



[ET Exclusive: Rich Redmond on Drumming, Networking, & Musical Success](#)

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Drummer, producer and songwriter Rich Redmond's daily life spans beyond playing to sold out crowds every night; he is the epitome of a true entertainment entrepreneur. Redmond is the touring drummer for country artist Jason Aldean, a position Redmond has held since 1999. Redmond has recorded on each of Aldean's seven records (including Aldean's yet-to-be-titled upcoming release slated for later this year), twenty #1 hits and two Grammy-nominated records. Redmond has recorded, toured and/or performed with notable artists including Aldean, Kelly Clarkson, Miranda Lambert, Bryan Adams, Lit, Jewel, Thompson Square, Joe Perry, Trace Adkins, Keith Urban, Bob Seger, Chris Cornell, Florida Georgia Line and Ludacris, among many others. Redmond has appeared on The Grammy Awards show, The Tonight Show with Jay Leno, The Late Show with David Letterman, The Craig Ferguson Show, Jimmy Kimmel Live, The Jimmy Fallon Show, Good Morning America, The Today Show, The Academy of Country Music Awards show and The Country Music Awards show, among others. Rich continues to give back to the drumming community as an instructor and clinician who holds lessons via Skype in addition to orchestrating and hosting performance and marketing clinics, including his C.R.A.S.H. Course For Success™, for aspiring drummers nationwide. Rich is the true definition of a "jack-of-all-trades", continually honing his skills as a marketer, actor, speaker, voiceover artist and author, as well, most recently appearing in the horror film Reawakened as Lieutenant

Paxton in addition to numerous short films with directors based out of Los Angeles, California. “Each day I want to strive for constant improvement,” says Redmond. “My life’s purpose is to entertain, motivate and inspire all the people of the world through my musical gift.” I sat down and spoke to Rich and asked him a few questions about his current time in the studio recording for Jason Aldean, touring, teaching, and entrepreneurial success. Stay tuned for Part II of this interview coming next week!

Entertwine: Rich! Great to sit down and talk with you! You’re a busy guy – in fact, you were just in the studio recording Jason Aldean’s seventh album, correct?

Rich Redmond: Yes. (Usually) Jason cuts fifteen songs for a record. Sometimes we’ll cut seventeen or eighteen songs and we’ll pick the best fifteen. I think we’re eleven songs in, so we’ll probably just do one or two more recording sessions... which in Nashville, means one day...you know? You do a 10am session and a 2pm session, and you do two songs per session, so one song every ninety minutes. Then I’ll do another day where I do percussion overdubs on my tracks, which is fun.

Entertwine: So, how do you prepare yourself to go in to a studio session?

Rich Redmond: We’ll hear the songs ahead of time — we have to program loops and figure out what kind of layering we’re going to do, if we’re going to use Boom on Pro Tools, Stylus RMX, if we were going to use a Native Instrument Maschine, if we are going to combine all of those things, or if it’s going to be organic percussion. We’ve only got that one day to actually execute so any prep with loops and stuff has to come ahead of time!

Sometimes I’ll scribble out a phrase chart of the song, and then I’ll identify the signature beat. A lot of times, the demos of these songs — these are world class songs, they practically play themselves, so it’s not rocket science what I’m going to do. The day of the session, we’ll have a Nashville number chart; I’ll put the key information on top of the number chart, so that way when I’m using the number chart I’m still able to communicate in the same fashion that the band is. When they say, “Hey, on the fourth bar of the pre-chorus on the one chord, let’s do a short stop instead of an...etc....” you can communicate the same way.

Entertwine: With this specific album, are you tracking drums by yourself? Or is it all traditional live room band action going on?

