

Pop: Shout, shout, let it all out

[Angela Lewis](#)

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Negativism, irony, and scepticism are off the agenda for Asian Dub Foundation, whose positive mix of riffs, beats and basslines aims to appeal to indie and dance crowds alike

It's nine o'clock on a weekday night and Asian Dub Foundation are at a port in Belfast, waiting to get the ferry to Scotland. The first night of their tour with Stereophonics and the Warm Jets in Dublin the night before kicked off well because, although ADF are East End born and bred, Dublin crowds had a good appetite for their techno/punk/jungle soundclash. "We are such a different band from the others, we like to

get people shouting and dancing instead of just nodding their heads," proclaims guitarist Chandresonis. "To be quite honest, I think a lot of people find it refreshing. We do like to perform, go mad onstage. If it's an indie crowd, we've got the band thing, but with new sounds: the jungle, the dub, what have you. But the dance crowd get into the basslines and drums, but it's live."

Asian Dub Foundation were formed in 1994 by Master D, dubbed "a drum 'n' bass Rotten", who teamed up with Chandrasonis, Dr Das on bass, Pandit G on decks and Sun-J (technology and keyboards). While they have benefited from increasing attention on Asian/global techno sounds, with a 1997 single "Nexalite" picking up plentiful acclaim, they are still brimming over with idealism, using abrasive rock-techno to spread consciousness. A highlight of last year was putting on workshops with the gypsy community in Budapest, which involved showing them simple sample technology and a live show.

But most important to them has been the reaction to their single, "Free Satpal Ram", a protest song about a court case dating back to 1986. After the best part of 12 years, Satpal Ram is still serving life in jail for fatally wounding one of six racist attackers who rounded on him in a Birmingham restaurant. For ADF, negativity, scepticism and irony are off the agenda. "Music can be about connecting with real things, helping to educate, a positive vibe, empowering people instead of encouraging people to worship the artist." What are the most common misconceptions people have about Asian youth? "People don't expect ADF to sound like we do," he laughs. "Now it's changing. We want to mash their heads about what we are supposed to be - passive, hippy, Bhangra. We want to be allowed to be taken seriously, instead of seen as some faceless mass that people can't relate to." And live? "Expect extreme distortion, guitars, breakbeats, conscious chat at a million miles per hour, and a conscious effort to get Satpal Ram out of jail." Nuff said.

Asian Dub Foundation (with Stereophonics, Warm Jets and The Audience) The Astoria, W1 (0171-434 0403) 25 Jan

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