

**PLANET  
OF SOUND**

By Kernan Andrews

**Arctic Monkeys - *At The Apollo* DVD**

(Domino/Warp Films)

ALEX TURNER looks like the kind of fella who should get a clip around the ear before being told "Get back and do your homework, you've school tomorrow."

I've never bought into the hype surrounding the Arctic Monkeys - Libertines/Franz

Ferdinand wannabes, who, despite some decent lyrics, aren't a patch on either of those bands. Nonetheless, given the involvement of the distinguished Warp label for this concert film, I was hoping this DVD would change my mind.

The opening credits are a deliberate homage to 1960s British cinema. A nice touch, but it goes downhill after that. The Monkeys' music is exposed as desperately limited. The same punk-funk/Brit-beat riffs recycled over and over again, making each song indistinguishable from the next.

It would be forgivable if Turner and Co put a bit of soul or spirit into their performance, but throughout the 70+ minutes they remain as stiff as pokers on stage, unwilling or unable to let themselves go.

Surprisingly for Warp, the film is unimaginatively shot. The audience are ignored, to the point of being invisible (and inaudible, were their cheers deliberately mixed low for this?). It makes *At The Apollo* feel like a giant 'performance video' made on a soundstage, not a show in front of screaming fans in Manchester.

Even when one fan is hauled out by bouncers, it is only caught on camera by pure accident. It's blink and you'll miss it stuff, which sums it all up - a boring in-concert film and a wasted opportunity.

**Robert Wyatt - *Rock Bottom* (Domino)**

"ONE OF the greatest men alive" is how John Peel described English prog-rock/jazz singer and composer Robert Wyatt.

Domino have re-released all Wyatt's albums and EPs and for many, his masterpiece is 1974's *Rock Bottom*. Just as he was about to begin recording the album, Wyatt fell from a fourth floor window, broke his spine, and became confined to a wheelchair.

Despite this terrible accident, Wyatt used the time to re-imagine his music and develop it in new ways. The result is one of prog's most acclaimed works.

Opener 'Sea Song' is the album's most famous track. Built around a mournful, haunting melody, it is a powerful, imaginative rumination on intimacy, distance, and sexual longing. *Rock Bottom* was produced by Pink Floyd's Nick Mason and second track, the jazzy, impressionistic 'A Last Straw' would not sound out of place on *A Saucerfull Of Secrets*.

This segues into 'Little Red Riding Hood Hit The Road'. Opening with dizzying trumpets and Debussy like piano, it builds to a climax that is just a simple chord change, but is so dramatic it is the highpoint of both song and album. Wyatt's fragmentary lyrics, charting an abusive relationship, create an unsettling effect.

*Rock Bottom's* exalted reputation rests on these three songs. The remaining three are awful, and I doubt even the album's fiercest admirers listen to them often.

'Alifib/Alife' is Wyatt and wife Alfreda trading nonsense rhymes and puns that are so private and whimsical as to be excruciatingly embarrassing and horribly self indulgent. Ivory Cutler's musings on 'Little Red Robin Hood Hit The Road' are fun, but too silly and too late to repair the damage. It's just as well side one is so good...

**No bling - just hip hop brilliance from Dälek**

BY KERNAN ANDREWS

LET'S BE honest, hip hop has gone stale these last couple of years...very stale. With the return of indie guitar bands, hip hop has retreated to the margins in a mind numbing orgy of bling and clichéd beats.

Where is the innovation, daring, audacity, and controversy that made hip hop so exciting for so long? An act which still embodies and pursues those qualities is New Jersey's Dälek, who plays *Strange Brew* in the Róisín Dubh on Thursday November 27 at 9pm.

Dälek is an MC and producer and he is backed by producer and DJ Oktopus. Together they have been flying the flag for hip hop by creating challenging and imaginative

rap music.

Dälek began MCing and DJing in the late 1980s and hooked up with Oktopus in the mid 1990s. They undermine every idiom of mainstream rap, choosing instead to blend hypnotic rhymes with a corrosively atmospheric, electronica-inflected hard rock sensibility - combined with a lyrical intelligence and social realism.

Their music has earned huge critical acclaim. "Instead of creating a sense of intimidation through overpowering samples and sheer brute force, they realise it through a cinematic eeriness and minimalist disquiet," said *Dusted*. Spin.com described their music as "ambient noise recalling that of Mogwai is hip-hopified a la Public Enemy."

The pair remained an underground phenomenon until their fourth album *Absence* (2005) brought them to national press attention. Further critical acclaim and public recognition was gained by 2007's *Abandoned Language*.

"We've been making wall of noise records for a long time and I think with *Absence* we realised that was as far as we wanted to go with that sound," said Dälek. "The new one is about composition and notes we are playing...but the more you listen to it the more f\*\*\*\*\*d up you realise it is."

Sounds too good to miss.

Tickets are available from the Róisín Dubh and Zhivago. See also [www.myspace.com/dalek](http://www.myspace.com/dalek)

**Cuba\* launches new night with Does It Offend You Yeah? DJ set**

BY KERNAN ANDREWS

BRITISH PUNK, funk, indie, and electro band Does It Offend You, Yeah? will launch The Alternative Disco, the new clubnight at Cuba\*, Eyre Square, this Saturday at 11pm.

The new night will be held on Saturdays and will feature a mash up of indie and electro from resident DJs from Button Factory's Transmission and the Trashed DJs from Andrews Lane Theatre.



Does It Offend You, Yeah? from Reading are James Rushent (vocals, bass), Dan Coop (synths), Rob Bloomfield (drums), and Morgan Quaintance (live guitar and synth). They describe their sound as "an arcade machine that has been thrown into a lake".

The group are known for their raucous live shows, which often end in stage diving and broken instruments. They have been compared to Daft Punk and Muse, and this year they completed a sold-out US tour with

their album *You Have No Idea What You're Getting Yourself Into*.

Upcoming events include Utah Saints DJ set on December 6 and The Whip on December 20.

Admission is €10 with free entry for Cuba\* members before midnight. For more information contact 091 - 565991 or email [info@cuba.ie](mailto:info@cuba.ie).

**Norman J @ Gigantic**

Norman J (pictured), one of the world's most respected and influential DJs - who in 2002 was included on the British Queen's Diamond Jubilee Birthday Honours List with the recommendation that he be appointed an MBE for "DJing and services to music" - will be spinning the decks at Gigantic in De Burgo's this Saturday. Admission is €15. Tickets are on sale in advance from De Burgo's on 091 - 562188.

**Erik Mongrain @ Róisín Dubh**

"Erik Mongrain is a self-taught French-Canadian guitar player that absolutely shreds. It's like Van Halen meets James Taylor; furious but soothing," said the *Boston Herald* about the Quebecois guitarist (pictured) who plays the Róisín Dubh this Sunday at 9pm. Tickets are available from the Róisín Dubh and Zhivago. Pic:- Gabriel Desbiens.