

# BLACKMORE'S NIGHT

*It doesn't feel like fifteen years since Blackmore's Night debuted with 'Shadow Of The Moon', when guitarist Ritchie Blackmore moved away from the rock he played with Deep Purple and Rainbow to try his hand at Renaissance music. With Candice Night by his side, the pair have gone from strength to strength, winning over fans with their exquisite albums and superb live performances. One of these performances has been filmed for release, titled 'A Knight In York', their third live DVD. Long term fan James Gaden needed no further motivation for the chance to speak to both Ritchie and Candice in an exclusive UK interview. Sit back for stories about touring with Blackmore's Night, making records, conversing with ghosts, playing practical jokes and the reason why Rainbow is no more...*

**I loved the DVD Ritchie, not only is it a really good show, but I was there in person when you filmed it so it brought back great memories. I thought it was absolutely superb. Was it one of the best shows of the tour?**

**R:** I think it was a good, average show - considering that whenever you make plans to record a show something invariably goes wrong and it turns into a disaster. I was pretty happy with how we played. There were a few mistakes, but that is normal. I was quite pleased with it. The night before, two nights before, we were in the most wonderful castle in Germany but it rained. That was originally where we planned to record it, so we would have the video of the castle, but it's a good job we changed our minds the week before. We were having problems with the promoter, it started a couple of months before we did a show in Germany. We saw the ticket prices and we said it was too much money for people to pay. We complained about the prices being too high and that led to all sorts of confusion and people getting annoyed, saying it was a typical price. We said we weren't going to play for that, so in the end things started getting given away at the show like medallions and merchandise. So planning to record there and then having things like that, we said "You know what? We'll do it in England."

**I thought, because you've played York a few times, you had maybe decided in advance it would be a great place to film.**

**R:** The problem we had was with those dollies that go up, the hydraulic things, we didn't think we'd be able to get them into an indoor venue, but they managed to do it, it all worked. I first played York in 1964, I was playing with a band called The Outlaws. The night before, we had nowhere to stay, as usual we had no money, so the manager of the theatre said "Well, you can stay here if you like". We thought "Oh, fantastic". We had our sleeping bags, we slept in the dressing room and meanwhile, I was hearing voices all night long. I heard the name Aubrey - it was spoken into my ear, very low, it was strange. The next day we checked with the manager and he said that it was the name of the ghost that haunts the place, Aubrey. It was in the English papers I think, that was my first ghostly encounter.

This time when we went, I took my camera when we were doing rehearsals in the afternoon. At sound-check there was nobody in the audience, just empty seats, so I took a photo. Of course, up comes this picture of a face in the audience. I knew it would, that's why I took the picture. I often converse with that spirit in the York theatre. If you are into that type of thing, I always try and make the spirit welcome, tell them we're going to play music and hopefully they'll like it... the fact that you acknowledge them, they really like that. It makes things so much easier. I've been in places where, until you speak to them nicely, they can give you hell! They can make all sorts of things happen, electricity can go bang, God knows what.

**I remember reading about you having some problems when you did the 'Long Live Rock And Roll' album, with Ba'al, wasn't it?**

**R:** That's right, yeah, Ronnie Dio, Cozy and two others - that name came up. Unfortunately, with séances, telepathy gets involved too I think, to a certain extent - you only have to think of something and that can crop up. You have to try and keep a very distant angle on it, you can't think of too many things when you do a séance. I've been involved in doing those ever since Purple, when we first got together in 1968, the bass player Nick Simper, he would often do them. I'd run upstairs to get away from them, because we were all in the same house. We were holed up in the north of London. It was a very old house, very dilapidated, falling apart. I was on my own upstairs in this house and could hear the glass moving around, so I would come back down to keep them company! I'd be too frightened to be on my own when they did them!

**Do you think you've got a connection that attracts them or allows you to communicate with them?**

**R:** I think everybody has if they open themselves up a little bit. I kind of look for it. To me, it's second nature - the paranormal, the supernatural, they surround us all the time. It's just a different realm, a different plane.

