



THEY BANG THE DRUMS

Those earphones you got in the box? Tat. Noise-isolating earbuds sound better and get you closer to the music – and needn't cost a packet, either

Beyerdynamic DTX 50 **£60**

01444 258 258

www.beyerdynamic.com

Made by one of the most revered names in headphones, and sonically, some of the finest performers around. Not up to the standard of the mega-money Shures, but still superb. Bass weight is outstanding, detail retrieval is excellent and the sound is fluent and expressive. Might be worth going for the black versions instead of these me-too white ones. Unless you want your iPod nicked.

Stuff says ★★★★★

Fairly pricey, but very capable – these are an invigorating, exciting listen, with excellent bass.

Sennheiser CX300 **£40** **0800 652 5002**

www.sennheiser.com

We couldn't imagine an earphone test without a pair of Sennheisers, and sure enough, the CX300s live up to the company's reputation. Detailed and dynamic, they tonk most freebie in-ears, and cut out background noise pretty well, too.

Stuff says ★★★★★

Sennheiser is good at these: quality, affordable earphones.

Goldring GX200 **£50** **01279 501 111**

www.armorhe.co.uk

Better known for turntable cartridges, Goldring has turned a deft hand to headphones. The

GX200s are impeccably turned out, feel comfy and perform fairly well – barring a slightly aggressive top end. But the price – more than the Sennheisers, too close to the Beyerdynamics – is a problem.

Stuff says ★★★★★

OK, but not class-leading; either spend a little less, or a little more.

JVC HA-FX77 **£30** **020 8450 3282** | www.jvc.co.uk

You'd be forgiven for wondering if JVC was a little out of its depth here, but despite a lack of pedigree, the HA-FX77s are decent enough. A splashy top end undermines them sonically, but bass weight is solid enough and they're still better all-round than most supplied

'phones. They're also cheap.

Stuff says ★★★★★

A fair sonic upgrade for not much money, but we'd spend more.

Shure SE530 **£330** **0208 808 2222**

www.shure.co.uk/personalaudio

Noise-isolating earphones can be a little 'invasive' for some, but none burrow quite so deeply into your ears as these Shures. You'll either find that hugely effective (because background noise is pretty much eliminated) or deeply unsettling. However, they do sound fabulous: revealing and crisp.

Stuff Says ★★★★★

When your earphones cost more than your iPod, something's wrong