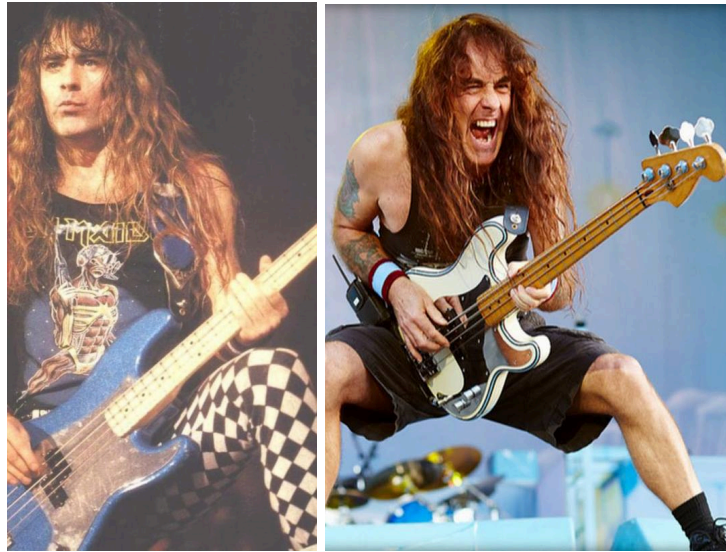


A Review of Iron Maiden's *"Piece of Mind"* (1983)

By Marek Vallée



Members



Steve Harris (1975-present)



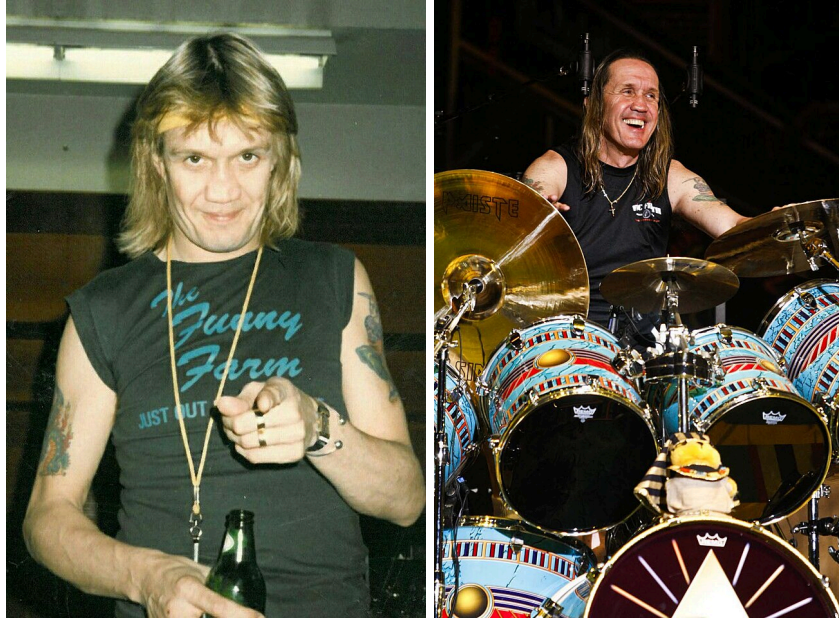
Dave Murray (1976-1977, 1978-present)



Adrian Smith (1980-1990, 1999-present)



Bruce Dickinson (1981-1993, 1999-present)



Nicko McBrain (1982-present)

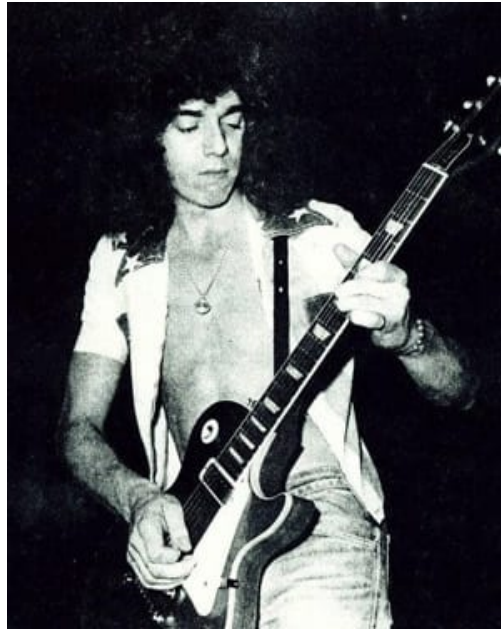


Janick Gers (1990-present)

