

Metal Monthly: While working on Women in Metal, I was of course drawn to the best Women That I know in metal, I have seen you ladies perform many many times, The pleasure is mine, and I thank you for your time for a little Q&A

WANDA: Thanks for the interview! The pleasure is ours as well.

AJA: It's a good feeling to be included in this piece - thanks for letting us be a part of it.

LINDA: Thanks so much! We all appreciate you including us!

HEATHER: Indeed = D

SARA: Thank you!! Yes I remember you from NAMM and our shows from way back too - thanks for staying in touch.

Metal Monthly: Tell our readers about The Iron Maidens, and your lineup?

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WANDA: Iron Maidens: The Iron Maidens are the World's Only Female Tribute to Iron Maiden. The band is Aja Kim as "Bruce Lee Chickinson" on vocals, Sara Marsh as "Mini Murray" on guitar, Heather Baker as "Adrienne Smith" on guitar, Linda McDonald as "Nikki McBURRain" on drums and myself as "Steph Harris" on bass. The project was originally started as just a fun thing but after the first few shows, the band started getting a lot of calls and now we keep pretty busy! I never thought that this would turn into a touring project!

AJA: Aja Kim aka Bruce 'Lee' Chickinson - vocals, stage antics and the occasional rant! ; -P

LINDA: Born in 2001 this band is in it's sophomore years now I suppose. It's a touring gig that thrives on playing and sharing the love of Iron Maiden music to enthusiastic and devoted legions of Iron Maiden fans everywhere; and they are everywhere! ..m/ The lineup has been through a few changes over time as can be expected of any band lineup, but this current one is by far the most intense and unified one we've had to date. Everybody genuinely likes each other and is of sound mind and with a solid foundation of professionalism ta boot which is certainly a bonus!

SARA: This is the most exciting line up since JoJo - our new guitarist Heather is a fireball on stage and has really upped our live performance so were really excited to hit the road again. Linda, Wanda, Aja, and I have alot of shows together so we've got a great base of experience with the tunes so it's clicking really well.

HEATHER: The Iron Maidens are an all female tribute to Iron Maiden, playing selections from just about every album that has been released. Our lineup consists of 5 seasoned/talented female musicians that have made it a point to not only capture the music but the stage show as well.

Metal Monthly: I have followed you over the years and seen you many times, even through lineup changes, including vocals and guitar players, one thing that has remained constant is your integrity and the energy of your live shows. your thoughts?

WANDA: Regardless of line-up changes, a lot of effort is put into playing the music and emulating a Maiden live show as accurately as we can. We're glad you noticed!

AJA: Thank you - this band is very much about musical integrity. We have an enormous respect for both the music and the expectations of our fellow fans in how we execute it. We're reminded every show how beloved this music is to so many people and it definitely keeps us on our toes. That onstage energy is fueled by the people out there in the audience. It's like manna from heaven and keeps us continually inspired.

LINDA: I would have to agree, and thank you for being such a die hard! Our audition process is very strict and we know exactly what we are looking for in bandmates each time we've moved forward with new members. You have got to be a certain caliber of musician and person in general to even be considered to take part in this project to allow it to continue as a solid entity because Iron Maiden fans know what they want to hear from a tribute band performing Maiden music. We have been very lucky most of the time so far!

SARA: Taking the high road and being professional are a real bitch huh - but I think striving for this has added to our longevity cuz we're not afraid of a little hard work and have the determination to see it through. When we first started this project representing the music and stage show was and still is first priority on our list. Over the years a step back has always been a learning experience and a chance to take two steps forward.

HEATHER: Everyone has made it a point to stay professional just like any entertainment act whose goal is to stay in the game and do what you love. We keep decisions and opinions at a very diplomatic level to make sure there is a consistent balance. Everyone within the band has a silent understanding that it's for the love of getting up on the stage every night and playing our hearts out to music we love.

Metal Monthly: You have met Iron Maiden, and even played onstage with certain members, what was that like?

WANDA: Very memorable. Michael Kenney, Iron Maiden's bass tech and touring keyboardist, arranged our first meeting with the band. I remember at the time that the girls and I were all very nervous and wanted to make a good impression. We prepared gift bags, brought cookies (which we accidentally left in the car!), and met the band backstage. Of course, we weren't as collected as we hoped we would be in these circumstances: we blushed, dropped stuff, and pretty much acted like total fans! But I guess that's okay since we really are fans. The guys were all really nice and it was a pleasure to meet them. A few of us had an opportunity to play with Nicko at a casual jam session in a bar in LA. Again, we were all nervous but we still had a really good time. Nicko was a really sweet guy

with no rock star attitude.

