

Brainwashed - Foetus, "Hide"

Written by John Kealy

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Over the course of his career, Jim Thirlwell has hugely expanded his repertoire with his Manorexia and Steroid Maximus projects as well as soundtrack work; a far cry and a lot more rewarding than my first exposure to him in my teens as a remixer of the likes of Nine Inch Nails. However, no matter what sideline work he does, when he comes back to Foetus it is a guarantee that the music will be brilliant. His role as a composer has fed progressively more into Foetus (fitting considering the seeds of Manorexia were sown and germinated in earlier Foetus albums) and *Hide* has a much wider scope than previously encountered.

[Ectopic Ents](#)

Track

A massive choir (which in true Foetus style is actually one opera singer, Abby Fischer, layered over herself) on "Cosmetics" opens the album sounding like Ennio Morricone conjuring up one last soundtrack for the end of time. This choral element runs through the album at a subliminal level; faint voice-like sounds permeate "Here Comes the Rain" as Thirlwell whistles and croons over the sumptuous music. On this piece and indeed across most of *Hide*, there is a strong soundtrack vibe; *film*

noir

and the aforementioned Morricone being spliced together with Thirlwell's own vision. This is nothing new to Thirlwell but on

Hide

he takes this formula further and gets more out of these different strands than on even his last album

Love

. He brings new influences to bear on "Oilfields" where the ghost of Giuseppe Verdi and the still-living soul of Arvo Pärt meet.

Yet it would be fallacious to view Foetus as a tribute to various composers as Thirlwell's own

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stamp is planted deeply into every song here. Despite so many facets of "The Ballad of Sisyphus" adding up to Morricone worship, it is pure Foetus. The structure, the mood and, above all, the lyrics take the music away from pastiche and plant it firmly in Thirlwell's universe. Only here could Sisyphus be more of a Wild West outlaw folk hero than a cautionary tale from Greek mythology. By the end of *Hide*, Thirlwell pushes the music outward and matches the visceral intensity of his first albums with the epic "You're Trying to Break Me" which successfully marries all of Foetus' constituent parts into one glorious black whole.

In an interview [here on Brainwashed](#), Thirlwell explained that he initially started work on *Hide* during the bad old days of George Bush's presidency and the feeling of being on the brink of disaster haunts his lyrics: "Stay in your homes... ashes over everything." The music pulses with an urgency that matches the paranoia of Thirlwell's lyrics and the album's title becomes an imperative command; go underground to escape the inevitable doom. Thirlwell's black humor puts a sting into the album and in this light it is easy to take the album's title as an order for those in control as opposed to the little people caught up in the aftermath.

samples:

- [Cosmetics](#)
- [Oilfields](#)
- [O Putrid Sun \(For Yuko\)](#)