

With over 20 years of experience as a musician, Rich Antonelli began taking drum lessons when he was 12 years old. He started tinkering around on piano when he was 17 and by the time he was 18, he lost interest in drums and keys because he heard Eddie Van Halen's innovative guitar riffs. After passionately practicing on an inexpensive guitar he spray painted blue in the style of Van Halen's signature guitar, Frankenstein, Antonelli figured out how to play Alone Again by Dokken and quickly established himself as a self-taught musician.

Other guitarists from the 1980s such as Richie Sambora of Bon Jovi, Nuno Bettencourt of Extreme, Steve Brown of Trixter, and Steve Vai, who toured with David Lee Roth and as a solo artist, heavily influenced Antonelli. Taking these various styles under his belt, Antonelli started playing in local rock bands with friends until he eventually formed \$kyhigh, a four-piece band that wrote and performed original music.

Through \$kyhigh, he opened for bands like Warrant, Slaughter, Cinderella, Quiet Riot, and Sebastian Bach. The band released a successful debut album, Tales From The Crib, which sold close to 5,000 copies internationally through their own label and also through Perris Records.

While he was happy to be playing original material with a great group of musicians, Antonelli got to a point where he realized he preferred being on stage performing more than being in the studio recording music. It wasn't long before he parted ways with \$kyhigh and started gigging with other bands, including tribute acts.

For the last eight years, Antonelli has been playing lead guitar for Bon Jersey, the Ultimate Bon Jovi Tribute Band, formerly known as Jovi. Bon Jersey tours throughout the northeast and has a large, faithful following in the Northern Massachusetts area. They have performed at notable venues like the Hard Rock Café in Boston, BB King Blues Club and the Canal Room in New York City, casinos such as Mohegan Sun and Twin River as well as larger music festivals. Antonelli has a huge amount of respect for Bon Jovi and thinks of the band as "a hit machine". He believes their talent is undeniable, whether you like them or not.

Not only does Bon Jovi guitarist, Richie Sambora, inspire Antonelli with his axe slinging skills, Antonelli admires Sambora as a vocalist and works hard at mastering Sambora's vocal parts. As with most tribute bands, the members of Bon Jersey dress in character for shows and Antonelli is flattered that he has been mistaken for Sambora both on and off the stage.

In 2013, Antonelli decided to record a solo guitar instrumental album. "Voiceless", as it is titled, was inspired by his 11 year old daughter's fight with Crohn's disease, an inflammatory bowel disease (IBD). All net proceeds from the sales of "Voiceless" are being donated to the pediatric GI department at Hasbro Children's Hospital in Providence, RI USA. Rich played all guitars, bass and keyboards on the album while enlisting a friend, Chris Longo, to play drums on the CD.

No matter which band he is writing or performing with, Antonelli thoroughly enjoys playing music for people. He thinks the best part about being a musician is hearing all the positive feedback from fans.

In his spare time, he likes playing volleyball and enjoys watching sporting events. Antonelli is a fan of New England-based teams and is educated in web-design. He is an animal lover and a self-proclaimed computer geek.