

It's not easy being vocalist for Blackmore's Night. The acoustic numbers require delicacy, crystal-clear diction and purity of tone. The electric numbers demand the power to rise above the Stratocaster stylings of guitar god Ritchie Blackmore. Candice Night is able to meet both requirements. Like the Renaissance Faires she loves, her voice evokes a mythic time-less elsewhere with roots in both fantasy and history.

Several years ago we interviewed Blackmore's Night (see *newWitch*#4.) Since that time their popularity has only grown — and so has their touring schedule. We were able to catch up with Candice during a break from her recording of the latest Blackmore's Night release, *The Secret Voyage*.

the magic of  
*Candice*  
*Night*

***Like me, you live on Long Island. Why have you chosen to make your home here?***

I've lived on Long Island my whole life. I have owls in the woods next to my home in the winter, deer in my backyard year round, and hummingbirds in the summer. When the fireflies light up the garden you know magic exists. There is no more beautiful place for me than home.

It's funny, I never thought I wanted to travel because of the beauty of this island.

***Yet travel you do! Last year Blackmore's Night played sold-out shows in Sofia (Bulgaria) and Belgrade (Serbia). Now you're on your way to Poland, Sweden, and Finland. How do you manage to keep yourselves grounded while on the road?***

In each place I try to learn a bit of the language, see the historical sites, buy some folk art or hand-crafts. I also try to find out about the local legends or folklore; as a result many of those ideas and places get woven into song lyrics or titles.

***Not only are you a singer: on many songs you've played shawms, recorders, bagpipe chanters, and other instruments including a rauchpfeife. This leads to an obvious question: what's a rauchpfeife?***

A rauchpfeife is a double reed Renaissance wood wind instrument with a wind cap on it. Shawms are similar but without a wind cap. I also play the cornamuse, which is a softer, more muted sound: it's the predecessor to the oboe. The double reed woodwinds are Ritchie's favorite instruments because they are the more bombastic-sounding ones. They were used to announce the kings and queens with pageantry music but also would accompany those doing battle. Sort of the "rock-n-roll" of the period.



### **What early music, Renaissance or Elizabethan composers have inspired you?**

The ones that move and inspire us the most are Tielman Susatto and Pierre Attaignant. Of course, so many songs are credited to that famous composer “Anonymous” but are usually taken from traditional folk songs of the area. I also enjoy the Cantigas and the works of the Spanish composers like King Alfonso the 10th of Spain. A great band that really captures the gypsy style of Spanish traditional folk music is the Terra Nova Consort.

### **Blackmore’s Night has recorded a few songs from Ritchie’s past, like “Child in Time” and “Street of Dreams.” How do you combine hard rock and Renaissance instruments? (Now I’m imagining “Highway Star” on a shawm...)**

I don’t know if “Highway Star” would work but I know “Smoke on the Water” does! As do many of the Rainbow songs... picture “I Surrender” on the Renaissance woodwinds! Many heavy guitar-riffed songs work really well on these instruments. I once saw a Swedish medieval band playing Black Sabbath’s “Iron Man” on shawms and rauchepffes. It was brilliant!

We find that the riffs of the Renaissance and medieval songs played on the bombastic woodwinds are so defined that they easily translate to electric instruments. Then if you reintroduce the original woodwinds within the song as well, you create a very different sound which incorporates instruments of such varied time periods.

### **I’m presently listening to *Winter Carols* (2006), which is marvelous! I love the way you capture the universal spirit of the Winter season. Do you have plans for a follow-up?**

I hope so! These were songs that we tried to bring back to their roots. Many of them were traditional melodies even before the church changed the words. Now everyone, no matter what your belief system, can enjoy the music! There are so many wonderful songs to choose from, “The Holly and the Ivy” probably being one of the oldest: which is really just about celebrating nature. Every year we have a holiday party, invite everyone we know, and perform the songs of the season.

