**Rick Rubin/Biography**

“Rick Rubin is the most widely accomplished record producer of the past 20 years.”

*-- Time Magazine*

“…he’s made more of a mark on the last 30 years of music than any other individual.”

*-- NME*

“One of the most influential producers in the history of pop music.”

*-- Interview Magazine*

“The most successful producer in any genre.”

*-- Rolling Stone*

As one of the most widely accomplished record producers of the past 25 years, Rick Rubin is also one of music’s biggest fans, a quality often times lost in the commerce of the record industry. Whether he is working with an artist in his capacity as a producer, or overseeing a record label, Rubin is guided by the principles of *common* *sense*, *be the best you can be*, and *keep it about the music*. If an album has commercial success, that’s a bonus.

Rubin doesn’t read music, does not operate a recording console, and he may spend more time working closely with an artist in pre-production than in the studio. His approach is very specific to the individual artist and not based on a template, consequently his methods of producing a record can be considered unconventional and easily misunderstood. His goal is not to make a target album release date or to focus on insuring a certain number of radio-friendly singles. As he told one writer, “I try to get the artists I work with into the mind-set that they’re not writing music for an album…they’re writing music because they’re writers and for the love of what they do.” Possibly unorthodox, but it’s hard to find fault with someone who has produced critically-acclaimed and multi-Platinum albums in just about every musical genre – rock, country, soul, pop, hip-hop, and metal. His credits include Kayne West, Adele, Eminem, Black Sabbath, Jay-Z, Ed Sheeran , LL Cool J, Kid Rock, Slayer, and the Beastie Boys. His aesthetic range is essentially limitless.

Rubin has been nominated and taken home the Grammy Award for Producer of the Year several times for his work with the Red Hot Chili Peppers, the Dixie Chicks, Neil Diamond, Metallica, Tom Petty, Justin Timberlake, and the late Johnny Cash. He has also been awarded countless other Grammys in categories such as Album of the Year, Record of the Year, Country Album of the Year, Rock Album of the Year, Contemporary Folk Album, and Best Metal Performance.

And, there is no “Rubin sound” - you can’t listen to a handful of records he’s produced and hear a similar “stamp” on them. Rubin considers his job as producer to get the best out of the artist, to make it *the artist’s* record, not leave his own mark on it.

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“I always assumed I’d have a regular job, and music would be my hobby.”

That’s the way Rubin saw his life when he was still just a student at NYU. He had an active music life, having played in punk bands and DJ-ed at various rock clubs. He’d grown up listening to hard rock and punk in Long Beach, Long Island, but also had an abiding interest in hip-hop, particularly the early-‘80s “hardcore” of Run-D.M.C.

While still at NYU, Rubin produced his first single, “It’s Yours,” by T-La Rock and Jazzy Jay, and acting more as a fan than a mogul-in-training. Even when he and Run-D.M.C. manager Russell Simmons got together to create Def Jam Recordings, the idea had less to do with empire building than with being able to record and make available great music.

In 1985, Rubin’s second production, “I Need a Beat” by 16-year old rapper L.L. Cool J, became an unexpected hit. Cut for $700, it sold over 100,000 copies. A half dozen singles later, and Def Jam was hot enough to be offered a distribution deal by Columbia Records.

In addition to L.L. Cool J, Rubin had begun working with a former punk group called the Beastie Boys, producing their first rap single, “Rock Hard,” and DJ-ing for them. Not only did they overcome early incredulity about being a white rap group, the Beastie’s Rubin-produced debut, *Licensed to Ill* became the first rap album to top the *Billboard* charts in 1986, and has since taken the #1 slot on *Rolling Stone’s* 100 Best Debut Album of All Time. That same year, he also produced Run-D.M.C.’s epochal *Raising Hell* – which featured the genre-busting hit “Walk This Way” with Aerosmith’s Steven Tyler and Joe Perry that sparked the legendary band’s resurrection.

Despite his hip-hop success, Rubin was diversifying. He made his first rock album, the Cult’s *Electric*, that transformed the slightly Goth-y British post-punk act (originally the Southern Death Cult) to a hard-rock powerhouse. In 1985, he began a long association with speed metal legends Slayer, producing the genre-defining *Reign in Blood* (he also brought Slayer guitarist Kerry King along for a cameo on *Licensed to Ill*). Then, in 1988, he launched the solo career of former Samhain/Misfits singer Glenn Danzig.

As the ‘80s slipped into the ‘90s, the demand for Rubin’s production skills continued to grow. He helped the Red Hot Chili Peppers move from cult heroes to genuine superstardom with *BloodSexSugarMagik*, the first album to successfully translate the band’s on-stage energy into tuneful pop singles that went on to sell in excess of 13-million copies. But then, that’s what a producer’s supposed to do, in Rubin’s view. “It’s really the job of a documentarian,” he says of the recording process. “We do a lot of work in preparation, before we go into the studio, to really get the songs together. But the studio’s really just about capturing a performance, and that magic moment just depends.

“There’s no telling what’s going to make that happen. Sometimes it happens quickly and instantaneously, and other times we’re playing the same song all day long, over and over and over again until we really think we’ve gone past it and it will never be good – then all of a sudden, it’s great. And sometimes we have to return a week later or whatever, to try to capture it again. There’s no real rule. Well,” he added, “the only rule is that it’s not done until it’s great.”

In June of 1988, Rubin dissolved his partnership with Simmons, moved to Los Angeles and formed his own label, Def American Recordings (which became simply American Recordings in August 1993). Within two years, the label had its first chart-topper, the Black Crowes’ *Shake Your Money Maker*, and further success was to

follow, with a diverse roster that included Sir Mix-a-Lot (responsible for the booty classic “Baby Got Back”), Johnny Cash, System of a Down, Andrew “Dice” Clay, Slayer, Donovan, Jesus and Mary Chain, Danzig, The Jayhawks, Love & Rockets, the Avett Brothers, Frank Black, and Skinny Puppy.

There aren’t many successful music producers who also oversee a record label, but Rubin feels the jobs are two sides of the same creative coin. “I consider my job both at the label and as a producer to be finding bands and making the best music possible, that’s what I’ve done from the beginning.

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For more information on Rick Rubin, log onto [www.herfitzpr.com](http://www.herfitzpr.com) > ARTISTS > RICK RUBIN