**As I was at the York show when it was filmed, I noticed there were quite a few songs you didn't put on the DVD which you played on the night. Was there a specific reason for that, like running time, or to avoid duplication from previous DVDs?**

**R:** One reason was running time, the other was trying to remember what was on 'Paris Moon'. I very rarely listen to our old stuff, I ask Candy. And here she is, so you can take over from there...

**C:** Hi! Yeah, it was because we hadn't done a live DVD since 2007 with 'Paris Moon', so a lot of people were clamouring for a new one. Since then we had two albums out, 'Secret Voyage' in 2008 and 'Autumn Sky' in 2010, so of course the set list had completely changed since 2007, as had the line up of the band. We played probably two and a half, almost three hours that night. We do really long shows but the record company only really wants a certain amount on the DVD, otherwise they have to make it a double DVD, which causes them more expense, it's a battle that you lock horns over. So we kinda just narrowed it down to the songs that hadn't been on DVD before and included some standard favourites people love to hear as well. There are a lot of songs that wind up on the cutting room floor, so we have a lot of things we can bring out. This year is actually the fifteenth year of Blackmore's Night being in existence, so at some point we're going to take all these songs that didn't end up on the DVDs and put something out, showing the different incarnations of the band, showing how we've evolved with the musicians, how we started and where we are heading

for. We might put that out as a special project for an anniversary edition or something.

**That was one of the things I was interested in - it was a long show. When they guy came on at the end with a clock, you carried on playing regardless. How set in stone is the set list? Is it a rolling set... how does it work?**

**C:** The first four or five songs are usually the same, and after that anything goes. We crack the whip on the band, they need to know at least thirty songs and of course, Ritchie and I know so many more than that because we go out and play in restaurants and things - I think when you're a musician it's not what you do, it's who you are. If somebody takes music away from you, they might as well take your breath and blood away. Whenever we go to restaurants, they are dimly lit, everyone dresses in garbs and we take over the back room and play acoustically. So we know so many more songs that Ritchie can just pull out of the hat, anytime he wants to do it. Actually, 'First Of May' is an example of that, it's very rare we play 'First Of May' so I'm really glad Ritchie pulled that one out. It was nice to be able to do it that night and include it on the track list of the DVD. But yeah, the set list changes every night. We're always watching Ritchie - you can see fear in the band member's eyes about what the next song is going to be! (laughs) Nobody ever knows where he's going from certain points. He changes it based on audience temperament, whether he feels it's a listening audience, whether it can handle more balladly stuff, more acoustic stuff, more instrumentals, extended solos, extended intros... he'll never play the same song the same way twice. Never the same set list the same way twice. I think that is one of the reasons people come to see us a bunch of times in a

row, because they know it won't be the standard set list played on autopilot. For us, it's always different every night, not just the set list, but the songs themselves.

**My family came along to the show and weren't sure if they would enjoy an entire concert, but they were really impressed with not only with how you communicated with the audience, the banter between you both seemed so natural, and there were a lot of humour like the Lady Gaga bit...**

**C:** We're very lucky to have a keyboard player who enjoys making a fool of himself. (laughs) You rarely find that in a band!

**R:** It's important to have some humour, in some form, particularly to lighten the load and help with the pressure. I realised how important humour was in a band when I first went to see Nero And The Gladiators when I was fifteen - they did a song called 'Transistor Radio' and I loved it. That kind of shaped my world. They were dressed up as Roman gladiators. That kind of dressing up on stage was something I looked for in other bands too. They had humour in there and it made me realise how that affected an audience.

**With that in mind, you obviously enjoy performing - but this is for both of you: do you have a preference for playing live, or creating the music from scratch?**

**R:** It always gets better. It's kind of irritating. You record something, then within a month of playing it with the band, it's changed for the better, so I'm kind of annoyed then that I've recorded it.

Sometimes when I play the recording back, how I did it in the beginning, it sounds so stiff and sterile. I've given up on that, you can never get it on record to compare to live.

