

IRON MAIDEN FE

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ANCIENT MARINERS

Magazine 74 Supplement

The Iron Maidens based in California

How long have The Iron Maidens been together.

WANDA: *About four years now.*

SARA: *I joined the band at it's inception in 2001 - this project is so much fun! It's truly an honour to be a part of, let alone having the opportunity to jam Iron Maiden songs alongside fellow Maiden fans.*

LINDA: *Since 2001, so we're pushing 4 1/2 + years. I've been a part of this band from day one also and even though they are not our own songs, we are having way too much fun playing this amazing music!*

LIZ: *Going on 5 years now. But I've only been in the band for 3 months.*

What made you decide to become an Iron Maiden tribute band.

SARA: *Iron Maiden is one of my all time favourite bands - they helped shape my musical background. It's the whole package - twin guitars on 10, melody, great songwriting, soaring vocals, monster bass and drums, and decadent album art!*

LINDA: *The position of drummer was open and offered and the word "No" and "Iron Maiden" just don't go hand in hand. I had always resisted tribute bands because of the cheese factor I've witnessed in some cases, but when it came to playing Maiden, I knew I would kick myself in the head for not jumping on board.*

AJA: *The Maidens were already going strong before I joined them. At the time, the guitarist in my original band had just moved to Spain and so I was open to a new project, while continuing to look about for someone to fill his very big shoes. I like to be involved in things that will help me to grow as a musician and to have the chance to sing this music was an opportunity I just couldn't pass up. Bruce Dickinson is one of the greatest performers and singers ever and I have so much fun pretending to be him!*

WANDA: *I can't pick only one because I have quite a few favourites. I particularly enjoy playing Phantom of the Opera, Powerslave, and Rime of the Ancient Mariner.*

Now which is your least favourite.

WANDA: *There are some songs I enjoy playing more than others but I can't really say there is a Maiden song I enjoy playing the least.*

Aja: *For me personally, one I find very challenging (translation: really freakin' hard!) is Where Eagles Dare. The placement of the melody on that one isn't easy, even for a woman, because it's in that high belting register all the way through. Bruce is a God! LOL!*

SARA: *All Maiden is good Maiden.*

LINDA: *The last song in the set. :(I don't have a least favourite!*

LIZ: *A least favourite? Well not that I don't like the song, but Transylvania is real simple and kinda repeats itself over and over again.*

Do you find it difficult to decide which songs go into your set list.

LINDA: *Without a doubt! Two hours just isn't enough time to play and get a proper Maiden fix on! We just have to mix it up to keep the show fresh, particularly if it's in a place we play more often.*

SARA: *I love em all, so yes and no! But even if we don't play a favourite one night, it'll show up the next set because we're always changing it up.*

WANDA: *We all have our personal favourites which makes it hard to decide on a set list so we had our audience choose songs for us: we had people fill out surveys requesting their favourite songs at our shows. The songs with the most requests are performed at our shows. Although, every so often, we'll cheat and do a more obscure song only because we like it.*

LIZ: *Sometimes. But Linda is the master mind behind the set list makings so she makes up our minds rather quickly. GO LINDA!*

Aja: *Yes! When you're covering a band like Iron Maiden, who has ongoing career and that enormous catalogue, it's really difficult to narrow it down to the roughly 15 songs that make up a show set for us. There are so many great songs to choose from. We all have our personal favourites and the fans have theirs, so we try to meet in the middle somewhere. It's inevitable that we've left out somebody's personal favourite. But that's the fun of it, too. People come up and make requests and that often helps us decide what we will learn next or put into the next show.*

Do you try to stick to a certain era of the band.