### **We know you and your partner Ritchie. Who are the other minstrels of Blackmore’s Night?**

Bard David of Larchmont is our keyboard player/resident operatic vocalist and general comic relief of the group. He is classically trained in voice, piano, and pipe organ and has even built a number of harpsichords that he has at home. Squire Malcom of Lumley is our English drummer / percussionist who has played in everything from orchestral surroundings to punk bands. We have a new bass player/rhythm guitarist who has yet to choose his (band) name: he was thinking of Sir Michael of Chimey because he likes that Belgian beer so much! He also plays our and lute so we may be using him on a number of instruments. Finally, our new backing vocalist is Lady Elizabeth. She also plays violin and has done so on a number of the USA shows that we did last year.

The great thing about the band members is that everyone has such varied backgrounds that they all bring something new to the band; and they can become anyone they want to on that stage, so they enjoy stepping into their roles.

### **I understand that Ian Anderson (Jethro Tull) and Joe Lynn Turner (Deep Purple, Rainbow) have also performed with Blackmore’s Night.**

We asked Ian to play on a song we did called “Play Minstrel Play” about the Pied Piper of Hamelin. The song is about how musicians are powerful because music is the great master of emotions; it makes you feel melancholy, excited, peaceful, or reflective.... We thought that Ian, as the original rock-and-roll minstrel and such an amazing pied piper himself, would be the perfect match for that song. We sent it to him and he played this incredible flute solo; he’s such a musical genius.

### **What went into the creation of *Secret Voyage*? Are there any songs which have special meaning for you?**

They all have such special meanings for me that it’s hard to choose between them. “The Circle” is probably my most lyrically important work because the symbol of the circle is so powerful. It represents the cycle of life, the seasons, the moon and sun and the earth itself. It also affirms that history repeats itself and we as humans should be learning from our past, not repeating our mistakes. I wonder how many chances we will get before the circle stops renewing itself and just stops — it’s a scary thought. So I hope that everyone does their bit to make this world a better place; maybe your neighbor will do the same and it will spread.

“Sister Gypsy” also holds a special meaning for me. It celebrates the nature-inspired, dance beneath the full moon, wild child within us all.

### **I was impressed by your fantastic version of the old doo-wop chestnut “Can’t Help (Falling in Love With You).” What inspired that?**

Ritchie and I are always bringing our instruments into restaurants, taking over a dark back corner with our friends, all dressed in garb, lighting candles and playing songs that we all sing along to. This was one of those songs that wound up being a great sing-along. If you make it uptempo — which no one has ever done with that song before — it takes on a different life. It was a great speed for Ritchie to do electric solos on the CD, and just a fun song for us to record.

### **Before becoming a musician, you modeled professionally for several years. What was that like?**

It was a great experience. It taught me how to deal with rejection and not take it too personally. It also taught me to become the character they were looking for in front of the camera. But I missed being able to have people know me on the inside, not just what the camera sees. Now — with what I do and the writing of lyrics and singing and playing — I feel it’s so much more *me*.



**You've been a model and a musician — now, with the forthcoming *Pray for Light* — you're a star on the silver screen. How do you like being in the movies?**

I am so excited to be involved in this project! I had acting lessons and performed in small theater productions when I was very young; it taught me how to be able to step inside someone else's shoes and see through their eyes. To act, you have to recognize a part of you in your character and feel what they feel; it translates into more than a character, it really is *you* these things are happening to!

The storyline is set in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, just after the Witch trials. There were so many suspicious minds at that time, and my character, Emily, is so pure of heart. Though it is classified as a horror film, it is also about the timelessness of true love.

**You've been a frequent guest at Faerie festivals: in 2006, you were the Faerie Magazine Festival Queen and Western Pennsylvania Faerie Festival Queen. You obviously have developed a fine relationship with the Good Folk, and their admirers: any words about the Fae?**

I have an enchanting relationship with nature; to find miracles you need look no further than a sunset's colors or watch a butterfly in flight. I get enormously inspired by legends, myths, and faerie tales as well.

