

Night inspired by Renaissance

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For 10 years, Candice Night and former Deep Purple guitarist Ritchie Blackmore have made music together as Blackmore's Night.

Unlike the straight-forward, blues-based rock of the guitarist's past, the music they play lies in the area of baroque-inspired, classically highlighted minstrel music. The style stems from the two artists' love for the Renaissance era.

Blackmore's Night recently released a new live CD/DVD, "Paris Moon," which features the group's best-loved songs, gleaned from a concert in the famous Olympia theatre. "There were a lot of great musicians who have played that place," Night said by phone from the couple's home in Long Island, N.Y. "I felt a little intimidated. We didn't know if the audience would like us or what they would be expecting. We didn't know if they would like us or throw rotten tomatoes at us. But as soon as we stepped on stage, it was a celebration."

"Paris Moon" is a little different than the couple's last DVD release "Castles & Dreams," which was released in 2005. "We recorded Castles & Dreams" at an old castle in Germany," said Night. "It was a DVD that we did of the concert, but also of the Renaissance fair that the promoters set up during our stay. It was wonderful.

"With 'Paris Moon,' we wanted to do something a little different. We have a limited-edition package with both the DVD and the CD in a little antique-book package. But we also sell the DVD and CD separately."

The songs on the "Paris Moon" CD include "Minstrel Hall," "The Clock Ticks On" and the crowd favorite "Under a Violet Moon," to name a few. The DVD features all those songs, plus "Renaissance Faire" and a reworking of Deep Purple's "Soldier of Fortune." "I love rock music, I am familiar with Deep Purple and (Blackmore's other band) Rainbow," Night said. "So it's kind of like a game when he throws out some old songs to see if I can sing them. I have had a vast musical background. Mom was into Broadway tunes. Dad was into Benny Goodman. I loved it all, and during my teens did the hair-band and spandex.

"But the singer's influence that has stayed with me from the time I first heard her until now is Stevie Nicks. There was something about her music lyrically and mystically. She sang about 'Sisters of the Moon,' 'Rhiannon' and 'Gypsy.' And she wasn't afraid to stay feminine and magical during the hair band-and-spandex days."

Night met Blackmore when she was working as an intern at a New York radio station. "I have always loved music, and knew that I wanted to be in a business close to music. While I was interning, Deep Purple came to town, and we had a promotional soccer game. You would not believe how they stacked the game. They had all these great players, and we had all our overweight DJs. They killed us.

"Anyway, I went over to, grudgingly, tell Ritchie, 'Good game' and we struck up a friendship. That night we talked about our love of the Renaissance, and we haven't stopped yet."

Night's first gig with Blackmore was during a Rainbow show in Europe. "Ritchie asked if I could sing the backing to the song 'Difficult to Cure,' which is basically Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. I was so nervous. So they hid me backstage behind speakers. It must have been good, because the reviews of the show complimented the female vocal samples in the keyboards.

"It was during that tour, Ritchie and I sat down and wrote some songs just for us. We wrote acoustic songs with that Renaissance flair. We had no idea it would turn into our first album 'Beneath the Moon.'"

For a decade, Blackmore's Night has been a hit on tours and at Renaissance Fairs. A couple of years ago, Night was chosen by Faerie — a publication dedicated to the history, myth, literature, art and "reality" of faeries and the like — to represent the magazine as its Faerie Queen. "The magazine and our ideas share the same philosophies," said Night. "Blackmore's Night has always tried to find the balance between music and nature.

"Throughout the years we have moved back and forth between the electric and acoustic. But each time we have found new instruments, such as the hurdy gurdy and various stringed instruments, to fill out our sound. Faerie magazine celebrates the art of myth and nature. And it's an honor for me to represent it."

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