

'JAM' FROM PAGE 20  
Garbage. But when they get into this other shit, it's not like other heavy metal bands, it's really complicated. I love that shit."

## Beasts of Burden

Asking the Beastie Boys to talk is like inviting Linda Lovelace to your pyjama party. I steered the conversation off their favourite subjects and asked them about their early days.

"The first record we made was when we were a punk band. It was called 'Pollywog Stew,' says Mike D. Then 'Cookie Puss,' when we were with Important Records. We weren't actually signed to Important, in fact we're actually suing them now for a few thousand dollars, because they're really not very good people."

"We're going to sue their balls off," prompts MCA.

"I think that's the best way to put it," agrees Mike D. "I mean we've already done it with British Airways, I think Important's next up, they're really gonna get their balls sued right off ..."

The rumours that are being spread around Auckland are not in the

slightest bit true. If the Beastie Boys do in fact make it to New Zealand for their much-vaunted live tour, neither Customs nor the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries will let them in the door. However, a few letters addressed to key people in the record industry might bring the first Beastie Boys album to the bargain bins of your local record shoppe ...

## Blank Label Business

The story behind 'Walk This Way' starts with Jammaster Jay, Run DMC's deejay. Like any DJ, Jay spends a lot of time hunting out fresh beats or riffs to use in his mixes, sounds that will set him apart from the other DJ's. It's such a competitive business that most DJs will soak the labels off their records so that the others won't find out what they're playing.

Very often the sources of their beats were among the worst record stores in the city. The record labels would be wrong. A DJ wouldn't much care what the song was called or who sang it, since he tore the label off it the moment he got it home

anyway. Run DMC knew 'Walk This Way' as 'Toys in the Attic.'

They told Rick Rubin they wanted to use 'Toys in the

Krushgroove, the film, was released last year and purported to tell the story of Def Jam and in particular the stories of Russell Simmons



Jam Master Jay

Attic' and Rick knew the song proper. He suggested they cover the song in its entirety, and then thought of ringing Aerosmith in California and asking them if they wanted to play on it. Aerosmithers Steve Tyler and Joe Perry agreed to give it a try. The result was a marriage that pleased both metallers and B-Boys.

and Rick Rubin. The B-Boys thought it was a scam and Simmons and Rubin were more than unhappy with the fiction. Hollywood had tried to sanitise the rap story. "Just as you can't sanitise *The Godfather* you can't sanitise rap," says Mr Bill. "*Krushgroove* came out as a slightly heavier version of *Beat Street*."

PHOTO BY DANIEL BARNES

Simmons and Rubin resolved that the next one would be a success, and that they'd have a tight rein on artistic control. The first such film is *Tougher Than Leather*, in production even as we speak. Another movie being planned is for the Beastie Boys. It's tentatively titled *The Beastie Boys: Scared Shitless*.

## Nightclubbing

"Check out the Latin Quarter," Bill Adler had said, "it's Tuesday so it'll be rapper's night." It was 10 o'clock and the camera and T-shirt shops were still doing business. I walked up Times Square and down the other side. Finally I asked a cop how to find the Latin Quarter. "Walk up to 47th Street and Broadway and turn right," he said. I moved over to the crossing. A second later he tapped my back. "You've not been there before? I wouldn't go there, the place is full of smart arses."

I found it, and loosening my tie, walked up to the entrance. A line of black kids watched me. At the cashier sat a mother of a bouncer. He looked at me in surprise. "It's disco," he ventured.

That's why I'm here, I told him. Inside the door another bouncer brushed past me. He spoke to himself and looked straight ahead as he did so. "Don't flash your money around and just stay cool," he warned, "I'll be watching if you need me." I went straight to the bar.

They were all black kids from about 13 to 18. It was a large room with a sunken dancefloor that ringed a long catwalk. A stage was behind it, higher up. When the guys danced, they danced together in a huddle, sinister like vultures, using their shoulders as battling wings. A little black girl, hair dyed blonde, with white pants and a flowing lace blouse, danced deliberate waves, lifting her knees high and picking out spots to stretch her pointed toe to.

The music was heavy and laden with bass and tom toms; they played the records of Fresh Gordon, Eric B and Cutmaster DC. Paradise, the DJ and MC, came on stage to announce the first rappers. They were a duo, in three-piece suits and Ivy league glasses, and when they kicked the place came alive. A blast that hit, a great wave, like you can only get from a live performance. Not a record, this had force and frantic pace, your blood rose and you went drunk with the beat. I was smiling, madly when, with one shout, the house moved as it took up this sensation.

That's what they mean by the phrase "rockin' the mike," there's a hell of a lot of power in the men who hold it, "Come on, come on," the rappers shouted. You witnessed victory in the vulture dance and the pride of the boroughs, "We're from Brooklyn!"

Three girls followed: one enormous, one weighty, and one skinny. The last was called "Slim." The boys moved up and hooted at them, the girls leaned back and grinned. Then a lone girl rapper, who halted her rap, calling the DJ to stop, and confronted the hecklers. She tore into them, disrespecting their manhoods, *size* and *performance*. "Okay," she said, "give me a beat, just clap it, and I'll do my rap to that." The boys started a beat. And she rapped.

A rapper from Philly, a burly guy with his own DJ came onstage. The DJ did the talking for him, switching like a ping-pong player from turntable to turntable, his assistant handing records to him as his hands began and ended a dozen beats and cuts. I looked to the club DJs, not believing he was doing all this himself. They weren't doing a thing.

"You'd better go," the bouncer said to me. "We'll be closing in a minute and you shouldn't leave with the crowd." I walked home through a much quieter square.

## On the Run

I left New York. I rang Def Jam a week after I got back. The phones were still ringing madly, they were still making cold money by the wheelbarrow-full, the sun was still shining strong. The Beastie boys were out doing a photo shoot. LL was still living at his grandmother's.

"Are we going to see Run DMC promoting Pepsi-Cola?" I asked Simmons once, "Run DMC Adidas or Run DMC Lee Jeans?"

"Run DMC Adidas, that's it," he replied. "They love Adidas, so they can do it. They don't care about money now, they really don't." He looked me firmly in the eye. "Sounds dumb, right? Sounds fake to say that. It's bullshit, right? If Pepsi offered us three million right now, we'd love them, too." ●



# Our Leading Pink Sparkling



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