



Candice Night

'One Dark Night, Magic Came Alive'

Renaissance revelers rejoice-the extraordinary "now age" musical entity known as Blackmore's Night have just released their latest album, **'The Village Lanterne'** (which has charted in Russia at #3, the Czech Republic at #3, in Japan at #6, and in Germany at #13), and newest DVD, **'Castles & Dreams'** (SPV Records) this past April, 2006.

Led by the stunning velvet-and-brocade-garbed singer/songwriter Candice Night, and anchored by instrumental virtuoso, Ritchie

Blackmore - formerly chief songwriter and guitar wizard for Deep Purple and Rainbow - Blackmore's Night creates a remarkable musical adventure by blending a contemporary rock sensibility with melodies and lyrics that hark back to the enchantment and mystery of the Renaissance and the Middle Ages.

Mixing guitars and drums with now-exotic instruments from centuries past, such as shawms, chanters and the rauchpfeife, performed by Night, along with Blackmore playing masterfully on the hurdy-gurdy, the group turns each song on Lanterne into a timeless, dream-like opus, whether it's a captivating original Night/Blackmore composition like "25 Years" or "Village Lanterne" or the miraculously revamped version of the Rainbow hit "Street of Dreams."

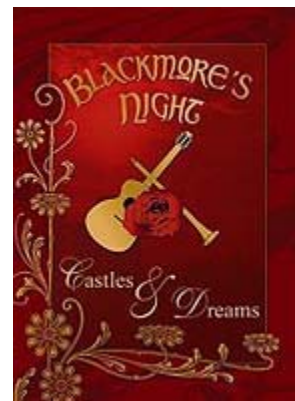
Blackmore's Night was founded in the mid-nineties by Night and Blackmore, musical and life partners who found one of their most profound connections through their mutual love of Renaissance music. The pair has effortlessly transformed their deep and abiding passion for the magic, romance and chivalry of medieval times into a fantastical journey that music fans around the world have been voraciously eager to share.

Chatting recently with Candice Night, I first asked her to tell us more about their new DVD 'Castles & Dreams' and in which German castle it had been filmed? *"The DVD was filmed in the courtyard of a beautiful 12th century German castle near Pegnitz called Schloss Veldenstein. We have played there before and the owner has always made us feel right at home. But this time he really outdid himself. He arranged a full medieval market on the ground of the castle and made it into a whole day event. Everyone*

was dressed up in renaissance or fantasy garb and they were selling handmade wares, meade and even engaging in swordplay to entertain the audience before we came onstage. We had filmed some other footage over the years of our shows at various castles, but the band members and the choice of songs that we had at the point of the filming of the Veldenstein show was so strong, the great energy was there and it was all in all a magic night. To be able to capture that on film is rare. We actually had to cut the footage down from there over 3 hours of songs that we performed that night because when we are feeling good and the audience is completely connected with us we've been known to play all night. As it is the DVD set is a double DVD with the concert footage on one disc, and the second disc has interview footage with each band member, acoustic performances in caves along the Rhein River, home camcorder footage collected from years of our travels, tv performances we've done, videos- it seems to have everything! We're really proud of the way it has come out."

How do you reach out to all these thousands of people to get them there on such a wondrous night?

"Most of the ways that our news spreads is the old fashioned way- word of mouth. Which we actually prefer in a way because those people who find you through word of mouth wind up being a lot more loyal than the normal way of seemingly brainwashing people to buy an album which is just to have the record company pay lots of money to radio stations for lots of repetition. when you hear something so much its not that you actually like it as much as it is you know it because of the repetition. So, for us, the people that find us love what we are doing not for any preconceived idea, but simply because they love the music and the escape that it provides them from a world of never ending stress, pressure and over bombarding of your senses. The people that come to our shows have such a vast array of backgrounds. The ages span from 5 to 85. Woman as well as men love it because women are more drawn to the romantic visions that we give and the men are usually drawn to the Blackmore name and the fact that that name is synonymous with great skill and talent whether its on hurdy gurdy, acoustic guitar or electric- all of which are featured in what we do. Its sort of like we are braving a path for a new type of music, through the woods, and orginally we did it simply for our own escape and for ourselves, but now we are looking behind us and all of these people from all over the world are following us down this path, curiously, and really enjoying themselves. What they are seeing, what they are feeling from the music and just the general vibe of the whole escape. We are really enjoying not being kept in a box, creatively, and just being able to play a song for the sake of the song. We can play folk based music, rock or pop, beautiful ballad or instrumentals or covers or originals. No categories, no titles stamped on us and most importantly no limitations. The shows are more of an event. There is no seperation between us and the audience,



we change the set list every night and just play whatever we feel at the time. So the audience never knows what to expect, and that's one of the reasons that they come to our shows repeatedly. Its one of the rare shows that you can experience that you can enjoy with your whole family, but also that everyone feels really good at. There is such a positive energy as opposed to a lot of music that is created today from aggression or from choreographed moves. Our music is just honest and real and what we love to do. So I think the feeling of love really comes across to the fans and they feel it too."

