

## San Antonio



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## Q&A: The Iron Maidens to show Texas that beauty and The Beast can rock together

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The tribute bands flooding the heavy metal scene these days face the same dilemma: Do the original band justice, or get off the stage. Now take five females paying homage to an all-male band that debuted in 1980 and is a global phenomenon that sold out the [AT&T Center](#) two months ago, and you have a double whammy: women who need to look good while playing the part well enough to be taken seriously by fans and those they are honoring.



From left: Heather (guitars), Linda (drums), Kirsten (vocals), Wanda (bass) and Courtney (guitars).

Photo: COURTESY ROBERT JOHN PHOTOGRAPHY & SCOTT UCHIDA

Considering they've played shows with [KISS](#), [Danzig](#), [Motorhead](#) and even [Snoop Dogg](#), [Cypress Hill](#), and [Bachman Turner Overdrive](#), [The Iron Maidens](#), who formed in 2001, aren't your average Eddie-come-lately band. Of course, it doesn't hurt that they're easy on the eyes, too.

San Antonians can watch their live-in-Japan 2010 performance of "The Wickerman" below, which will be included on a DVD to be released Wednesday. Or they can judge for themselves when The Iron Maidens headline the 20-band, three-stage Extreme Metalfest on Sunday, Aug. 29, at [Backstage Live](#). If you can't wait till then, The Iron Maidens' five-city Be Quick Or Be Dead Texas '10 tour will stop at [Republic Live](#) on 5th St. in Austin this Thursday. They are scheduled to go on between 10-11 p.m. at both shows.

The band is made up of singer Kirsten Rosenberg (a.k.a. Bruce Chickinson), who played her first gig with the group in April 2009; original drummer Linda McDonald (Nikki McBurrain); Wanda Ortiz (Steph Harris) on bass and guitarist Courtney Cox (Adriana Smith). Unlike Iron Maiden, The Iron Maidens have two

guitarists instead of three (sorry Janick Gers). But Heather Baker (Dee Murray) is currently a fill-in, and the band is looking for a permanent replacement.

Interested, ladies?

On Friday the 13th, Kirsten and Linda -- who is also a co-founder of [Phantom Blue](#) -- phoned me to talk about living their dream, being sued by the band's original singer, their favorite material to play, the DVD and of course, what their idols think of them. They also found time to toss a little plea in the direction of Iron Maiden manager Rod Smallwood:

**Q: Have either of you played San Antonio in previous bands or with The Iron Maidens?**

**LINDA:** I cannot recall; I don't think that we did. Maybe Austin. I'm gonna check up on that. Texans in general just love their metal. (Later during the interview) I'm checking on older dates. We've been in April 2006. We've only been one time.

**Q: The band was formed in 2001, but how did it come about, and who got the ball rolling?**

**L:** It was the original singer that we had, something she wanted to put together. It took awhile. It was one of the guys in the band that was (playing the part of) Adrian Smith, so it just kind of evolved from there.

**Q: Do you find that fans seeing you in concert for the first time start out skeptical and may not take you as seriously as they might an all-male tribute band?**

**KIRSTEN:** Oh yeah, there's that curiosity factor. It is a novelty that we're all female. But that's quickly dispelled once they hear us playing.

**L:** Yeah, we do buck the stereotype that we can't play metal. There are people that want to see us crash and burn, but we think a majority are cool and want to see what we can do. A lot of people say it'll either be really good or really bad, but that's OK. We like that.

**K:** Bring it on! (laughs)

**Q: How do you balance trying to get fans to take some of the focus off of your looks, yet simultaneously utilizing the look and appearance to attract new fans?**

**K:** (Laughs) The music does speak for itself. It becomes the focus. It's great music, it's Iron Maiden, and we're giving justice to it.

**L:** The looks -- we never make the visual a part of it. We just kind of got lucky (laughs). It's just a little quirky part of it.

**Q: What are some of your most memorable experiences as an opening act?**

**L:** I know that Wanda, one of her fave bands of all time, she's always been a KISS freak, so that was a dream come true for her. That must've been about three to four years ago. You know, we're so lucky to play such a big place. It's something original bands dream of doing! We never thought we'd get to do that as a tribute band.

**Q: How many times have you met the guys in Maiden, and did you have any problems getting them to support what you do?**

**L:** We've actually met them several times. The first time, our bass tech was a friend of the band and sought them out one by one to meet their female counterparts (laughs). They seemed very immune, and it

was like Christmas morning for us. [Steve Harris](#) actually came to a show in Mexico City because they had a day off and were playing a bill with (Steve's daughter) Lauren Harris and her band. He stayed for the whole show and gave us so much praise.