**C:** I think the writing process, the way we write, is a constant evolution. Also it's about self discovery. For me, it's very cathartic to get involved in the creative process, it's almost like a really good therapy session, y'know? It's an amazing outlet. Having said that though, you can't beat the energy of being on stage, feeding off the people who are so excited to be there. For us, when we look out, it's such an interesting audience. We don't have a set demographic. We have like guys who have followed Ritchie since he started Purple in the 60s, their music taste has now matured a little bit, they are not just head banging anymore! They are into melodic stuff now, melodic rock. Also now they have gotten married, so maybe Purple stuff or things Ritchie has done before may have been too hard for the women. Now the women love this type of music, because it has a female singer, we dress up, have romantic visuals - then it becomes the two of them there. Then they have children, they have that innocence, girls like to dress as princesses or wear fairy wings and boys as Robin Hood or knights in armour. Our stuff is so easy to sing along with, a lot of our choruses are easy to sing along with for the children. So they can come as a family, and then their parents parents come - the grandparents! We've seen 85 year old jesters, like in full jester outfit with the hat and pointy shoes - (to Ritchie) oh, that was you? (laughs)

It's amazing, like a full family audience now. I think that's really rare at concerts. You can look into our audience and see a guy in a Black Sabbath t-shirt with tattoos, standing next to a hippy tree hugger, standing next to a lawyer, standing next to a five year old girl... it's amazing that we are the thing they all have in common. In normal life they would probably never speak or meet. It's a meeting of the minds as far as the music is concerned, and actually bonds them together. The one thing they have in common is they are all independent thinkers who are looking for something different. We're not gonna get heard on the radio, we're not going to be seen on the Jools Holland show. So when they discover us they really enjoy the fact that they finally found music that speaks to their soul and they really appreciate it.

The musicianship, obviously that Ritchie is going to bring the Blackmore name, whether he plays acoustic or electric or hurdy gurdy, he's going to play all of those things

every night. It's interesting and fascinating to look out and see the audience, there's such a positive energy and positive vibe that everybody wants to leave with a smile on their face. A lot of shows are very aggressive and these are natural emotions on stage, I feel we have so much aggression in this world as it is, it's nice to see people enjoying themselves and having a good, positive energy and vibe - being on an emotional journey with the variety of music that we play in that couple of hours on stage. We're turning it into something positive out there. If people like it, great, come along. It's the same thing with anything - if you hate it, turn it off.

**R:** We have the attitude of 'If you like it, God bless you. If you don't like it, God bless you.'

**Fair enough. What you said there Candice, obviously people remember Ritchie from Purple and Rainbow - you have taken tracks from those bands and re-worked them into, in essence, Blackmore's Night tracks. Do you instigate that Candice, saying 'We could do something with that,' or does Ritchie bring them to you saying 'What do you think to this?'**

**C:** I am not an instigator. (laughs) I have to answer to Ritchie, Ritchie is definitely at the helm of this band, he is the captain of this ship. Of course, having so many years in the industry... and don't tell him I said this, but being a musical genius - I know if I say that his ego will take over and I'll have to live with it... (laughs)

I'm always in awe of how he crafts songs. He puts so much into not only the writing process but the creative process. We often don't do cover songs from the past unless we can give them our identity or do them differently. To do it, you have to be the first, the best or different. Unless you're different doing a cover, there's no point in doing it. Somebody will have done it first, and probably better with the original track. So I leave it up to Ritchie to choose those songs. And I'm glad that I do, because he chooses some tracks that I've never heard of before. Being here in America, I hadn't heard 'Celluloid Heroes' which I love! Or even 'Diamonds And Rust' which was such a die-hard folk kind of song and I was never really into folk music. Ritchie's really opened my eyes to a lot of the songs he grew up with, that he appreciated, songs I would never normally heard of.

**R:** The thing is with the American market is they don't play much from Europe. They play American stuff. And when you go to Europe, it's American again. There's a band we like from Norway, they wouldn't have a chance in hell of being played here, they're too musical. Or you get other bands, Nightwish, I like them, they won't get properly played over here, maybe a token nod, but it's really got to be American. It's not right. Then you get all the way to Germany or somewhere, and they're playing American stuff.

