



Candice & Ritchie

OCTOBER 5, 2008

Written by IVETTE MANNERS

As the lead singer and guitarist of the New Age band Blackmore's Night, Candice Night and Ritchie Blackmore have inspired many love stories with their enchanting lyrics. "When we started writing our songs together, we noticed that couples were getting married to them because they're so romantically based," says Candice. Their own love story began in 1989 while Candice was working for the Long Island rock radio station WBAB and Ritchie was the guitarist in the band Deep Purple. A charity soccer match was set up between his band and staffers at WBAB, and Candice attended the game to cheer her team on. "Ritchie's team was stacked with semiprofessionals and they beat our team very badly," says Candice. "After the game, I went over to congratulate Ritchie on his win and ask him for an autograph." Even with the large crowd of fans around him, Ritchie looked up at Candice and noticed how beautiful she was. But, unlike the prince who let Cinderella slip out of sight, Ritchie sent three of his roadies through the crowd to find out who Candice was and to ask her to meet him later on at a local pub. That night, they talked until the early morning. "It was like seeing an old friend again, even though we had just met," Ritchie later told Candice. They kept in touch no matter where Ritchie was touring around the world, and whenever he was in town, they made sure to meet up. In 1991, they moved in together and two years later Candice started touring with Ritchie and his band.

Christmas has become an important holiday for Candice and Ritchie, both professionally—because they've written hit songs about the season—and personally. One Christmas Eve, Ritchie took Candice out on the deck of their home overlooking Long Island Sound. "The sky was brilliant with pink and orange colors that reflected off the water," says Candice. "He put a blanket around my shoulders to keep me warm, and got down on one knee. It was perfect!"

Fittingly, the couple that loves everything about the Renaissance era held their wedding in a castle—the Castle on the Hudson in Tarrytown, NY. Candice chose a Renaissance fantasy theme and infused her passion for fairy tales into her big day. She was a true princess bride in a gown specially made for



CEREMONY & RECEPTION SITE: Castle on the Hudson

PHOTOGRAPHY: Michael Keel Studios

VIDEOGRAPHY: Joseph Edwards Videographers

OFFICIANT: Rabbi Roger Ross

WEDDING GOWN: Demetrios

CEREMONY MUSIC: Gypsy Rose String Quartet

BOTTLE DANCERS: Pasternack Productions

MINSTRELS FROM GERMANY: Des Geyers

WEDDING CAKE: Black Forest Bakery

her by Demetrios. It was designed with a corset bodice, dropped waistline, modified sweetheart neckline, and a chapel-length train. The bodice of the dress was embellished with silver thread and crystals, and the lacy skirt was decorated with crystals hand sewn into the middle of lace flowers. The groom wore a Renaissance-style outfit based on one once worn by the legendary actor Errol Flynn. The bridesmaids each wore a different color custom-made Renaissance-style dress, and the groomsmen wore dark suits for the ceremony, and then changed into period garb for the reception.

The ceremony, which incorporated Candice's Jewish religion and Ritchie's Spiritualist beliefs, took place in the gardens of the Castle. A string quartet played instrumental songs that the bride and groom wrote; and the couple said their vows under a chuppah made of willow wood decorated with white roses, crystals, and butterflies. Their vows, written by Candice, and Tao readings reflected on the beauty of nature. They did the traditional breaking of the glass, but used a light bulb instead of a glass as part of their commitment to recycling and preserving the Earth. They also had a wine sharing ceremony dedicated to Gaia, the Earth spirit; and ended the wedding ceremony with a Cherokee blessing and a 20-dove release.

The reception was held in the Great Hall of the Castle—a grand space designed in a medieval style with high cathedral ceilings, stained glass

windows, and tapestries on the wall. To further go along with the event's renaissance fantasy theme, the seating cards were written to give each guest a title, such as "Lord", "Lady", and "Earl". Medieval minstrels serenaded the guests as they walked in. After Candice and Ritchie made their grand entrance, bottle dancers did a comedic skit and then leapt into dance. Following their performance, everyone got on the dance floor and raised the couple up on chairs and they all danced the hora. "It was like being in Fiddler on the Roof," says Candice. The photo booth rented for the occasion was a big hit, and a scrapbook was made for the couple with all the fun photos taken that night. There was also a magician and belly dancers.

The guests dined on Maine lobster bisque, roasted free-range chicken wrapped in prosciutto, and filet mignon. The open bar included authentic German beer. Their 4-tier chocolate and vanilla cake was covered in white fondant stenciled in gold. In addition to minstrels, the music for the celebration also included a DJ who played ethnic, dance, and period music; and a jam session at the end of the night performed by the couple and their musician friends who attended the wedding.

After the fairy tale wedding, the happy couple honeymooned in Aruba. "It was truly the wedding of our dreams," says Candice. "Our first dance as man and wife was the only time that I've ever cried tears of joy."

