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In-person interview with Linda McDonald, Kirsten Rosenberg, Wanda Ortiz and Courtney Cox of The Iron Maidens

By Aniruddh "Andrew" Bansal



February 20th 2010, Paladino's, Tarzana CA



Andrew: What did you think of Heather's performance tonight?

Courtney: Amazing!

Linda: She did so wonderfully well. We missed playing with her when she had to leave before. But it is so nice to have her back, as temporary as it might be, she did well.

Kirsten: It felt seamless to me. It was great.

Andrew: As you said on stage, it must have been kind of weird for her because she used to play the Adrian role and tonight she did the other one.

Courtney: Yeah it was like there were two Adrians on stage. (laughs)

Linda: She had to do a quick conversion because she had less than two weeks to do this. We all missed her on stage very, very much. We wish

her well and I think Heather did a wonderful job.

Andrew: You said its temporary with Heather. So, what's happening with Sara [regular guitarist]?

Linda: Sara is on an extended leave of absence, sabbatical, hiatus, whatever you may want to call it.

Kirsten: Yeah to concentrate on her medical and personal issues, and to take care of those things.

Linda: There is a lot going on in her life. She just needs a little time-out. So, the show must go on and we are carrying on. You can check us out on theironmaidens.com and see when the next show will carry on!

Andrew: Talk a little bit about the Japan tour.

Kirsten: It was a lot of fun. The people were awesome, the crowds were great and we were treated very well.

Linda: Exceptionally well! It's the whole Japanese custom. Everything is about respect.

Kirsten: And lots of food! Very good junk food.

Courtney: Its like thanksgiving everyday.

Linda: The Japanese really love Iron Maiden. Remember Maiden Japan? It was a repeat of that. (laughs) They knew all the words and it was really good. For the size of the venues there were like 300-600 I would say. We

did three shows in Tokyo, Osaka and Nagoya and they were sold out.

Kirsten: The best thing about Japan is the heated toilet seat! (laughs)

Courtney: Royal milk tea. You gotta try that when you go to Japan.

Linda: On a personal level, I got to see a lot of my family there. It was the first time they ever saw me playing drums. I had made a promise to them almost 20 years ago when I started playing. We also saw Marty Friedman, a long time friend. He came out and had dinner with us. We are due to be back there again either at the end of the year or the beginning of next year.

Andrew: There was talk of a live recording in Japan.

Kirsten: Yes we recorded a DVD.

Linda: Its not a worldwide release or anything, its more a souvenir type thing for those in Japan of the performances that we did there. Then there are some personal interviews and that kind of stuff. I believe its only going to be issued in Japan.

Courtney: We also have tour t-shirts that we are selling in the states from our Japan tour.



Andrew: What do you think is the reason for Iron Maiden not releasing albums as frequently as they used to? When the new album comes out it'll be after a gap of four years.

Kirsten: Well, may be at this stage in their career they feel like they can just take their time. I don't really know but as a fan I wish they would hurry the fuck up!

Courtney: I think with the amount of albums they've already released, they are taking their time to make sure that it surpasses everything else. They have a lot to pass!

Linda: And at this stage of their career they are not under the pressure of any record label to say you have to have one released by tomorrow or by yesterday. So they can release them when they're good and ready, when they are confident with the material. Its what they want to give to the metal world, you know.

Courtney: Take your time. We want the best!



Andrew: Do you make an effort to have your set lists different from Maiden?

Kirsten: Yeah! We do songs like Alexander The Great.

Courtney: They don't play Invaders that much and none of the old songs actually, not counting the Somewhere Back In Time tour.

Linda: When they were here on tour, we wanted to not play what they were playing, which is very difficult because that's a lot of what we focus on. When they do come out on tour its kind of easy because they play the newer stuff and we play the older stuff.

Wanda: The dream gig will be opening for them when they do the new album and we do the old songs and everybody gets what they want!

Courtney: There will be some extra rarities in a couple of our shows coming up so you should definitely come and check it out!

Linda: What we try to do when we play shows is keep track of set lists from everywhere we play since day one. So if it's the same city or club we've played before, we try to vary up at least by half a set if we can. We plan ahead. It's a performance and a show. People don't want to see the same thing being played over and over again.