AJA: Wanda and I had a chance to sit in with Nicko at a benefit here in L.A. He complimented my singing, which meant a great deal to me. I have to say it was both completely nerve-wracking and really exciting all at the same time. He was very sweet though and made us feel as at ease as one could under the circumstances by making funny jokes and that kind of thing. He thought Wanda had much better gams than Steve, too! I agree!

LINDA: I usually do not care to meet my major influences due to some disappointing events like this in the past where they never seem to live up to your expectations of them, HOWEVER, meeting the Men of Iron Maiden has always been a wonderful experience with each meeting because they are always the utmost of professionals and extremely courteous and caring to their fans. They are human beings who understand and respect the other human beings who are there supporting their art. Awesome people, awesome band. I still don't want to meet the rest of my influences though - ha ha ha!

SARA: I've chatted with them a few times after their shows here in L.A. - got pics too on my website hahaha I had a huge grin the whole time! I'm a huge fan from way back. I had their posters on my wall in high school so meeting them in person was surreal. Being in an all female tribute to Iron Maiden was interesting to them, kinda like, girls playing our music? They wanted to know who played their parts and where we played at. Dave Murray's wife had fun with it and gave me a big hug!

HEATHER: The other members have had a chance to get on stage with Michael and jam with Nicko. That seems like a very fond memory of theirs that I hope to do some day as well.

Metal Monthly: What is the funniest thing that comes to mind on a recent tour, whether it was a prank, or some drunk dude hitting on you?

WANDA: At one venue, there was a bar table that was connected to the stage and I thought it would look cool if I ran out there (on top of the table) while playing. Unfortunately, I didn't notice that the table was wet (someone must have spilled a drink) so I slipped and fell off the table and into some guy's lap. I climbed back up on stage as quickly as I could and only missed a few notes but I was really embarrassed. So much for trying to look cool! I hope that guy was okay.

AJA: Once, at a meet and greet, a guy came up to the table and had nothing for us to sign, so he dropped his drawers - and he still had nothing to sign!

LINDA: Our airplane tongue photos. LOL! A bizarre way we amuse ourselves on long flights. ;-P

SARA: Oooohhh pranks! Yeah, when your dead tired from traveling a good laugh will raise your spirits. Finding out I'd eaten iguana in Puerto Rico was quite a surprise - chicken of the tree hahaha. We spend alot of time on planes so we'll stick our tongues out and take a picture so the perspective looks like we're licking the other passengers.

HEATHER: Drunk dudes come with the territory, then again we have no problem keeping up with their tolerance. Playing out of state it's always interesting traveling in the large groups that we do. We play occasional hotel pranks on each other and make it a point to have loud plane rides.

Metal Monthly: Here is a standard Question I ask most Bands:

If you could send one cd/album up in the space shuttle to be left on another planet, to be found by other life
what cd/album would you send to represent American Metal?
(I asked Paul Dianno this same question, his answer was AC/DC, not exactly an American Band)

WANDA: Iron Maiden! Either Piece of Mind or Powerslave.

AJA: Well, you know which British band I would choose! ;-P But one single American band is a tough choice! Can I rip a compilation?

LINDA: Dose em up with some Pantera! Or send some KISS or Twisted Sister out there to really freak them out visually and warn them not to come to Earth. Hahaha!

SARA: Since I'm from SoCal I'd have to stay west coast with bands like Slayer, Metallica, or Testament.... k....Slayer's Reign In Blood ..m/

HEATHER: I would have to shoot Pantera's "Vulgar Display of Power" out there. I'm sure some aliens would start banging their

heads involuntarily.

Metal Monthly: What are your influences, and what are you currently listening to on your ipod/cd player?

WANDA: As a bass player, I've always been drawn to bands like Rush, Iron Maiden, and Yes because the basslines are so fun and interesting. Right now, I have an Iron Maiden CD in my CD player because we're learning new tunes.

AJA: My influences are so wide and varied the list would go on forever. For the longest time I had only Iron Maiden in my iPod. I only recently started adding some other flavors for variety - everything from Bad Co and Cream, Joplin and Hendrix to Miles Davis and Mozart!

LINDA: Current player loaded with Scorpions, Incubus, Madonna, Megadeth, SOD, Pantera, and of course Maiden. Been revisiting my roots lately which include some of the aforementioned as well as early Van Halen and Priest. :-)

SARA: My playing style is mostly bluesed based but I stole a lot from Randy Rhoads and cut my teeth on Lemmy and Iron Maiden. Lately I've been listening to Brad Paisley, techno with cool breakbeats, and Madonna.

HEATHER: I have influences for every aspect of music ranging from song writing to guitar playing and one contributing to another. Zeppelin's riffs always felt right to my ears, and Fleetwood Mac's song structure made the most sense in writing. There are so many players that have left an indentation in history that I've studied over and over again; yet again, the list goes on.