**C:** That's the great thing about the internet, there's almost no boundaries, you can type in what you are looking for and you can find all these bands you've never normally heard of that you might think are quite special.

**Candice, you first came to my attention because you contributed some lyrics and backing vocals the last Rainbow album 'Stranger In Us All'. The first time you wrote with Ritchie was 'Ariel'... I know it was credited as Rainbow, but was the idea to be a Ritchie solo album or was it always a Rainbow album? I've heard differing things, and I was curious as it was a completely new line up.**

**C:** I think the idea was to get out of a contract wasn't it? (laughs)

**R:** Yeah, I had to throw together some musicians pretty quickly, but I never liked to think of it as a solo album. I like to think I'm steering the ship but I'm not solo, people have asked me to do a solo album but I enjoy playing in a band and being in a band situation. So no, it's a Rainbow album and I think it's a pretty good record.

**I thought so too, I loved it!**

**R:** Yeah - but I don't understand how some people think, they go up their own asses with their opinions sometimes. One will say one thing, one will say another. It kind of reminds me of a show once, and a member of the band asked these two women "Which way is the ballroom?" and these two women were back to back and they both pointed in different directions. That sums up a lot of opinions these days. One person says it's wonderful, so the next one says it's rubbish. It's interesting - I used to meet a lot of fans at the stage door to ask them, in the old days, what they thought of the light show, the new songs... and I got so many conflicting opinions, I couldn't do anything! It was a waste of time. Two guys would stand next to each other and one would say "Great show!" and the other would say "Oh, it was a terrible show". "The lighting was wonderful" - "The lighting was awful". I was just getting nowhere, trying to find out what people's views were.

**C:** The other thing too, with the Rainbow stuff and even with Blackmore's Night, he didn't want his name on there. He didn't want it to be 'Ritchie Blackmore's Rainbow', he just wanted to be about the music. But it always comes back to the record company, they say if you do something different or if you form a band, you have to add your name to it so people know it's you. You know Ritchie - he wants to be actively involved in it, with the writing, even with sound check he's moving chairs, rearranging furniture and adding foliage! He's that hands on with everything, even the album covers, it's all his ideas. He loves the creative process but he doesn't like being out there in the spotlight. He's not all 'me, me, me, me, me'.

**R:** All things being equal, which is a redundant statement, I didn't like the 'Ritchie Blackmore's Rainbow' thing. I just wanted it to be Rainbow. But you talk to management and record companies and they say "No, it's probably better the other way, let people know what you're doing" and you go "Okay". You go along with it. Sometimes I feel a bit awkward about it.

**I see. I assumed that working with Candice when she started helping on the lyrics was probably the start of Blackmore's Night, the idea behind it. When you thought about that, with it being such a change of direction, did you think you would maybe run Rainbow and try this as a side project, or were you always going to think "Right, I'm going to throw everything into this new direction"?**

**R:** There was an interesting bit of dirt going on there. The band Rainbow, as it was then, we were playing... go on Candy, you can remember the facts.

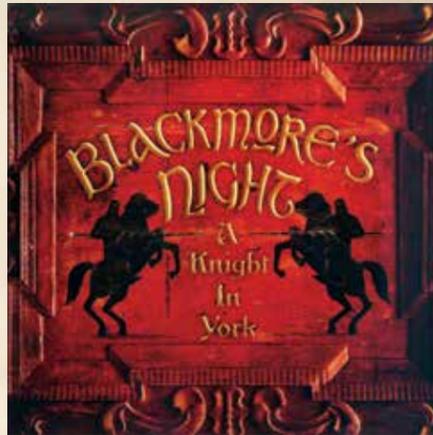
**Facts are always good. We like them here at Fireworks.**

