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Rhythm: All-female Iron Maidens ready to rock

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British heavy metal group Iron Maiden will be going on tour next spring, but the closest they'll be coming to Wisconsin is Toronto. But don't despair. A live show that features technical prowess, vocals that careen between feral and operatic, and source material that ranges from ancient history and literature to science fiction and the occult will take place on Friday night at the Annex, 1206 Regent St.

Just be prepared to see leather pants and vests traded in for skirts and bras.

The Iron Maidens -- an all-female tribute to Iron Maiden -- would be just a gimmick if it wasn't for the fact that just playing an Iron Maiden song correctly on any instrument is usually the sign of advanced musicianship, at least in rock 'n' roll realms. Most bands probably couldn't make it through a set of Iron Maiden songs if their lives depended on it.

That's not to say that gimmicks aren't allowed. Lead singer Aja "Bruce Chickinson" Kim and drummer Linda "Nikki McBURRain" McDonald lead the way with their tongue-in-cheek stage names. Eddie, the original band's mascot is expected to make an appearance at the show. The Iron Maidens also tapped Eddie's creator, British artist Derek Riggs, to create Edwina, a female version of the skinless, snarling Eddie, to grace the front of their two studio albums.

Sure, they aren't quite on the same level as the world-conquering British heavy metal gods, but their average band member age is also not hovering around the half-century mark. Plus, just by being in the room they will have already doubled the average female turnout for a show by the real Iron Maiden.

Metal bands Mirror Black, Sacred Dawn and Rictus Grin open the show at 9:30 p.m. Tickets are \$15 advance and \$18 at the door.