LINDA: *We used to focus on the "Live After Death" era in the beginning, but have expanded the set list since then. We play about 40 Maiden songs now so we have a pretty good chunk covered, but are always adding more to keep it spicy!*

AJA: *Though the band initially started out covering the "Live After Death" era, recently we've been extending our horizons with songs from Seventh Son of a Seventh Son (thanks to Michael Kenney who's joined us on keyboards for a couple of shows) as well as Fear Of The Dark and Brave New World. We've been getting a lot of requests for songs from Dance of Death lately, too. I'm glad Iron Maiden is so prolific with great songs. It keeps things very fresh, both for us and the audience.*

WANDA: *Not really. We try to cover material from all eras of the band's career.*

SARA: *Iron Maiden's albums all have their unique stamp - so many of them too! The fans of Maiden all have different tastes as well, which is cool. Being well versed in all eras has allowed us to keep the project new and fun for us as well as the people who come see us*

How many shows do you roughly play a year.

WANDA: I would guess between 30 and 50 shows a year.

SARA: Yeah alot! - sometimes I check our website to see where I'll be next!

LINDA: Not enough is all I can say! I'm a performance junkie! LOL! We love spreading that Maiden love whenever and wherever we can!!!!

AJA: Not enough, hahaha! I'm a workaholic and I especially love to sing this music. It's very fulfilling, musically and spiritually. I know that sounds kind of corny but it's true. The audiences give you so much love.

LINDA: I love it when people tell us that hearing us play brought back so many memories that they are going to go out and buy all the Iron Maiden CD's again 'cos all they have is vinyl and their record players don't work anymore!!!

What sort age group do you see turning up at your shows.

SARA: Lately more and more younger metal fans come to our shows which is awesome 'cos it's great to see the metal community still growing.

LINDA: There's also a lot more women coming to the shows too, and not just to hang with their boyfriends either.....'cos they love metal and Maiden!!!

WANDA: I notice that there are a wide variety of people of all different ages at our shows~ especially at our all ages shows (only people 21 and over can get into most of the venues we play, unfortunately).

AJA: There are the old school Maiden fans who've been listening to Maiden since they first came out. Now their kids are discovering the music too. I've seen fans as young as 8 at all ages shows and those are the best shows of all. When you see whole families come out together all headbanging away in their Maiden shirts, it's really great.

LIZ: All ages. From old farts to young farts.

If you could play at any venue which would it be

AJA: It would be amazing to play at one of the UK festivals, like Leeds or Reading. I know they don't need us there because they have the real thing! But a girl can dream!

SARA: Ruskin Arms!

LINDA: Long Beach Arena!

LIZ: Los Angeles Staples Center. Ok, now that's getting greedy.

WANDA: We would love to play at any venue opening up for Maiden ~ even playing on a side stage before a Maiden show would be cool. We'd also love to play at an official Maiden convention like Hi-On Maiden (another Iron Maiden tribute band) did.

Iron Maiden are know for there great merchandise, do you have your own merchandise.

SARA: Everyone needs a g-string from The Iron Maidens! We'll hook you up online at our store even if you can't make it to our local shows. I'm most proud of our tribute CD - we put our hearts into it and it's awesome to read the rave reviews all over the world! This years 2005 holiday issue of *Guitar World* featured us in the editors pick, as well as including two of our videos on the included cd-rom. Hell Yes!

WANDA: We have CDs, t-shirts, panties, picks, photos, and drumsticks. These items can be purchased online at www.theironmaidens.com.

LIZ: Hell yeah! We have all kinds of sh*t. From pictures, to cd's, to shot glasses, to thongs.

LINDA: Yes, and our CD cover and t-shirts sport some fine, new, original artwork from Derek Riggs!!!

Thanks for taking the time to answer these questions, is there anything you would like.

***AJA:** I just want to thank Iron Maiden and all the Iron Maiden fans out there because that's what has made it possible for us to experience the joy that playing this music live brings us. If it weren't for the band we wouldn't exist and if it weren't for our fellow fans, we couldn't exist. Up the Bloody Irons, Baby!*

***SARA:** Thanks for the interview - it was a pleasure! Up The Irons!*

***LINDA:** Up the Bloody Irons, Baby!!!!*

THE IRON MAIDENS

Photo: Ernie Manrique