**C:** (Laughs) Originally, what was happening was Ritchie was with Rainbow in a farmhouse, there was six feet of snow around, it's not like the guys could drive around, they were stuck in that house for a long time. The original reason I got involved with writing was when I would come up to visit, there's a ferry here, it's about an hour and fifteen minutes on the ferry. Ritchie would call me on the phone because the singer was having trouble coming up with lyrics they were all happy with. I was always like this closet poet, writing and scribbling in my journal and Ritchie asked if I wanted to give it a shot, otherwise he would have to fly in a professional lyricist. He already had people in mind he was gonna fly in, but I guess to save on some money, he asked me to give it a shot! If I could do anything, then great, if not they'd pay for a guy to come in. So for that hour and fifteen minutes on the ferry I sat and stared at the water and I wrote about fourteen verses for the backing track he played to me for the song. When I got up there, the producer Pat Regan looked at what I'd come up with, he circled four verses and pieced together another part for the chorus, said "We've got it, let's go!" We recorded it and it ended up being 'Wolf To The Moon'. It was a very natural evolution, to

workshop like that and help with the lyrics.

While the other guys were doing their tracks, Ritchie and I would be in front of the fireplace with acoustic instruments, just writing songs for ourselves. It was to help relieve the pressures of the rock and roll world, what it had become back in 1995. It was much more corporate then, the record company wanted a say in what made the album, they wanted demo tapes - Ritchie hadn't made a demo tape in thirty years, if ever! There was a lot of pressure and he wasn't really enjoying the process. So as an escape we'd sit by the fireplace writing songs for ourselves. Those songs wound up being what would later become Blackmore's Night, but at that point we had no idea we would create our own band. It was just a group of songs we enjoyed writing in a very innocent way as an escape from the pressure.

When we started playing the songs to our friends at parties, they were like "Oh my God, if this came out on a record, I'd buy that album!" That was when we first thought we might have something that was more than just a collection of pretty songs for ourselves. But, in all honesty, what happened with the demise of Rainbow was the band had been booked to headline a Swedish rock festival. The day before they got on the plane, and Ritchie had paid these guys for the week, he was basically funding everything - it all came from the Blackmore fund, he called himself Major Funding... before they got on the plane, Ritchie was packing, getting ready to go and he got a call from two of the members of the band, saying unless he doubled their money



they weren't getting on the plane. You can imagine how that would be, the advertising had been done saying they would headline the festival, you can't pull out or you get sued, you can't just not show up and it all comes back to Ritchie's name. It was a very difficult and awkward situation to be in, made everyone very uncomfortable, so a lot of back and forth went on, Ritchie got on the plane, went there and after that show, he distributed a contract.

The American agent had flown over to see that show too, the American agent had so many tour dates in place, including Europe, the UK, he had a list of tour dates that would have kept these guys on the road doing Rainbow. Ritchie said he wasn't going to be put in this position again, he wrote up a new contract, distributed it to each band member and said "You're either in or you're not. You're not going to do this to me again, I'm not going to be blackmailed. If you sign this contract, basically saying I'll be here on such-and-such a date for this much money", which was good money, "then we can move ahead with Rainbow. I need it back before we get back on the plane and if I don't receive it from you, then I'll go ahead with other projects." Two of the band members signed it and gave it back immediately. Two did not. That's what happened to Rainbow.

**Oh! I see.**

**C:** Ironically, two weeks later, those two band members were like "Great, what's going on, are we touring?" They were floored when we said "Er, noooo." They made that decision and what

a shame, I think people would liked to have seen Ritchie and Rainbow - but it was a fork in the road and he left it up to those two band members and they unfortunately put Ritchie in a very awkward situation. They made that decision and we moved forward with Blackmore's Night. At this point, fifteen years later we're loving what we're doing so in that respect it was a good decision.

**That's awful, but like you say, everything has worked out for the best, with the success of Blackmore's Night and the fact that you've enjoyed following that path... but that's terrible!**

**C:** It was horrible.

**R:** That was the main thing that happened. I've heard other stuff that was wrong or is just lies.

**C:** I don't think we've ever told that story.

**I've never heard that before. I'm still quite staggered! When you came to make the first Blackmore's Night album 'Shadow Of The Moon', I was going to ask if you feared how it was going to be accepted artistically for you Ritchie, and generally for you Candice, as you hadn't done anything like that before... but I suppose, after hearing that story, you probably thought you had nothing to lose?**

