

# The Doctor is In

studio beats by dr dre \$499

**H**e loves his bass, dr dre, judging from these over-the-ear **'studio's, part of the 'beats' collection from Monster**. They come bearing not only his signature on the extraordinarily upmarket packaging, but also a supposedly personally-penned paean to the power of music: "Most headphones can't handle the bass, the detail, the dynamics," he says.

*"With Beats, people are going to hear what the artists hear and listen to music the way they should: the way I do."*

Such performance has the Doctor demanded that internal power is required to drive the **extra-large drivers and active noise-cancelling**, so you face the running costs of two AAA batteries in the left ear-shell (the power switch is on the right). The return on your battery investment is that you never run short of level — you can take them mighty loud. "The Safety of Your Ears is in Your Hands" warns the quick-start guide.

We saw in *Geare #59* the Lady GaGa heartbeats, signed off both by the GaGa one and by the Doctor. Those proved to have decent sound (as you'd hope from Monster of cable fame) but were less impressive than hoped in their rather plasticky construction.

Here the look succeeds far more authentically — genuinely unique, indeed, with a **blood red cable** and two-section plug, while the closed-back headshells and band are indeed again plastic, but more solidly so here, comfortably-padded around ear and cranium, yet still able to fold inwards for relatively compact storage in the supplied hard case.

Both purposeful and practical, then, they perform as advertised. **Bass is enormous** — not only full, but well controlled, slightly overstated but never bloated nor intruding on the midrange. And they make music which demands attention.

Don't presume they're unfriendly to anything outside the Doctor's own oeuvre — our favourite beats moment was with Joan Armatrading's *Show Some Emotion*, which opened with a totally 'owned' bassline that seemed to **physically shudder the ear-cups**, yet doing so without denying access to the acoustic around the left-channel guitar chords that accompany the first vocal lines; magical stuff. We loaded up *The Eminem Show* and the bass thumps were phenomenal — though here we did feel quite a strong need for more openness, the combination of closed-back design and full-on bass bringing us up screaming for air. If used in a relatively-quiet environment, and particularly at moderate levels, we thought many tracks would have benefitted from brighter, more open upper frequencies. On Sheryl Crow's *Run, Baby, Run*, for example, there was certainly no lack of definition to the vocal, but no sparkle either — the effect was to highlight the band, the solidity and power of the rhythm section, at the expense of organ detail and vocal impact.

This balance does, however, suit noisier environments very well. The extra bass rises above bus and plane rumble, while you can whack the volume level skyward without incurring any top-end overload or peakiness.

The noise reduction here seemed to come as much from the closed back design as anything active going on; still, your neighbours will thank you for the isolation in the other direction. The Australian sunshine brings out their red highlighting, and the way your head is vibrating will impress passers-by. The beats are designed to be driven hard. Just don't tell your audiologist.

More info: [www.ehifi.com.au](http://www.ehifi.com.au)