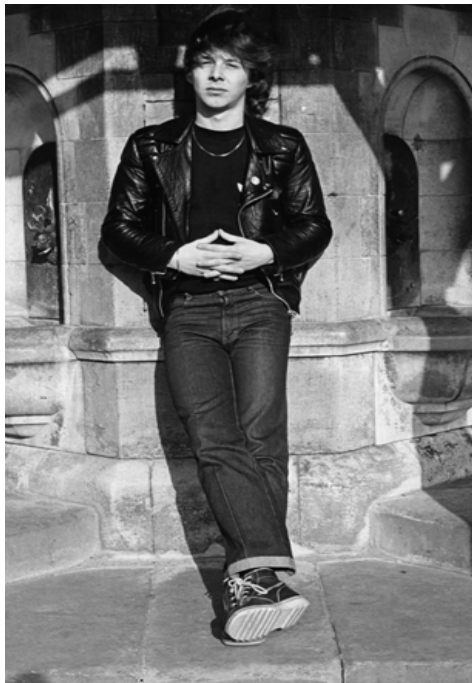
Other Notable Members



Paul Di'Anno (1978-1981)



Dennis Stratton (1979-1980)



Clive Burr (1979-1982)



Blaze Bayley (1994-1999)

A Brief History of the Band

Iron Maiden are an English Heavy Metal band formed in 1975 by bassist Steve Harris. Between the time it was formed and the release date of their first album in 1980, there were many lineup changes. After that, they did have a couple more lineup changes but as of 1999, they have had what is regarded as their best lineup (now with 3 guitarists!). They are also considered one of the greatest metal bands of all time, along with the likes of Black Sabbath, Metallica and Mötörhead. Some songs you may know by them include “The Trooper”, “Fear of the Dark”, “Run to the Hills” and “Wasted Years”.



Iron Maiden on their World Piece Tour in 1983 (from left to right: Dave Murray, Nicko McBrain, Bruce Dickinson, Steve Harris, Adrian Smith)

More About the Album

Released on May 16, 1983, this is the band's 4th studio album, and 2nd album with new vocalist Bruce Dickinson. It is also their very first album to feature new drummer Nicko McBrain. This album includes a lot of their best

work, and is personally my favourite album of theirs. It also produced the two singles “Flight of Icarus”, and probably their most famous song “The Trooper”. Some things I love about this album include the bass tone Steve Harris used, and the guitar harmonies on tracks such as “To Tame a Land”, all paired together with Nicko’s amazing drumming and Bruce’s absolute belting vocals. In my personal opinion, no other Maiden album’s songwriting is as good as this one. Though a couple have come close. The band also embarked on the World Piece Tour in 1983 in support of their new album.



Track #1: “Where Eagles Dare”

From the wild drum intro to the simple but heavy main guitar riff, this song is a *perfect* opener for the album, as it sets the tone very well, and is just awesome all around. On someone’s first listen, they may think it is about planes dogfighting in the sky, which isn’t necessarily incorrect, but more specifically, it is about the movie of the same title, starring Clint Eastwood (who kills a bunch of nazis), where a group of Allied soldiers strike a German fortress in the German Alps during WW2.



(Movie poster for *Where Eagles Dare* (1968))

Personally, I'd give this song a 9/10.

Track #2: "Revelations"

One of my favourite tracks on the album, *Revelations* is about two things: the Bible book, and a man named Aleister Crowley, who thought himself to be the antichrist. This is a very fun song to hear live, as the crowd all screams during the instrumental breaks, where they play an A power chord, a G power chord, and then switch back to A. Here's footage of the band playing it from their *Live After Death* concert DVD in 1985:

[Iron Maiden - Revelations \(Live After Death 1985\)](#) (skip to 4:06 for the crowd interaction part)

9.5/10 for this one.

Track #3: "Flight of Icarus"

Released as the first single on the album on April 11, 1983, with the B-side being a cover of Montrose's *"I've Got the Fire"*, this song has a very simple, but very catchy and heavy main guitar riff (and an AMAZING guitar harmony part from Dave and Adrian near the end). The song itself is about the mythological story of Icarus, who (with wax wings) flew too close to the sun and plunged to his death. In the second pre-chorus section, the lyric "Now his wings turn to ashes, to ashes his grave" symbolizes his wings being melted by the heat of the sun, causing him to fall to his death. Personally I love this song, and I really wish they would have played it when I saw them.



(The cover artwork and the back cover for the single)

Another 9/10 for this song.

Track #4: "Die With Your Boots On"

Now if things weren't awesome enough already, here's where it starts to get real awesome. This song has a fantastic guitar riff, and it has the perfect speed and tempo for the song itself. This particular number is essentially a message about how we're all going to die one day, and you might as well live life to the fullest before it's over, and go out fighting, instead of laying in bed, or slaving away at a job you hate.

"No point asking when it is
No point asking who's to go
No point asking what's the game
No point asking who's to blame" - refrain from the song

"If you're gonna die, die with your boots on
If you're gonna try, well, stick around
Gonna cry, just move along
If you're gonna die, you're gonna die" - Chorus from the song

Another 9/10.