**K:** As the newbie in the band, I'm still looking for my first time.

**Q: Have you ever opened for them; if not, why not?**

**L:** It would be so fun. I'm just sitting here thinking about the reality of doing that. It could be, you know, it's a possibility. Hey Mr. Smallwood! We could play the earlier stuff, and they could play the newer stuff like they've been doing.

**Q: Can you play every song in Maiden's catalog?**

**L:** We're not afraid to try. We don't have a keyboard player or a third guitarist.

**K:** We play songs even they don't play live.

**Q:** Such as?

**K:** Alexander the Great.

**L:** Women in Uniform; Phantom of the Opera.

**Q: What are your favorite ones to play?**

**L:** Depends on the mood. Phantom of the Opera.

**K:** Yeah, it totally depends on my mood, too. Right now, I'm in a Revelations mood. . . .

**L:** Ooh.

**K:** . . . and Hallowed (Be Thy Name). I love doing that as well, but seriously, there are so many, I need to come up with a better answer. . . . OK, I came up with a better answer. My favorite is Losfer Words (laughs because that's an instrumental).

**Q: First Maiden album you owned?**

**L:** [Killers](#)

**K:** Mine probably was [Piece of Mind](#), and then I went back and picked up the earlier records. But [Powerslave](#) was what got me into them.

**Q:** I just received a copy of [The Final Frontier](#) before it comes out on Aug. 17. How soon will you try to learn the new songs, and will you incorporate any of those into the concert here?

**L:** We're gonna listen to it, and never say never. But I don't know if there's a need for us to do it. Unless the audience requests it.

**Q: You're holding auditions for Heather's guitar slot (those interested can send an e-mail to [guitarist@theironmaidens.com](mailto:guitarist@theironmaidens.com) for more info). Why is she leaving, and will you have all five members here?**

**L:** Heather is not leaving. The position is open, and Heather is filling in. We have a person named Nili Brosh, and she's coming in (to do the San Antonio show). We have a few different girls (in mind), but it's an open slot. Everyone wants to be Adrian Smith, but they're happy to be Dave Murray (laughs).

**Q: Linda, it sounds like you had a pretty contentious court case with your former singer suing you and Wanda (reportedly for royalties). Anything you want to tell fans about that?**

**L:** Just move on as we wish that she did. It's a band that was born out of her wanting to put something together but nothing more.

**Q: Well, it's almost hard to imagine tribute bands going through the same rigors of the record industry as original bands. But I guess if you've been around for nine years, something's bound to happen, right?**

**L:** Actually 9-10 years. Heather was in a band that was on a major label, and we've never seen anything like this. It's just very different. Just move on.

**Q: What can you tell me about the forthcoming DVD?**

**K:** I can tell people that as far as the way it was shot, it's super high quality. We're very impressed with the actual recording and the way it was filmed. I have to think back as to what was on our set list. Obviously The Wickerman. . . . Revelations, Phantom of the Opera, Killers, The Evil That Men Do, of course Run To the Hills.

**L:** I think Moonchild, too.

**Q: Have you had a chance to catch Maiden's current tour, and what did you think of their set list?**

**K:** We both did. I loved their set. I thought it was a great set, and the band never ceases to amaze me. And [Bruce](#) just had a birthday Aug. 7, I wanna say he's like, 51 (52 according to Wikipedia). I mean, the guy has so much energy and sounds as great as he was 25 years ago. He has the same charisma and stage presence. I was blown away.

**Q: Any desire to eventually play original music, or is it Maiden for life?**

**L:** A lot of us have been in other bands, and some of us write different material. . . .

**K:** . . . but we love doing the Maiden tribute thing.

- **WHO:** [The Iron Maidens](#)
- **WHERE:** [Republic Live](#) (301 W. 5th St. @Lavaca in Austin)
- **WHEN:** Thursday, Aug. 26
- **TICKETS:** Call the bar at (512) 480-9888 for more info
- **OF NOTE:** San Antonio's [Martyrhead](#), a tribute to Motorhead, is one of the opening acts.
  
- **WHAT:** Extreme Metalfest (20 bands on three stages)
- **WHERE:** [Backstage Live \(1305 E. Houston St. in San Antonio\)](#)
- **WHEN:** 3-11:30 p.m., Sunday, Aug. 29
- **TICKETS:** \$15 at [Krazy Kat Music](#): 3020 N. St. Mary's: (210) 737-0523 or [Flipside Records](#): 1445 SW Military Dr. (210) 923-7811

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Slideshow: Q&A: The Iron Maidens

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