**R:** Well, yes, in a way. I was getting stale with myself, playing hard rock music. I was tending to go through the motions and I need to stay fresh, for myself. This was a welcome relief, pick up the acoustic guitar and play some stuff that really excited me. I could have gone on with the rough stuff but I was starting to bore myself and starting to bore people around me. Now, I can bring in some heavier stuff on stage, and I'm back to playing the Strat more often and it fits the mold of what we've created. But in the beginning it had to be that very enforced branch off. I thought about it, I knew there would be some fallout about it, but you have to take a chance in life and do other things, or you'll go stagnant. For me, I'm still working on it, it's a challenge, a big challenge to play the acoustic instead of the electric, it's so much easier to turn up the level and play louder with the sustain.

**Did you have difficulty shopping it to record labels with it being a deliberate departure from hard rock, or was your name enough to get people interested?**

**R:** It's not think we had difficulty, did we?

**C:** In Japan, they snapped it up right away. They actually named the band!

**R:** That's right, Europe were okay, there was only England, but that's normal.

**Don't judge us, we're not all ignorant!**

**R:** It's nice to see the real English audience when we play there, we're very comfortable playing for the English people. But the media involved, the middle people, are very weird at times. Whether it's the radio or the newspaper people, there are certain interviews I just won't do because I know they'll stitch us up.

**C:** It's never the band and it's never the fans, it's always the people in between! (laughs)

**I must admit Candice, I read an interview you did for your solo album - they gave you a two page spread, one of which was a full page picture, asked you just nine questions and one of them was 'Do you own a pair of jeans?'**

**C:** (laughs) I know. When I was in college I used to take a journalist course because I thought that was what I wanted to do with my life. I did 'Ethics In Journalism' which was an oxymoron, but it's interesting when you get somebody on the phone and they ask you questions that don't even make any sense! That was a mild question - half the time, you know they are basically jabbing you with a needle to see if they can get a sound-byte out of you. It's a shame, because you are taking time out, usually from a busy tour schedule, you rush home from the show, you're exhausted, all you want to do is go to bed but you have to get on the phone and



talk to somebody... which is okay, but it has to be worthwhile for both parties. A good interview can be like a good therapy session, they ask you good questions that really pull from your inner soul, you wind up thinking about certain things, it can be very cathartic just getting out and speaking about things you've never spoken about before, maybe even rediscovering things you've not thought about before. A really good interviewer has really good questions that are introspective. But not everybody is a good interviewer! (laughs)

**At Fireworks, none of us are interested in grabbing some dodgy quote, we want to talk to the artist about what they are doing. We're not out to write something scandalous and sensational, all we want is to promote the music simply because we love the music.**

**C:** Ritchie doesn't often do interviews as you can imagine. That's why he agreed to this one, Fireworks has offered good support and it's appreciated.

**R:** Yeah, I think really going back in England, say twenty years, the English papers were always taking jabs at musicians, whether it was McCartney or Michael Jackson, whoever, it didn't matter. Everyone was fair game - some of it was funny but they seem to think that is the way to go, to criticise and be sarcastic. I know out here, there are a lot of American actors who won't do English interviews for that reason, they'll avoid the English press for that reason, so it's obviously something that not only I have noticed. If a magazine does that, word gets around with the artist or the actor and people stop doing interviews.

**C:** I think the whole country has a bad name for that, many people will hear it's an English interviewer and say 'Oh, no thanks.' It's a stereotype, obviously all you guys aren't like that, but people get nervous and think 'Well why should I put myself through that?'

**R:** I can be very sarcastic and English people like sarcasm, it's a popular form of humour, look at 'Fawlty Towers', it's all about sarcasm and it's really funny, but not everyone gets it.

**Well, bad interviews about it aside, I enjoyed your solo album Candice. I know you've had some great reviews.**

**C:** Yeah, I'm amazed, I'm really happy with the reaction. I've even had some play on the radio here in America which is usually not even an option for us! Adult Contemporary Radio picked up on some of the tracks, it entered pretty well on the Billboard charts, the New Age category... The truth is I

never planned to tour on it or make a big bang, it's a collection of songs that for many years have just been sitting there waiting for me to breathe life into them. I did the music and the lyrics alone and was getting involved with the arranging and the instrumentation and the production processes really opened a new door for me. It was all very exciting.