Andrew: You really need to play some east coast shows. Many people from there wanted me to get this message across.

Courtney: We are ready!

Linda: If there is a promoter that wants to bring us out. The biggest issue is getting us there.

Courtney: Yeah a lot of props and gear, so help us out!

Linda: We were there twice and we really need to go back.

Kirsten: Yes we do. We got a lot of peeps there.

Andrew: You should think about playing in India too!

Linda: We had an offer to play there with Paul DiAnno the other year! But apparently he insulted the people over there so bad that they cancelled the whole thing. That's why we didn't go. We were supposed to go and play some shows, he was going to come out and do some songs with us.

Andrew: As tribute musicians have you ever felt bounded or limited by the fact that you are supposed to pay tribute to just one band?

Kirsten: I think if we want to do something on our own, we do. For me, its not like I feel constrained being in The Iron Maidens. I feel like I won the lottery, getting to rock out music that I'm crazy about with an amazing band and people rocking out too because we are all fans of Iron Maiden. So I don't feel constrained at all. I'm having the time of my life. But we do have other stuff like orchestra, side project bands and session work. People have their outlets.

Linda: In my life, when I was doing an original band called Phantom Blue, it got to the point that I was so frustrated and fed up with the people, the musicians we were meeting and just the industry.

I wanted out. I took pictures of my drums and put them online for sale. Then I got a phone call out of the blue, about this Iron Maiden tribute. I thought, you know, that's the whole reason [Iron Maiden] that I started playing so why not go and try it out. I was chuckling probably like a lot of people do when they first hear about this tribute. So I totally relate to that. Nine years later, I have nothing else to say! But yes, I am totally open to original stuff again. I guess this was the second time Iron Maiden changed my life.

Andrew: So tell me about those side projects you were talking about.

Kirsten: Our side project [Kirsten, Courtney and Linda] Crabby Patty is just a fun thing where we play the big ol' goofy stuff from back in the 80s through to the current stuff. It's just silly, good-time metal stuff.

Kirsten: Yeah its old school metal.

Linda: Its for the times that we're not booked for the Maidens.

Wanda: I do orchestra stuff so it kind of works out when these girls are doing their side project.

Andrew: How did the NAMM Coffin Case show [Jan 15th 2010] come about?

Linda: Coffin Case called us. It was their party and we endorse their brand. They asked us if we could do it and we were like, of course. Why would we not? Dave Ellefson jammed with us on the song 'Killers'.

Wanda: We've had guest artists in past shows too. We've had Phil Campbell from Motorhead and Alex Skolnick from Testament, Michael Kenney played with us and we've also had the chance to jam with Nicko [McBrain, Iron Maiden drummer] at the joint.

Linda: I was photographer that night [with Nicko at the joint] and it was great. I got to go behind him and watch his foot. (laughs) He actually played War Pigs. You can find a link on the Iron Maidens boards.



Andrew: Do you think tribute bands get bigger when the original bands retire?

Kirsten: Hard to say!

Linda: Not necessarily. I hope we never find out

Kirsten: Yeah I hope we never know the answer to that.

Wanda: I think there are a lot of successful tribute bands where the original band is still around. Sometimes the original band can't get everywhere. So if you can't see the real deal, you go for the next best thing.

Linda: We like to consider ourselves the unofficial surrogate fix of Iron Maiden when they're not able to tour here. (laughs)

Andrew: Can I have each member's favorite Iron Maiden album or song?

Linda: Well, as a drummer one of my favourites is Phantom Of The Opera. To listen to, depends on my mood o:

the day.

Kirsten: I really don't have one! Powerslave is a great album. That was about the time when I really discovered Iron Maiden and then I went back and got into the older stuff. I actually had the album, I would come home after school and just spend hours listening to that record.

Courtney: I swear by Sea Of Madness and that's the end of my story!

Wanda: Piece Of Mind was my first Iron Maiden album so I have an affinity for that album. Phantom Of The Opera is one of my favorite songs to play.

The Iron Maidens line-up for this show was:

Kirsten Rosenberg - vocals

Wanda Ortiz - bass

Courtney Cox - guitar

Heather Baker - guitar

Linda McDonald - drums

Check out the band's website for all the info on upcoming gigs at www.theironmaidens.com!

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