



Blackmore's Night

Interview with Ritchie Blackmore

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Every Night Is Halloween

by: Jennifer Kajzer

Ritchie Blackmore, most known for his work in Concrete God, who later changed their name to Deep Purple, has traveled through the world of music dating back to the '60s. Naturally, Ritchie's resume could kill an entire tree, fast-forwarding in the effort of thinking "green," you're going to embark on a journey into Blackmore's Night.

Ritchie Blackmore first laid his eyes on Candice Night (yes, Night as in Blackmore's Night) in 1990. Candice was born in Happaug, Long Island, and lived on the island her whole life. She worked for a radio station and met Ritchie Blackmore there during a radio station event. Candice said, "He told me, 'You're very beautiful,' with his English accent," after she had approached him for an autograph. Ritchie asked Candice to meet her at a bar after this event. "We wound up talking all night, we had so much in common on so many different levels, and we were good friends for a long time before anything progressed," Candice said. Shortly thereafter, the two embarked on a romantic journey with each other, and now Ritchie lives with Candice at her home on Long Island.

In 1993 Ritchie asked Candice to go on the road with him and that's how she started singing. "He asked me to sing background vocals and he had just left Deep Purple and re-formed Rainbow, and I was always a closet poet. The guys from Rainbow were stuck in a farmhouse in Massachusetts in a few feet of snow and they were going a little stir crazy, having a hard time coming up with lyrics. Ritchie would call me and play me the tracks and ask if I could come up with anything to help them." Candice used to go up to visit them in the house, and she would sit with Ritchie in front of a fireplace while the other guys were brewing beer or doing their backing tracks. They would sit with his acoustic guitar and write songs. They started playing their music for their friends who would tell them, "That sounds kinda interesting, if you put it out there, I'd buy it." So goes the natural evolution of Blackmore's Night.

So you started with Ritchie in the '90s. What's the band up to today?

We've been together as Black's Night for 10 years, this upcoming tour is our anniversary tour. We've really built up a lot overseas, so that's the market we've owned a lot, because we get a lot of inspiration from there, like the Teutonic melodies from the 1500s and 1600s are so inspirational. Ritchie has found an incredible passion when listening to that music. For Ritchie, as soon as he used to step off that rock-n-roll stage, he'd put on purist Renaissance music. Although we still play rock on stage, he now has this creative freedom to play ballads or folk or tavern music, where people swing their beer mugs and dance in the aisle. Ritchie is also able to open up and channel from a higher place and play these extended intros and solos and you'll never see the same show twice, he changes set lists every night. Now, 10 years later, we have five studio albums and our second DVD called *Paris Moon* coming out Nov. 4 in America. We have a Christmas/winter carols album coming in December and we have half our new album recorded already. So in January when it's really cold out, we'll stay in the studio [in our home] and finish up that album.

So you have this New York show around Halloween on the 29th. Do you have anything special planned for this show?

Halloween is my favorite holiday. We do something for it every year. When I first started out, I was a model. I started working for Ruby's costume catalog, they used to black my teeth out and it was my favorite. But for us, Halloween is every night for us. We dress up in Renaissance garb for every show, we have the three-dimensional stage in this medieval town wherever we go. Obviously, overseas when we play in castles, the effect is so much more than here, where we're playing theaters, it's harder to get people into that mindset. But we encourage fans to dress up and wear their personalities, just to feel free to express who they are. People come as jesters, monks, fairy princesses, 'Robin Hoods,' queens, knights, and it's just great to see what people are like on the inside, and it's a very brave thing for

people to do!

So tell me what Ritchie is like.

He's probably everything you heard and nothing you heard. He's this mystery conundrum wrapped in enigma! He's probably one of the most interesting people I've ever met. He has a generous and pure heart. He never seems to get burned. He's fascinating and probably not like anyone you've met before.

We go on owl prowls at midnight, he puts on a long cloak with a walking stick and a hat with a feather and a lantern, and we go through the woods here looking for owls. He's really involved with nature. And for me it's amazing because I get to wake up in the morning and the first thing I hear is probably the world's best guitarist serenading the birds outside or our two pussycats. Oh! And he's obsessed with the vacuum cleaner. We have three floors in the house so we have three vacuums in the house.

Besides playing guitar and being involved with the paranormal and nature, he actually likes to vacuum. Me personally, I'm a swiffer fan.

What's your relationship like with Ritchie?

I think we're the perfect kind of yin yang balance. All of my weaknesses are his strengths and vice versa. So as much as we probably wouldn't work on paper or according to a match.com for example, the age, schooling, music, background and geographical differences, when you put it in practice, when we're together, it's like we complete each other. It's almost like looking in the mirror and it's the same person but the complete opposite, but it's the two halves of the whole. Even creatively, he deals with all the music and I deal with all the words. We never cross paths on those things.

Because we have a personal relationship, I'm always there singing in the house, in the kitchen, wherever, being in the same house it's easier for him to come up with a melody, then call me into the room. I play all the Renaissance medieval woodwinds. I have them all over the house, hung up on the wall. So I'll grab one and start playing with him and singing some melody lines. Because we are around each other a lot, we find ourselves writing in a much different form than most others.

He lives here in Long Island, he's actually here right now sitting in the den. We have this house right on the water in a seaside town next to Port Jefferson. We are so close to nature here. Inside the house, he wanted this dungeon bar room. So we made this stone basement bar room. We invite people over and have amazing parties. Then we have another room that's a studio here, but the house isn't that big. When I first met him, he was living in this big Tudor house in Connecticut deep in the woods with Christmas lights on all year round inside. I used to walk in and hear this Renaissance music playing all the time. And now, I hear this music and it brings me back to those butterflies in my stomach. It's so nostalgic.

When I first met him (this November marks 18 years since), it was so mysterious and magical. He loved doing magic tricks on people and I was so enamored by it. And now, he's still coming out with these unbelievable tunes and melodies. He's in a really nice place emotionally and spiritually. He's pulling inspiration from where he wants to. He isn't in one box, and can play different types of music. Yes, he still has the Fender Strat, but he's also playing the nickel harp, mandolin, the herdie gerdie and electro acoustics. He has a newfound passion and inspiration, and for me, as someone who cares for him not only as a musician and as a legend, but as someone who cares about him as a person, as my other half in my life in this life's journey, it's great to see him pulling the inspiration from some place positive. A lot of his past inspiration has come from negative places and friction, and we all know he can do it, coming out with these great melodies, but now it's more positive. And I'm just so happy for him

Blackmore's Night will play the Blender Theater at Gramercy on Monday, Oct. 29. For more info visit blackmoresnight.com.