**R:** Didn't Pat Regan play guitar on it? He borrowed one of mine.

**C:** Yeah! He snuck out of the room without telling Ritchie what we were doing. It was all done hush-hush behind closed doors! But yeah, I'm really pleased with the way the songs came out, it's exactly how I heard them in my head. It was great to hear them after gathering dust on a shelf for years in CD form. A lot of fans had asked if I would do a solo album. But I never asked Ritchie's opinion. If he'd gotten involved, it would just be a Blackmore's Night album. So the training wheels were off and I had to see if I could take that ride by myself.

**You told my brother, Candice, a couple of issues ago that you had kept Ritchie away from it and didn't play him anything until it was done. So I'm going to put you on the spot Ritchie - what was your opinion of the album when it was all finished?**

**R:** I heard one of the songs Candy was singing, she was at an airport and she was singing this song to her mother and I said "What's that?" and she said "Oh, it's just a song I put together..." Which one was that?

**C:** That one wasn't on the CD, that's going on the next one!

**R:** Oh - well I liked that. She just sang with no musical accompaniment - I think the finished record is very good and a lot of people like it. A lot of people like it's sort of 'new' sound. We sometimes play 'Black Roses' from it with our band.

**C:** At Ritchie's birthday party actually, we had a group of more select fans and we brought everybody to a restaurant and we set up the acoustic instruments and some very small amplifiers and after everybody ate their dinner, we got up and played requests all night. Somebody asked for 'Black Roses' and Ritchie played it on the guitar and I sang it. We have had requests to play some of them in concert, but like everything else, we just have to wait and see if Ritchie is gonna choose to play them! (laughs) I can't really answer truthfully one way or the other, I just have to wait and see what he wants to do!

**R:** We're also thinking of bringing in an interval to our shows after about an hour and a half, so

people can take a breather, get a beer before the second half... our shows are so long, it's a lot to ask of audiences.

**C:** The real reason is you want to get a beer and have a bathroom break.

**R:** Yeah.

**(Laughs) Candice mentioned you're very meticulous and very hands on about every aspect of creation Ritchie, but you've never produced an album by yourself, you usually have Pat Regan with you, or, like the last few, Pat has produced them alone. What is it that Pat brings that you feel you couldn't do yourself, or is it that you don't want to be involved in that final process?**

**R:** I can only stay in a studio for probably ten minutes at a time. I get so bored with just sitting there. I like playing the music, but I like to do a take and that should be it. I want to get the hell out and come back later on. Pat can just stay there hour upon hour. He'll sit there for playbacks, tweaking, correcting notes that are maybe acceptable to me on the first take... I really don't know anything about engineering. We have a studio downstairs and I don't even know how to turn it on, and I'm at the age where I don't particularly want to find out. My days of reading manuals and all that - I also have a bar downstairs and I find that more important! For me, it's more fun entertaining people, having a drink and playing music, whereas other people have that need to 'make a record'. I'm not a recording fanatic, I like the old days of a hundred years ago when people just played. However, it's a necessary evil, but I really don't know anything about recording. That's Pat's side of it, and he's very good at getting sounds from orchestras. I enjoy that side, saying "Oh, what about a hammered dulcimer here?" or a cello or oboe, I get excited about that. But after a week of that, Pat might say "No we don't need that, it doesn't work," so then he has to erase a week's work. But I must admit, usually when I've finished recording, I don't listen to what I've done.

For instance, I don't know much about this new release, I don't sit down and listen to it because I played it every night. I just hope it's right and keep my fingers crossed! I can't analyse music, I have to play it and move on. I'd much rather go for a walk, kick a ball around, have a drink then sit and analyse thinking "Oh, we should do it again, and again, and again". That's torturous. I'm willing to accept my playing in the studio is never going to be to the level I think I should be. I'd listen to stuff and think "Oh, I can do much better than that". And it depends on my frame of mind, I might play a bit stiff or sterile. That's my nature, I'm a shy person

and if I hear myself playing in a studio it's not - I'm self-conscious. Also, I invariably record sober, that doesn't help. On stage I'm usually drunk!