Track #5: "The Trooper"

If you don't already know this song from the title alone, you'll most likely know it a few seconds after you hit play. Released as the second single from "*Piece of Mind*" on June 20th of 1983 (along with the b-side "Cross-Eyed Mary", a Jethro Tull cover), this song is definitely their most famous and well-known/widely known track. The guitar work in this song is again, pretty simple, but very effective and catchy. Hell, why do you think it's their most popular song?



(Single cover for The Trooper)



(Iron Maiden's Trooper Beer)

This one is about the Charge of the Light Brigade during the Battle of Balaclava (1854) during the Crimean War, which lasted from 1853-1856. This song also had an MTV music video, but it was later banned for having movie clips where *actual* horses died. And also, they even made their own beer brand named after the song!

Get mad at me all you want, but I give this song a 8.5/10.

Track #6: "Still Life"

Another great song that gets overlooked a lot of the time, *Still Life* is a track about a man who sees the faces of spirits in his pool, which he doesn't only become fascinated with, but they also give him nightmares. Eventually, he takes his partner with him to look at the faces, and he grabs her arm and jumps in the pool with her, where they both drown. This song has a rather unique sound that separates it from the rest of the album (and from most of their discography actually), from the reversed spoken word intro, to the slow and quiet intro suddenly ramping up into something heavier.

Fun Fact No. 1 about this song: The reversed spoken word intro is actually Nicko McBrain (the drummer) talking, and he says "What ho sed de t'ing wid de t'ree bonce" and "Don't meddle wid t'ings you don't understand", followed by a harsh belch (which is actually the first thing the listener hears in the song, except it is reversed!)

No. 2: *Piece of Mind* is one of the very few (4 out of the 17) Maiden albums that doesn't have a title track (actually it's the first of the four too!). However, in this song, during the second chorus, Bruce sings the lyrics "*nightmares coming all the time, nightmares will give me peace of mind*" with a robotic-sounding effect over his voice. Sure, it's not the same spelling, but it makes you think a little bit when you first really notice it.

8.5/10 for this song.

Track #7: "Quest for Fire"

I'm not gonna waste your time, this song is about one thing and one thing alone: *cavemen*.

Okay, okay, I lied (even though that's mostly correct). Like *Where Eagles Dare*, this song is ALSO inspired by a movie of the same title, which was released in 1982, a year before *Piece of Mind's* release. In the film, tribesmen were attacked and their tribal flame was extinguished, and they want to return their "gift of fire" to their tribe. This track is probably my least favourite on the album, but that does not at all make it a bad song. It has a great vocal performance from Bruce Dickinson, and another great accompanying guitar riff from Adrian and Dave, as well as a cool sounding intro.



(Movie poster for *Quest For Fire* (1982))

I give this song a 7.75/10, the lowest ranking you'll see on this review.

Track #8: "*Sun and Steel*"

Another overlooked banger. I *love* this song, even if I like most of the album more than this song. An intro with only a couple notes, with a brief pause, and then the galloping rhythm begins, something that Maiden seems to excel in (along with some of the best guitar harmonies *ever*). I also **REALLY** like Bruce's vocal parts, especially during the choruses of the song.

This one is about a famous Japanese swordsman/samurai/philosopher named Miyamoto Musashi (1584-1645), but this song is also relatable for Bruce Dickinson, because he is actually a really good, world-class fencer.



(A photo of Bruce Dickinson fencing (DUH). Though I'm not sure which one he is. Most likely the one on the left, considering he's only 5'6")

9/10 for this song.

Track #9: "To Tame a Land"

Finally, my absolute favourite track on the album, and one of my favourite Maiden tracks overall. In my personal opinion, this song encapsulates *everything* that Iron Maiden is. Drum fills from Nicko that fit the song perfectly, awesome rhythmic bassline from Steve, amazing high and low guitar parts/riffs from Adrian & Dave, and searing vocals from Bruce. This one is about the story of the character Paul Atreides from the book (and movie(s)) *Dune*, and is a perfect closer for the album. Excellent musicianship from every member of the band. My favourite part is the buildup during the bridge of the song, which then breaks down into a fast and awesome bass riff, accompanied by perfect drums and guitar (again). The intro and outro of the song are also both awesome, starting off quiet in the intro, and then suddenly hitting the listener with the

heavy main riff. And the outro fading out on the last note (which is an F#) is just the cherry on top.



(left to right: the book cover for Dune (1965), the original movie poster for Dune (1984), movie poster for the Dune reboot (2021))

I would say 11/10 for this one, but for the sake of the review, I give it a 10/10.

Overall, I would give this album a 10/10, considering it's my favourite of their albums, and I just love everything about it. It has some of their absolute best songwriting ever, and everything about it is just awesome.