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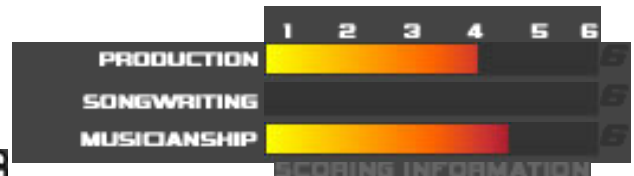
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[The Iron Maidens](#)

Self Titled

Released on 8/20/2005 - DRZ Records
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MATT MOORING

Sharon Osbourne! Drop those eggs from your chubby, decrepit little hands. The sounds you hear are NOT from your Ozzfest nemesis **Iron Maiden**, but from the world's only female **Maiden** tribute band, **The Iron Maidens**. These Californians have built a name for themselves by combining very competent tribute work with a fun and unique presentation. When it comes to the material, **The Iron Maidens** are all about business, and their renditions of these **Maiden** classics is a no nonsense, note for note replication, as one would expect from a tribute band, as opposed to a cover band. The album cover art (the best **Maiden** related cover since **S.O.D.**'s *Bigger Than the Devil*) was done by none other than Derek Riggs, and Eddie and Satan both make regular appearances during the band's live shows. But what makes **The Iron Maidens** more fun than your average tribute band (even the good ones), is how well the band concept interfaces with the source material, setting a tone that is lighthearted, and backed up with professionalism. C'mon, **The Iron Maidens**? A moniker that's as perfect as it is obvious. The singer's stage name is Bruce Chickinson, and the band's website has graphics of the scowling face of *Piece of Mind*-era Eddie, with a little pink bow cocked to the side of his bald head. The band does a nice job playing with the gender issue and while they don't shirk away from sexuality (their bio claims that they boast

musicianship as well as beauty), they're not all Charlotte the Harlot-ed out, and clearly image takes a rightful backseat to competence. Still, it's a good bet the ladies wish they had a dollar for every time some portly drunk stumbled up to one of them during a set break and busted out some lame **Maiden** related pickup like "Hey, now that *you've* played 'Tail Gunner', why don't *we* play some tail gunner of our own", "Let's you and me make some Children of the Damned", or "Hey baby, you're like, Maiden heaven".

Unfortunately, an album format doesn't really give you the full **The Iron Maidens** treatment, as once the presentation and experiential concert elements are removed, what remains is competent, but hardly exhilarating versions of some of your favorite songs. The band does an entirely respectable job replicating the material, but it seems this album is best marketed as a concert souvenir rather than to **Maiden** fans in general. Although if nothing else, a little press on the album and band could provide some publicity for their live shows, which would more fully showcase the band's offerings.

The Iron Maidens cover material from throughout **Maiden's** career, but for this project have chosen to do songs from the band's classic early period, from the self titled debut up through ***Somewhere in Time. The Number of the Beast*** receives the most attention, contributing four of the eleven tracks on the album. Much like with **Maiden**, there are very few surprises, as the usual suspects make their inevitable appearances. "The Number of the Beast", "Children of the Damned", "Run to the Hills", and most enjoyably, the fan favorite "Hallowed Be Thy Name" are all included, while other albums are covered with a track or two at most. With only minor exceptions typically related to production, the instrumentation is spot on. The more challenging part, of course, is duplicating the one of a kind vocals of Bruce Dickinson. For the most part, Chickinson (her momma named her Aja Kim) does a very respectable job. It's difficult to pinpoint why some songs tend to work better than others, but some simply seem to click more than others, although none of the versions actually fail. Oddly enough, some of the most intriguing material on the album comes from the three Paul Di'Anno-era songs, "Killers", "Phantom of the Opera" (thanks ladies!), and the hidden live track "Remember Tomorrow".

The Maidens' work is very much a worthy tribute to the legendary **Iron Maiden**. Whether or not you shell out for their album will depend as much on your appreciation of tribute bands as your hunger for all things **Maiden** related. Regardless, if **The Iron Maidens** ever make it to my neck of the woods, I'll be there for sure. I'll even scream for them, Long Beach.



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