

Animat play it straight with soundtrack



Animat play at the Showroom



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By Ian Soutar

SHEFFIELD-based electronic duo Animat have developed a new soundtrack to David Lynch's *The Straight Story* which they will perform live at the Showroom Cinema on Thursday 12 June 6.30pm.

Using a mixture of their own original brand of dubby downtempo sounds and an eclectic selection of tracks from their DJ archive, Animat (alias Michael Harding and Mark Daly) will provide a unique live reworking of this most unusual of road movies.

The Oscar and Golden Globe-nominated *The Straight Story* tells the tale of one man and his lawnmower and their epic journey across America's mid-west.

David Lynch gave his express approval to the screenings and to remixing the soundtrack – even though the director had a hand in creating the original score himself. Animat are offering a percentage of any profits from the performances to the David Lynch Foundation – www.davidlynchfoundation.org

Unlike most other live rescues, Animat use modern cult classics and not old silent films and in addition retain the original dialogue. The result is a mixture of DJ music remixed and remanipulated, some original music and some familiar tunes, played live in real time with the film.

"We chose *Straight Story* because we felt it has great emotional resonance," explains Harding. "It goes on a journey, it's a chilled-out road movie which subverts your anticipation of road movies like *Easy Rider* because it's an old bloke going at five miles an hour. It's quite uplifting and it's a very untypical David Lynch film."

And they really liked it. "If you are going to live in a film you have to have an emotional connection. Before you start you wonder who we will feel about it after seeing it 50 or 60 times and we are still seeing new things in it."

"Animat came out of the Sundaze chill-out session which we were part of as DJs but were increasingly bringing our own music into it and wanted to develop that side of things," says Harding.

The film soundtrack idea was seen as introducing a visual element, since "electronic music tends to be not that exciting for people to watch".

Animat's first film project was French animated cult film Belleville Rendezvous which they toured successfully to arthouse cinemas last year.

"We did wonder if it would work in cinemas," says Harding, "with people sitting in seats with their arms folded saying, 'impress me' but it did. The response has been amazing."

The Straight Story event at the Showroom comes halfway through their second tour.

They have already started on another film, obscure avant garde German title Tuvalu.

In the meantime Animat will release their first full-length album, Earplay, on Big Chill Recordings in July.

Page 1 of 1

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