stereotype fill-in-the-blank. Female lead singer. Check. She’s skinny and looks semi-Bjork-ish. Check. Hard rockin’ band that could be something between *Hole* and any other power-nouveau 90’s punk/rock band... You know... a bit too much of too many other things. But at least they played hard and they stuck to their 30-45 minute set. After this band, I was more than ready for *Foetus*... (continued>
As Thirwell's backing band mounted the stage, the dementedly strained orchestral overture to "Take It Outside Godboy" rumble through and the crowd already knows that what is yet to come will be too good to be true. As the guitars go into full tilt, Thirwell, dressed in a John Travolta/Saturday Night Fever white & black suit and cool 70s shades, takes over the stage with well rehearsed loungelizard / Tom Jones moves as he grips the mic. As one key line in the song goes, "If you're gonna get down, get down and pray..."

The first bunch of songs all pummel the crowd into an energetic, yet not too dangerous pit. Yours truly was even so taken with the tunes that he was swept up into the mighty chord progressions of the single off Gash, "Verklemmt". (Don't ask me how to pronounce that or what it means, 'cuz I don't know...) "It came down from the prophets / derived from dime store books / by day I strangle chickens / trapped in my cloven hooves"

Somewhere in there, Jim & co. dove right into "Mighty Whity" and eventually slowed things down to do one of my ultimate favorite Foetus numbers, "I'll Meet You In Poland, Baby", which is a slowly building history lesson from World War II, sung from the perspective of ol' Hitler himself. "I tore up the Versailles Treaty / Today is the First of September / See you at your graveride baby / I'll meet you in Poland, baby"... It's a scary song, but was done well live especially with the electric violin added in there... Even the tape recordings of air raid sirens, the Hitler speech and the tribal drumming were executed with almost perfect militaristic...
(continued>) precision. Sometimes with these electronic studio projects don’t translate as well as one might hope on stage, but Foetus and co. had no problem in duplicating an entirely electronic piece like “...Poland, Baby”.

Later on, they did two covers: The Beatles’ “I Am The Walrus” and Alice Cooper’s “Elected”. Both came off as being fresh re-interpretations (or, at least, fun romps through another artist’s work) instead of stale reworkings.

Somewhere in there, they even managed to pull off the opening track to Gash, “Mortgage”, which, to me, is one man’s tale of being trapped, not just by a mortgage, but on many other levels as well: relationship-wise, attitude-wise, situation-wise, etc. The song drones and builds in intensity yet never rushes itself. It’s especially fun to have the part where the organs and synths pull off a Bela Lugosi-esque chamber music sound and to blast it while paying at a toll booth on the Mass Pike. If you don’t crack a smile and speak only in a monotone, you could really freak out the overpaid toll collector. Hahaha.

Now, a while back I said that this show had an “energetic, but not too dangerous” pit. Well, the dangerous parts were (a) when some guy had his skull bashed into one of the building supports whilst hurling out of the pit and (b) the following story...

From what bits & pieces I could gather from those who were closer to the front of the stage, some guy had been tugging on the microphone Foetus was using and had (perhaps) nailed him between the legs with a solid blow... It was also reported that someone threw water at him, but whatever provoked what was to follow, the fact of the matter is that Foetus was pissed, pacing around, and saying into the mic “This is the last time I play in this town. This is the last forever...”

Someone drove the final nail in and Foetus dove from the stage into the crowd and started wailing on the thorn in his side... Security quickly descended on the scene and Foetus escorted himself off stage only to return (continued>
(continued>) a closing tune from the album *Nail*, I believe. It was pretty scary to see one so ferocious, yet so *little* a guy hurl himself into the crowd to beat the shit out of ‘im, but it happened.

This scene is sort of akin to my view of *Foetus’* place in the alterna-pop set: He’s rarely (if ever) played on the radio. You never hear his stuff in clubs. And I’ve yet to be at a stop light and hear *Foetus* being blasted from the car next to me. The guy is the forgotten noise king. He came before *Trent*, he out-noised, out-sillied *Ogre* of *Skinny Puppy* and he’s got more songs about hellfire and eternal damnation than even the *Thrill Kill Kult* can lay claim to.

*Foetus* is the kind of guy who you listen to within the confines of your room... well, except for me. Hell, I’ll be blasting the heavy stomping beats of *Gash* as I tear down I-290 for years to come. It’s simply too good to leave collecting dust at home. And hopefully, *Foetus* won’t make good on his threat to never return to Boston, ’cuz he was great.