

# SCHOOL'D BY FUNKMODE

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## **EMCEES IN THE ROCK AND ROLL HALL OF FAME - PART 2 - BEASTIE BOYS**

As of the writing of this lesson, only a small handful of Hip Hop artists have been voted into the prestigious Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. In this series of lessons, we will learn more about each of these legendary artists.

As mentioned in the previous lesson, it may seem odd that there would be any rappers in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. However knowledgeable music fans know that Hip Hop and Rock developed and evolved side by side throughout the late 1970s and early 80s. During this time, as Hip Hop started to establish itself as a musical genre, so too did the style of "Punk" Rock. Two New York Punk Rock groups, "The Young Aborigines" and "The Young and the Useless" combined members to eventually form a Hip Hop group. This group is now famously known as the "Beastie Boys", the focus of this week's lesson and 2012 entrants into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

The Beastie Boys started in 1981 as a four person Hardcore Punk group, three of whom had previously been members of The Young Aborigines. The four initial members were Michael Diamond, Adam Yauch, Kate Schellenbach, and John Berry. Together, they recorded an album entitled "Polly Wog Stew" which was a perfect example of the Punk sound going through NYC. The Beastie Boys came to be close with the other Punk group mentioned above, The Young and the Useless, while working on a documentary project. It was in this group that they would find Adam Horowitz, who would become the new fourth member of the group after John Berry left. With this new foursome, the Beastie Boys recorded a single called "Cooky Puss". This song has some heavy bass beats and scratching under samples of a prank call the Beastie Boys made to a Carvel Ice Cream store asking for their famous "Cookie Puss" ice cream cake. The track was described by drummer Kate Schellenbach as being just barely Hip Hop. However, it became very popular in the New York underground club scene and therefore inspired the Beastie Boys to try more Rap in their style.

DJ Double R was added to the group as the Beastie Boys decided that they needed a DJ for their live performances to be taken seriously in Hip Hop. This one move might have been the luckiest and most pivotal decisions in the history of the group. DJ Double R was a college student by the name of Rick Rubin who would join with Russell Simmons to form Def Jam Recordings, probably the most important record label in the history of Hip Hop music. Rick wanted the Beastie Boys to sign to his new label. Around the time of joining with Rubin, the men of the Beastie Boys had made the decision to go from a Punk group to entirely Rap. They parted ways with their drummer Kate and took on Hip Hop stage names. Adam Yauch became MCA. Michael Diamond became Mike D and Adam Horowitz became King Ad-Rock (later just Ad-Rock). The first song they released, titled "Rock Hard", under Def Jam was actually the label's first catalogued release. Their popularity started to grow and Rubin's connections were a big part of their expanding notoriety. They started performing on tour with very successful artists like Madonna, Run-DMC and LL Cool J. This success set them up to release more singles, one of which ("Hold it Now/Hit It") made the Billboard charts. They even performed a song in the classic Hip Hop movie "Krush Groove" which was a semi-fictional movie based on the early life of Russell Simmons. All of these accomplishments allowed the Beastie Boys to release their first full album under Def Jam, titled "License to Ill" in 1986. This album is now one of the most important recordings in the history of Hip Hop. It became the first Rap album to reach number one on the Billboard charts and was the best selling Rap album of the 1980s. It eventually sold nearly ten million copies, making it one of the best selling Rap albums of all time.

The Beastie Boys would go on to record seven albums that reached Platinum status or higher. Their Billboard sales numbers say that they are the best selling Hip Hop group ever. They, possibly even more than Run-DMC, are pioneers of the Rap Rock genre. It was this unique sound that made the Beastie Boys so popular. They did not try to fit into a mold or do what everyone else was doing. Every album they released showcased different talents and sounds. Their second album release, 1989's "Paul's Boutique" has been recognized by many as one of the most creative Hip Hop albums in history. In 2007, they released a completely instrumental album called "The Mix-Up", which won them a Grammy award in 2008.

Probably the most notable accomplishment in the Beastie Boys history has been their ability to stay successful and relevant for such a long time. As of this writing, it has been over three decades since the Beastie Boys first

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came together. Yet, they released an album, "Hot Sauce Committee" in 2009 and it still sold hundreds of thousands of copies and again made the Billboard charts. To be around this long in any musical genre, or any art for that matter, and still be appreciated, is incredible. Not only does it show the power of Hip Hop to inspire, motivate and entertain, but it shows the power of this talented trio to deliver the best of what Hip Hop culture has to offer to the world. It is without a doubt that the Beastie Boys deserve to be included among the incredibly talented artists in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

## HIP HOP WORDS OF THE WEEK

**Jump-off:** For something big to happen, good or bad, especially suddenly.

EX: "As soon as she got into that Broadway show, her career just jumped off!"

**Scraper:** A car that is lowered so much that the wheel wells scrape the tires.

EX: "I'm ridin in my scraper and these speed bumps are turning my tires to vapors."

**True dat (that):** To agree with something as being true. (similar to "Word")

EX: "That is THE coolest bike I've ever seen!" "True dat! You ain't lyin!"

**BONUS:** Create a sentence using all words of the week

## EXTRA LEARNING

- 1) Who gave the introduction speech for the Beastie Boys when they were inducted into the Hall of Fame?
- 2) What popular band did Kate Schellenbach go on to join as a drummer for nearly a decade?
- 3) Name an album by the Beastie Boys not mentioned in this lesson.