

BEASTIE BOYS

Ill Communication

CAPITOL CDP-28599 • 1994, 59:56

Performance ★ ★ ★ ★
Sound Quality ★ ★ ★

Anyone who's heard the last two Beastie Boys albums will be breaking down the doors to hear its newest. Loud, vulgar, nasal, stupid but never dumb, the Beastie Boys is simply one of the best groups around. If that sounds strange to you, it's probably because you tuned the band out after *Licensed to Ill*, its best-selling

mix of heavy-metal rap.

Licensed to Ill was a decent album, but it only hinted at the quantum leap forward the Beasties would take with *Paul's Boutique*, a brilliant collage of samples and sounds, and *Check Your Head*, a furious mix of punk and '70s funk. Both albums only sound better and better with the passage of time and the same surely will be true of the new *Ill Communication*.

From the infectious opening track, "Sure Shot," to the furious "Tough Guy" and the endless other highlights, the Beasties and co-producer Mario Caldato Jr. create a dense, harsh sound that layers samples, raps, and music into a compulsively listenable sonic groove. It also contains the mellow, dead-on funk of "Transitions" and enough hilarious and inventive ideas to keep the competition busy for months.

While other rap groups dip into jazz solos or sing about positivity, the Beastie Boys are slumped down in the corner of the room, making rude noises and blowing everyone else away.

—Michael Giltz