Metal Monthly: Have you played guitar hero yet? your thoughts?
(It Has Wrathchild on it)

WANDA: I've only tried it once and I thought it was fun!

AJA: Not yet! Guitar Hero is purely a spectator sport for me! But I may have to give it a try sometime - there's a thread about it up on our bb forums and the general consensus is that it's a riot!

LINDA: I can't do those games...I get so damn worked up it's not good for my anxious mind and blood pressure!! Let alone the Turrets syndrome kicks in full gear!!! LOL! Actually Guitar Hero looks REALLY fun, I just haven't tried it yet.

SARA: Yeah, it's fun - especially on a big screen. I'd rather spend my time with a real guitar tho - kids should too. I'd like to see them throw in some music theory - sneak in a little education instead of just color recognition and timing.

HEATHER: I had to get that game the minute it came out. I think it's great for dexterity and time improvements with people that already play either guitar, bass, and even drums.

Metal Monthly: I am working on going to Wacken Open Air 2008 (Hint to My Boss) Iron Maiden Is headlining, any plans yourself of going?

WANDA: Not at the moment. The girls and I will catch their show in Los Angeles.

AJA: Wouldn't I love to - but our schedule for next year is still being worked on and it's hard to say where in the world we'll be. But we definitely plan to see them when they come to the States. This upcoming tour is one not to be missed.

LINDA: I've never had the privilege to attend a Wacken Open Air yet but would love to experience it someday. It would be totally amazing to see Maiden at Wacken but we'll have to count on seeing them here in Feb and in the Summer instead. Enjoy you lucky dawg!! (Another hint to your boss!!!)

SARA: That festival is huge! Please share some pics cuz that's as close as I'll get!!

HEATHER: I am such a fan of that event, and it would be such a treat to attend. The Lineup for 08' is exactly what I would want to see in a historical metal show, not to mention the previous years. Children of Bodom, Sonata Arctica, At the Gates, Hatebreed, and of course Iron Maiden so far on the bill for 08'?! If I can't get a flight, I'll swim.

Metal Monthly: How important is the internet these days in promoting your music?

WANDA: It's a very resourceful tool that definitely helps spread the word. I would say it's very important.

AJA: Absolutely essential. The internet is an amazing tool that enables bands to reach people without the fat cat middleman getting in the way and dictating things. You can only force feed people for so long before they'll find a way to rebel. The best music is the music you discover for yourself anyway. The internet allows people the freedom to do that more easily.

LINDA: Beyond words. It allows you to reach as many people as you can find outlets for! You can find music from bands all over the world online these days at the click of a mouse! Communicating without pony express is the best thing in the world!!

SARA: The internet has taken over the world and a band is crippled from the gate without it. It's so much easier to get your music heard, and I like the fact that as a listener I have more choices than what the big record companies put out. The Iron Maidens are a live act tho, so we aren't affected much by downloading. If people hear our stuff and know of us then maybe they'll come check out our show so in a way it's free advertisement.

HEATHER: The internet has proven to be such a vital support system for music that we try to utilize it as much as possible. It keep us in close contact with our fans and allows an interactive outlet.

Metal Monthly: Hardest part of being a female in this business?

WANDA: Dealing with preconceptions that women cannot play this style of music competently.

AJA: Male or female this business is difficult, period. Of course it's a bit annoying when some people assume that the only reason you have achieved what you have achieved is because you are female and not because you work hard for it! Sure, 5 women playing Maiden - it may catch people's attention for a minute but to keep it you can't rely on being eye candy- you have to deliver the goods. So the focus for us is on the music, not the fact that we have to sit down to pee.

LINDA: When people get too touchy feely after the shows. It's an exercise in self control not to rip the balls off some poor bastard who has liquid courage and spits all over your face and arms when talking to you and then thinks he can hug you 50 times cuz he's forgotten the other 25 times he already did. Okay, not the hardest part of being a female in this business but the only thing that comes to my mind at this moment. Bwahaha.

SARA: Being a minority means you have to work a little harder to get a job - most people have little or no precedence to compare to.

HEATHER: Being a female definitely has it's ups and downs in the business. It's true that females have to be almost better at their instruments than men to get acknowledgment as a serious player. Yet that's never really bothered me because as the intimacy grew with learning guitar, I always felt a sense of self- accomplishment. Learning an instrument is an individual journey.

Metal Monthly: Sara is one of the most passionate Bad Ass guitar players I have seen, and Wanda (who is easy on my eyes) is a Orchestra Member, what other things do the Iron Maidens do- That our readers would be interested to hear about?

WANDA: I freelance quite a bit with different groups in the Southern California area (mostly on upright bass), one of which is the South Coast Symphony.

