

Iron Maiden and Twisted Sister not misogynist?

By DARLA MUZZERALL

It's a safe bet that most of Dalhousie's student population aren't brave (or foolhardy) enough to see Iron Maiden and Twisted Sister on Nov. 24. To many, such filth and noise in Halifax is unpardonable. But, as the Metal community will attest, both groups have much to redeem them. Let's first look at common preconceptions about the two bands:

- They're too loud. OK, that's valid.
- They're weird-looking. So are the 'new wave' types and, in fact, most everyone in the pop music business. That's an advantage, not a drawback.
- They're androgynous. See above.

- Too violent: a bunch of doom-and-gloomers.
- They're misogynists.

The final contentions are perhaps more worrisome.

Iron Maiden are a far cry from pacifists. Bruce Dickinson (vocals) is quick to admit there is glory in war as well as pain. But the music of Maiden and Sister deals less with world war than it does with personal confrontations. Iron Maiden emphasizes freedom from tyranny: "[I'm] Not a prisoner/I'm a free man/And my blood is my own now." They infer that violence is a means to a positive end. Sister, on the other hand, are streetwise and they deal in generation-gap anthems; basic anti-authoritarianism. This is not-so-subtly proven in their recent kids-against-Neider-

meyer videos.

Essentially, Iron Maiden uses negative imagery for visual "appeal." As in the days of Shakespeare, audiences today are interested in the supernatural. The main influences on Maiden's songs are horror movies and science fiction literature. References are numerous to Poe, Herbert's *Dune*, Coleridge and even a British hymn (in "Revelation"). These allusions give an illusion of grandeur to the often anti-intellectual quality of Metal.

In Iron Maiden's show, a ten-foot-tall corpse/mascot named Eddie is intended as a spectacle. Now that I.M. travels with six 45-foot trucks of gear, including a

stage set of pyramids complete with Sphinx, spectacle should be the least of the band's concerns.

Twisted Sister, instead of relying on expensive scenery, have patented the most outrageous stage patter ever. Dee Snider equates profanity with entertainment in the manner of the lowliest comedians. The band sees obscenity as a means to deliver its message to its audience, the message being Individual Rights.

Sister's woman-inspired costumes and cosmetics (designed by Snider's wife) do not reflect their attitude toward women, which is decidedly non-chauvinistic. Four of the presumably nasty Sisters are

happily married. These guys may be caught up in the rock world, but they are not caught up in its typical playboy image. In fact, the head Twisted Sister has even written some lovely ballads ("You're Not Alone" and "The Price"). It should be noted that T.S. hasn't yet thrown gratuitous sex-kittens into their "fun" videos.

Iron Maiden, while not actively defending women's rights, do not implicitly condemn women either. Occasionally, however, they will refer to wartime murders of women and children as a despicable act which must be revenged. They take a sort of masculine pride in defending one's territory from invaders.

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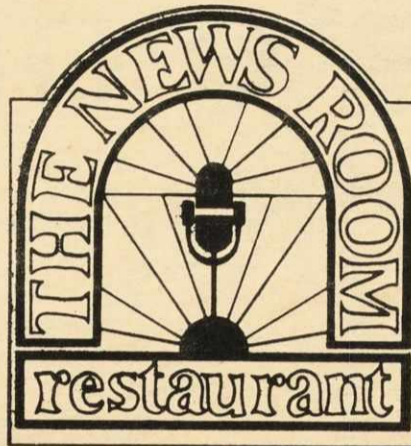


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