Does anything ever go wrong in these castle settings? *"Oh of course, it can. But something can go wrong no matter where you play. Our main concern when performing in castles is that the only place in a castle that is large enough to hold the thousands of people that come to the shows is the outdoor courtyard. Indoors is just too small in a castle to hold that many people. So, on an evening where your playing and you look out over from the castle setting and the courtyard is filled with people in garb surrounded by the castle ramparts, the full moon is rising over head and the clock tower is chiming in the distance and everyone is singing and dancing along nothing could be more perfect. But when the skies threaten rain and you have electrical equipment that needs to be protected from the puddles of water that are drenching everyone- it can get a bit difficult. Luckily that's only happened to us a couple of times in the almost 10 years that we've been doing this. We still go out and play for as long as we can and it always amazes me that the fans who are getting soaked in the rain stay for the duration! As a matter of fact the 1st show we filmed for the DVD was in Burg Solingen and that's exactly what happened there. That and the fact that we used up all the electricity with the lights, equipment and cameras so we lost power for a while till the generator kicked in."*

"All the other difficulties of playing at these specialized venues we leave to our production manager who, luckily, loves a challenge. But at the end of the day, all the obstacles and challenges are so worth it because its like nothing you've ever seen before."

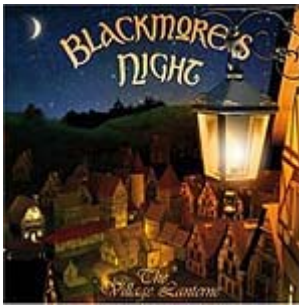
Your combination of soft rock music and European folk melodies, often fused with instruments of the Renaissance era with those of the modern day, have brought a lot of smiles to a world sometimes lacking. But is it a style that is still under-appreciated within the industry? *"I find that in today's industry the whole business seems to be motivated by money first and fashion second. Its never about if anyone can really write their won songs, play their own instruments. Today everything can be manufactured and "fixed" in a studio and its usually the producers creating the real magic, not the so called artists. The people creating their own styles or really mastering their own instruments always seem to be on a back porch or in a forest or around a bonfire creating for themselves - but you never hear of them and certainly almost never hear them on the radio. That's saddening to me because there are such a vast*

array of good musicians out there that never get heard. So, I believe that this industry is based on the wrong ideals. Music is supposed to make you feel heights and depths of emotion. It used to be based on creative people that were easily identifiable through their individuality, but now everyone sounds like everyone else because every major label has to do copy cat signings. I don't mind because I don't fit into that world of following fashion- I'd rather brave my own path, make my own fashion based on my own individuality and not be told who to listen to, what to wear or what to think. I think a lot of people are getting tired of being dictated to also and are looking for something different. They're getting restless with the lack of choice presented to them on radio, on television shows and on MTV which for a music station only seems to show cheap reality shows. I'm just glad that people are thinking outside the box. Our music is for those people that are looking for something different and the industry doesn't usually like it when artists play by the rules not created by the industry because they can't manipulate them. So is it under appreciated by the industry- yes, though it is a movement that is huge in Europe- the US has yet to catch on in a major way. Underground it is a big movement in America, but not that you'd know if your world only consists of commercial radio. I kind of like it though, because it isn't fashionable, so if you're never "in" you can't be "out" when the next 5 minute fashion hits. So I prefer it this way."

To your mind, at what point in time will wearing long velvet skirts, dancing through castle courtyards, peasants and knights abounding everywhere, jesters and kings side by side, and lanes upon lanes of cobblestone streets ever become boring and not entertaining anymore?! *"When people stop dreaming. When we stop reading romance novels and believing in a more romantic way of life that. When we stop believing and hoping for a more magical, more simple place to come upon. When we are ready to be completely satisfied with the mundane. When we stop believing in soul mates and stop being mystified by the beauty of nature. When you can look at a brilliant sunset or a field of fireflies at dusk or have a deer eat from your hand and not feel amazed. When you cease to see through the eyes of a child and cease to wonder and see the magic of the oceans with awe. Then ..."*