AJA: Everyone in this band is so talented and always has something going on - I guess we're just workaholics! The Maidens keep us pretty busy and, thanks to people like you, have become quite a priority as a result. Some of us are having fun doing a little writing together just to see what happens. For me, personally, I've been very fortunate to have worked in the past with some really wonderful musicians and I have a solo project and CD out - it's called Modern Babylon and is world's away from what I do with the Maidens. The title cut and some of my other work can be heard here: www.myspace.com/ajakimmusic I'm also writing for my 2nd solo CD when I can find the time!

LINDA: I play with Sara's bad ass in a female Ozzy tribute called The Little Dolls. Check it out at www.thelittledolls.com Check out www.phantomblue.com too if you are in browse mode. :-) My original female twin guitar band that's been around with releases on Shrapnel and Geffen Records and a few indie releases, with the lovely Miss Marsh on board as well. You can see what I keep myself busy with at www.myspace.com/lindamcdonald if you are curious. Band work consumes most of my waking moments so I don't really get a chance to do much else these days. I need a vacation and a life huh! More than anything I would love to get a dog but time does not allow it right now, I'm too busy hitting things. Wah.

SARA: That's an awesome compliment thank you Downshifter! When I'm not playing my

guitar I go to Glamis to motor around on the sand dunes, and during the summer you'll find me close to the nearest river, lake or ocean.

HEATHER: I've been a drawer/painter for quite a while. I also enjoy golfing at least once a week and make sure that I snowboard regularly every winter.

Metal Monthly: Will I see you Ladies at Namm again this January?

WANDA: Yes, we're all going.

AJA: Absolutely - it's become a tradition for us!

LINDA: Without a doubt!! Wouldn't dream of missing it! So many new toys in one place and it's always like a family reunion there! See you there!!!

SARA: You will - maybe you'll know of some cool shows to catch - last year the Coffin Case party was a rager. I'll probably be playing the Transperformance booth again so please come by and say hello!

HEATHER: Yes, we all plan on attending this year. It's always a great experience and exciting to see up and coming technology.

Metal Monthly: Please tell our readers what material you have to offer right now (cd's, Dvd's, other Stuff) and where can they find it?

WANDA: We have photos, drumsticks, picks, hats, t-shirts, CDs, DVDs, and panties. Everything can be found on our website: www.theironmaidens.com .

AJA: Our latest release is a Studio EP/Live DVD called Rte. 666. The studio tracks were produced by Bob Kulick and Brett Chassen and the concert performance is from a show we did at the Galaxy Theater in Santa Ana, CA featuring Michael Kenney ..boards (he's Steve Harris' bass tech and also plays keys on the road with Iron Maiden)

LINDA: Our first CD is still available too which features 9 solid studio cuts recorded at Silver Cloud Studios, which is where Bruce Dickinson recorded some of his finest solo releases! The artwork on that CD cover is a new original piece done just for us by Derek Riggs!! It's a female monster named Edwina whose image was inspired by the lovely Ms. Paris Hilton. Both U.S. and special Japanese versions (with a couple bonus live tracks included) are available at our shows and at our website store at <http://www.theironmaidens.com/store/store.html>

SARA: Everyone needs a g string - how bout one with our logo on it?

HEATHER: We have quite an assortment of merchandise ranging from full lengths to japanese editions. We have a our new cd/dvd japanese combo that just recently came out that features a well shot performance we had a few years back. We also have unique t-shirts designed by the one and only Derek Riggs, along with our new "Route 666" t-shirt and panties for the ladies.

Metal Monthly: Name 5 Women in Metal, who you admire, and respect?

WANDA: Doro Pesch, Joan Jett, Lita Ford, and the girls in my band.

AJA: At the top of my list is Doro Pesch - she's truly the grande dame who paved the way for the rest of us. We played a festival up in WA with her in Sept and she put on a fantastic show - she performs with so much heart. I had a chance to meet her afterward and she was very warm and gracious - a lovely woman, both inside and out as well as a great singer. The next four are pretty easy because I play with them all the time - Linda McDonald , Sara Marsh, Heather Baker and Wanda Ortiz. They make me proud to have ovaries.

LINDA: Doro, my fellow Maidens, Carina Alfie, Kate French, and though not metal, Jennifer Batten.

SARA: Otep, Doro, my band mates, Lita Ford, and that chick in Guitar Center looking for her first guitar.

HEATHER: Stevie Nicks, Janice Joplin, Liz Fraser, Beth Gibbons, Karen Carpenter.

Metal Monthly: Thanks So Much for your time, is there anything else you would like to plug or add for our readers?

WANDA: www.ironmaiden.com , www.derekriggs.com , www.theironmaidens.com .

AJA: Just that we truly appreciate all the support from everyone that we get for this project.