Rich Redmond: Oh yeah, we record everything together. I don’t do any sessions where I’m by myself, I mean that’s like an LA, New York thing just because traffic is so bad and people can’t get together at the same time. That’s the beautiful thing about Nashville; it’s still like Motown, we’re all in the room at the same time. So bass, drums, two electrics, keyboards, acoustic guitar, and steel guitar all in a giant room together. We play with a scratch vocal and then Jason does a vocal day; this is pretty much the way a lot of the big Nashville recording sessions go. When we produce with my production company, New Voice Entertainment, we’ll have the rhythm section start on the floor, just us, and the artist singing a scratch and we’ll really deconstruct things and focus on that. Then, we bring in the icing on the cake, which is keyboards, acoustic guitar any additional electrics and steel guitar after the fact. So there is a different dynamic in doing both of

those things but it still boils down to all of us — some form or fashion of all of us — being in the room at the same time.

Entertwine: I'm sure that improves the feel of everything, too...

Rich Redmond: Yeah, you're interacting, you're making suggestions...it's great! Then there are other types of sessions where I meet the client for the first time when (I) walk in the door. You get a number chart of the songs that day: that's when your intuition, your training and your thousands of hours of experience kick in, because you're on the clock and you've got to make something happen in a short period of time.



Entertwine: Do you have any advice for someone that's going into the studio, whether it's the first time or maybe the 25th time? What would you say are maybe the top two things that person would definitely need to know to be prepared?

Rich Redmond: Show up first before anybody else so you have plenty of time to get drum sounds with the engineer. The engineer is your friend — he probably knows the room better than you, he knows which microphones are going to work in that room...identify that 'give and take' relationship. In Nashville, once you're in the circuit, you start to know who all the engineers are, but if you're new, you need to go in with an open mind and attitude and a giving spirit. Make sure that you've got extra stuff: heads, a choice of snares (and) an extra pedal so you don't bog down the session.

It's always nice to have some kind of a box, like an MPC 2000 or an Alesis drum machine, so you can create loops. Having your gear together and, most importantly, bringing a great attitude and being able to play well with a click track (and loops). Maybe even overdub your own percussion, too! Also, be able to read the Nashville number system and scribble out your own phrase chart in a very short period of time. Be very familiar with, in essence, a history of popular music. In this town, you might have to know your classic rock, Americana, R&B, soul, this current rap-country trend we have going and classic country. Be familiar with a lot of different kinds of styles and feels — the more familiar you are with a lot of different kinds of music and the deeper your bag of tricks, it's going to be harder for people to stump you and you'll be able to get the track faster. The drums are the hot seat: we're expected to get the track before anyone

else and we actually have the most power to shape the feel, the vibe, the attitude, everything about the song.

Entertwine: What does it mean to know you've recorded on seventeen number one hits with Jason?

Rich Redmond: It speaks to what this crazy thing called life (is), and how we create (our) life... you create opportunities for yourself and the more prepared you are, musically, and the better person you are (plays into the) overall package. Do you have great gear? Are you (a) good musician? Do you have an image? Are you easy to work with? Do you get out at night and let people know you exist? This business is out of sight, out of mind.

I admired drummers like Liberty DeVitto (who played with Billy Joel for thirty years), Nigel Olsson (Elton John), Kenny Aronoff (who played with John Mellencamp for fifteen years). These guys had that killer symbiotic relationship with their front man and their band, and they were able to create this body of work. That's what I end up attracting: I'm a highly visible sideman, involved in somewhat of a democratic music-making process (where) our opinions and skill sets are valued. I know some musicians may go their whole life trying to play on a number one song; the fact that we did that is pretty cool.

Entertwine: Do you remember the first time you heard something you played on on the radio and said, "Oh my gosh, I'm playing drums on this and it's on the radio"?

Rich Redmond: Yeah, it's really special. The first time I heard myself on the radio was before Jason. Our rhythm section, Kurt Allison and Tully Kennedy, who I've been playing with since 1997, had a band called Rushlow with Tim Rushlow from Little Texas, and we put two singles out. The first song, a mid-tempo sappy adult contemporary kind of song, was called "I Can't Be Your Friend Anymore". We heard ourselves on the radio and we — I mean, I, cried. When all your hard work comes to fruition and that moment where everything connects it's like, "Oh my God, guys, we did this! Holy Cow!" We weren't spring chickens, we were already in our early thirties still grinding away, and I was working at making a name for myself. The business is a marathon, not a sprint. They call it a "five-year town" and maybe it's going to get even more competitive now. Maybe it'll be the seven-year town where it takes seven years for you to play enough gigs and meet enough people and shake enough hands and create and cultivate enough of a reputation to where you can be in the club where you're playing drums every single day and actually saying no to work.