Considering all of the Blackmore's Night CD releases, which one has been the most accomplished to your mind thus far - and for what reason? *"I think each one of them is an important reflection as to where we were in our lives, as musicians, as people, as storytellers. The maiden CD, 'Shadow of the Moon,' was our first attempt at this type of music. The songs are strong, but I had yet to be the "front person", to learn the medieval woodwind instruments, but there is still a great innocence and tranquility to it. It still has some of our strongest songs on there. The 2nd album, 'Under A Violet Moon,' was written while we were touring and realized that we needed more upbeat songs to implement into the stage set. So we wrote more gypsy based and faster tempo numbers for that album. 'Fires At Midnight' was when we started incorporating more*

electric guitars and some hurdy gurdy and a few authentic woodwinds like the shawms. 'Ghost of a Rose' had fuller productions, some more orchestral songs, and at that point I could utilize the 5 woodwind instruments I had then learned to play. All the while, we were writing while on tour mostly so the songs have very varied backgrounds. We were playing exotic places, absorbing the folk melodies of the regions, staying in the castles, playing in UNESCO sites and amazing historical venues world wide. We took the spirits of those places and weaved them into songs. You can hear the influences some of those regions and specific places had on us through out the songs. I think on this latest album, 'The Village Lanterne,' we are at a new place in our musical journey. Still telling the tales of myths and legends, but paralleling the stories so that we can feel them just as strongly today and recognize ourselves in the tales. This CD isn't a destination, its a continuation of the journey. Its where we are now. I am very proud of the songs on here. There is such variety, from haunting nature spirit songs like "Faerie Queen," to full out rock tracks to olde world tavern songs all the way over to ballads and instrumentals. Its a journey of what we've seen, experienced and where we are and where we're going."



When can we expect to see the new CD, 'The Village Lanterne' - and what will be its musical theme? *"The Village Lanterne' was just released this month in the USA. Its theme is varied and yet distinctly Blackmore's Night style. It even has a few of Ritchie's past tracks on there just for fun. It was great to breathe some new life into some old classics."*

Has Richie ever discussed remastering or re-recording any of the classic Deep Purple and/or Rainbow albums - to allow a new generation to discover who he was in his previous rock existence?

"We actually find out that that is being done all the time as far as the remastering. We usually find out through fans since the record companies own the rights and never tell us when those things are coming out. He actually wishes it was done less than what they are doing because he feels its taking advantage of the fans and he would never want that to happen. He gets a little tired of hearing there's a new very very very very best of 25th, 26th, 27th anniversary edition of the same songs that they have been putting out since the 70's. He loves those songs and appreciates the fact that fans are into them, but he doesn't understand why they keep trying to sell the same songs again and again in different packaging. As for the re recording of any of the songs, we have redone "Street Of Dreams" and "Child In Time" on 'The Village Lanterne.' They were great songs to do, but he also is loving what he is doing now. It's nice for him to have the freedom to do the old stuff if he chooses, but to be able to play whatever he wants to as well. We may do a few more, just for fun, and we do a few on stage, but in our own style. He doesn't feel there's

any need to rehash the past when there's so much that he hasn't done yet that he's looking forward to doing and he's enjoying the challenge of the new music as well as the new instruments he's discovering."

What '80s (and possibly cheesy!) song would you love to cover today - in a Renaissance style - if asked ... and why?! *"I am a huge fan of cheesy 80's music, that's my generation you know! So it would be hard to get me to choose just one and to stop me from singing any of the ones even thought about or mentioned! But for the sake of time I guess I'll go for 80's hair band rock ballad classic like "I Remember You" by Skid Row. But I know now I will spend the rest of the day thinking of and singing along in my head to about 100 other cheesy 80's songs ... Thx for the flashback!!"*

Lastly, I like Penguins ... do you?! *"Doesn't everyone?!"*

Interviewed by Russell A. Trunk

If you would like to win an AUTOGRAPHED copy of the new Blackmore's Night CD 'The Village Lanterene', and you feel you know all there is to know about the band, just answer this easy Blackmore's Night question: Aside from 'Beyond The Sunset: The Romantic Collection,' which other Blackmore's Night album was voted '#1 Vocal Album of the Year' in the United States by the New Age Reporter and the National Public Radio Stations?

Send me your answers and if you're correct you'll be in the running to win one of these great new AUTOGRAPHED CDs! Just send us an e:mail here before June 15th with your answer and the subject title **'BLACKMORE'S NIGHT SIGNED CDs'** to: exclusivemagazine@flash.net

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