

## Album Review — Blackmore's Night: Secret Voyage

August 21, 2008

by Peter Lindblad

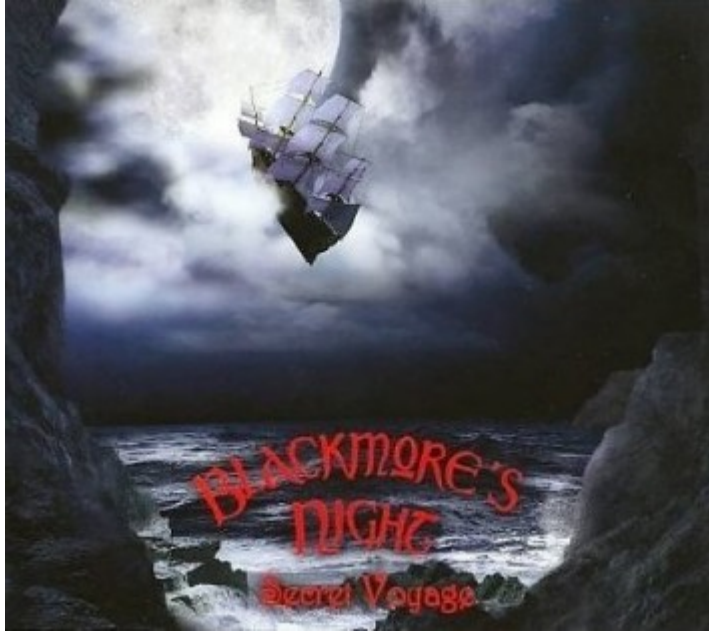
Under Review

Blackmore's Night

Secret Voyage

SPV (91782 CD-E)

Grade: \*\*\*\*



Another haunting journey through the ancient past, *Secret Voyage* takes this group of wandering minstrels to musical ports of call both familiar and foreign. Along the way, the collective, led by legendary rock guitarist Ritchie Blackmore and the ethereal chanteuse Candice Night, resurrects the folk music of Eastern Europe, France, Germany and, of course, England with a beguiling mix of modern and Renaissance-era instrumentation.

On the rollicking, toe-tapping drinking song “Toast To Tomorrow,” stringed instruments, including Gypsy Rose’s violin, wheel about the dance floor in an authentic mastery of Russian folk traditions, while “Gilded Cage,” featuring Blackmore’s intricate acoustic guitar patterns and borrowing from French folk styles, plays on romantic, old-world sensibilities.

But, Renaissance music is Blackmore’s Night’s forte, and the lushness of “The Circle” and the misty atmosphere of “Sister Gypsy” — both featuring Night’s alluring vocals and gripping lyrical tales — drive home the point.

Examples of Blackmore’s incredible dexterity as a guitarist abound in the acoustic instrumental “Prince Waldeck’s Galliard,” an adaptation of German traditions, and the more English leaning “Peasant’s Promise.” Interestingly, the full, rich reworking of “Rainbow’s Eyes,” an old Rainbow tune, and Blackmore’s soaring guitar leads on the synth-powered remake of Elvis’ “Can’t Help Falling In Love” make you wonder if he’s, indeed, ready to give up the rock ghost.

If nothing else, Blackmore’s Night should be applauded for reintroducing the world to musical styles that would, otherwise, be in danger of being forgotten entirely. That they continue to find new avenues of expression through dead musical languages is nothing short of remarkable.