I am a strong believer in the idea that we share this planet with many otherworldly beings. I believe they may be trying to tell us to protect this amazing earth. There are many mysteries and realms we have yet to explore, but perhaps if they stay hidden then we can't ruin them. There is so much we will never understand; just to be in harmony with all around us is enough for me.

**You and Ritchie are both known for your interest in spiritual things.**

Ritchie and I are on a constant journey; we are always learning. We try to stay open and I think that's why we are able to feel such a deep connection with nature and be able to translate our feelings and inspirations into music.

In this world, it is so easy to close down and be jaded. We are all in a constant state of survival mode. Stress and pressure



photo by R Brand

Far left: *Blackmore's Night in all its glory*: left to right- Ritchie Blackmore, Candice Night, Gypsy Rose, Bard David of Larchmont, Squire Malcolm of Lunley, Earl Grey of Chimay. live. Left: Candice during a concert in Neuenburg, Germany.

I don't think that anyone sat down and worked out the idea. As with everything in our music, our touring schedule is an honest representation of who we are. Going to Renaissance Faires is something we have always loved to do. When we're not at a Faire we have Maypole parties at our home, in our garden. All of our friends come dressed up and we dance the Maypole, sit around the bonfire, and get back to an old-fashioned form of communication... talking! Under a starry sky with crickets singing in the background and everyone with acoustic instruments playing or storytelling and pondering the mysteries of the universe and where we are going.

**I've heard tales of a haunted castle in Waldeck, Germany that inspired a song on your new CD, "Prince Waldeck's Galliard."**

Oh, there are many haunted castles, Waldeck is one of the most amazing ones I have ever seen. It was depicted on our first album cover, *Shadow of the Moon*, in 1997. The history of the castle is filled with tragic stories. We have played at the castle (and stayed there, too) many times, and have had many experiences with the castle's ghosts.

**Uncanny happenings at your concerts seem to abound; rumor has it you've even had people in rabbit suits running across the stage.**

I don't know what you're referring to... Perhaps its because Ritchie's instrumentals are so intoxicating people start hallucinating during the show and see the strangest things! Though I did once trip over a large costume with very large ears attached to it backstage once... hmmm....

**What's next?**

2008 was so intense I might relax for a month or two! *Secret Voyage* was released in the U.S. on July 15th, then there was the movie shoot, European tours, and — our fans know this already — Ritchie and I got married this fall.

**Congratulations!**

After eighteen years together it was about time. Our German minstrel friends flew over to play; of course, everything was Renaissance-Faire themed. It was a wonderful wedding!

**How can your fans keep up with you?**

Check out our website at [www.blackmoresnight.com](http://www.blackmoresnight.com) for all the latest news, photos, videos, and audio files. There's something new there all the time! ☺

— KOHRINOOR SETORA is a mystic, epicure, lady about town, and voracious reader who lives with several pets and a mountain of books in the New York metro area.

abound; our senses are constantly bombarded with people yelling at us in commercials, reality shows, movies with fifty explosions in the first thirty minutes. We never take time out for ourselves, our senses, and our spirit. That is one reason there is so much negativity and anger in the world. Everyone is completely tapped out; we're all running on empty.

I wish more people would just shut everything off, light some candles, and just breathe for even a few minutes a day. If you walk through the woods, feel the wind in your hair or the raindrops on your face, or just take time to watch a sunset you are immediately renewed. But we're all so exhausted by the end of the day no one takes time to do that. We all have the key to our own prisons. Unfortunately, we just tend not to give ourselves the credit for having that power.

**Where other bands might have concentrated on clubs and bars, Blackmore's Night tours Renaissance Faires. It was an unusual idea when you started and it proved to be a brilliant one: you've established a rabid Rennie fanbase. Who was responsible for this stroke of genius?**