Entertwine: What do your touring plans for 2016 look like so far?

Rich Redmond: We always go back (on the road) either the second week of January, the end of January or the first week of February. It's usually a two-year cycle. In January, the rhythm section rehearses, we tighten up all of our parts (and) maybe add some new arrangements to the hits. A day or two before the first show of the year (is) where everything comes together. Everybody is still (finding) their footing on nights one, two and three, and then you're off to the races. The way we tour and (because of) where Nashville is located, we're in and out of the city all year. (They're) weekend-based tours. A lot of indie rock bands play on Sunday, Monday and Tuesday nights, but country people want to go out Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights.

Entertwine: A lot of artists are touring differently now, I mean it used to be one day after the other, and now I've most artists big and small are doing weekend shows, or like three or four days in a row in chunks...

Rich Redmond: That's what we do, we do chunks.

Entertwine: I'm sure you find that to be much easier, right? When you come home from a three to four day run, do you have time to decompress? How do you transition from walking on stage and playing to 30,000 people to going home?

Rich Redmond: (There's) no transition. I'm crazy. I'll get off the bus and go play a jazz brunch or go (to) a rehearsal or (book) a Sunday night session. Monday night you're either writing songs or playing on a record or producing something. We love what we do so much, so it doesn't feel like work. This amazing community that we call Nashville...everybody lifts each other up and supports each other. (Last night I went) to see some guys play at The Sutler...and there's twenty drummers in the bar and we're all talking about felts and springs and the new direct drive pedal...it's just awesome.

Entertwine: You've been playing in front of large crowds for a long time now. Do you ever really get nervous anymore before shows?

Rich Redmond: Maybe at the beginning of the year when I know that I've got to hit all of my marks and we have to make sure that all the transitions are perfect, because it's fresh. A lot of bands will rehearse, in the pop world, for a month, just the band, and then they (work) another month with the dancers, etc. It's a huge process. It's not necessarily rocket science for us; we've had the same rhythm section for ten years with Aldean and before that we were in the trenches (for) five years doing demos and showcases and van gigs trying to get him to the attention of the public. That's a fifteen-year history there; it's like wearing an old pair of shoes, the music usually takes care of itself pretty quickly. The only time I would (be) nervous (is if I was) playing a drum festival sandwiched between Thomas Lang and Dave Elitch. Usually, the people that are playing venues of that size...they earned the right to be there...it just doesn't happen overnight.

Entertwine: Do you find there's much of a difference between playing arena shows versus awards shows? Is it different thinking, "Oh my gosh, this is going to be recorded live on TV", versus playing a tour date?

Rich Redmond: I treat every gig like it's the last time I'm ever going to play. If I don't play a certain way, I would die right there on the throne. The drummer has a massive responsibility to bring the energy. What makes it even more exciting when you're (playing an awards) show is you know it's being viewed by sixty million people around the world and it's going to be archived forever. Every show, even if you're just playing at coffee houses, it's possibly being documented and it (may) end up on YouTube, so you're always (in) a recording session. I don't think there's a difference between being a recording drummer and a live drummer. (While) you might have to alter your touch or make different selections for the environment that you're in, it still (is) all about playing from the heart and making it about everybody (playing in the band). I can play visually because I loved guys like Gene Krupa, Buddy Rich and Carmine Appice...anything visually that I do is safe (and doesn't) detract from the actual music or the feel. When you play live TV and you're looking out and you're like, "Oh wow, there's Taylor Swift, there's Reba McEntyre, there's my favorite actress from The Big Bang Theory...and I go, alright here we go! Catch Part II of the Rich Redmond interview next week, right here on entertwine.net!

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