**I know you had a reputation for being a prankster. Are you still the same now with Blackmore's Night?**

**R:** Oh, not so much. I like jokes and in the old days it was easy to get away with them because I didn't smile very often so people thought "Well it can't have been him!" Silly things, like when we were recording for Rainbow and we were living together, I'd stock the fridge so that everyone would be told not to go to the fridge except for one person. When they opened the door, the milk would be on top of the eggs, with eggs on top of the milk, so it would all fall out and that person would have to clean it all up. Yeah, silly things. I remember when Rainbow brought in David Rosenthal, he was only about 21, a brilliant player. He would go for a shower every day about one o'clock, so we'd turn all the hot water off so whenever he had a shower he'd only get freezing cold water, and this was the middle of winter. He'd ask "Hey, anybody else have this problem?" and we were all "No, it's fine..." He had no idea we were all running downstairs to turn the hot water off.

**So you don't do anything to Candice then?**

**C:** He wouldn't dare! He used to - when I first met Ritchie... this is a very romantic story. We met on a soccer field, I was working for a radio station and he came to town with Deep Purple and called up the station, asked if they wanted to do a charity soccer match. I went to cheer my team on, but Ritchie had stocked his team with ringers so he had all these amazing European players! If you imagine, these DJ's who were working the station were American and overweight, because they pushed buttons and ate pizza for a living! So his team beat us mercilessly, very badly, and I was trying to be a good sportsman, so I congratulated him on the win and asked him for his autograph. He looked at me and told me I was very beautiful in an English accent which immediately enthralled me, and asked me to meet him later on at the pub. But the part of the story most people don't know is halfway to the pub, a friend of mine was driving and Ritchie was being driven by his roadie. Ritchie's car pulls over and we pull alongside next to him. Ritchie's roadie says "Ritchie wants Candy to come in the car so he can talk to her before we get to the pub." My friend says "It's okay, I know these guys, there's nothing to worry about, I'll follow you." So I get in the back of his Mercedes - which was a sports car, with no back seat, so my knees are up to my chin! Luckily I'm a small girl and I folded myself up in the back of this very uncomfortable car and Ritchie was very silent, very mysterious and very moody as he is known to be! He's in the front seat, very quiet, I'm just sitting there in the back and nobody was really saying anything. I was getting more and more uncomfortable, then he decided to change his soccer socks, which were completely caked in mud and very sweaty at that point. He took his cleats off, took his socks off, turned around to me, looked romantically into my eyes, and threw the soccer socks right in my face. Now, if that's not an icebreaker, I don't know what is! After that, it wouldn't have mattered what he did or said. It was something you definitely would not have expected on your initial meeting with someone, so it's been like that ever since, he's been throwing socks at me since that day! (laughs)

**So that's where I've been going wrong!**

**C:** Yeah! That was our initial meeting. You can imagine, after that, at one point I was moving in the house in Connecticut and it was part of my first week of living there, I was taking a shower and he snuck into the bathroom very quietly, I had no idea he was there, and he took a full glass of freezing cold water and dumped it over the top of the shower curtain. So yeah, he still does things like that! Luckily, he's tapered it down on me a bit.

**R:** There's a story that comes to mind with



Rainbow when Roger Glover was in the band. We were staying in a castle and Roger's room was next to mine, we had these gigantic rooms in this really old castle. I decided to play a trick on him - I had this long twelve foot pipe. We both shared the same toilet, and I could hear when somebody opened the door, so I waited for him to go in the toilet. This was like two or three in a morning, I picked up the long pipe and rushed into his room. It was really long, so I was going to wedge the door with the pipe against the other side of the room, so he couldn't get back into his bedroom. That was the idea. I went into his room and this was a really heavy pipe I just found around the place. I'm pushing and shoving, trying to get it in, thinking "I've got to be quick, he'll be out in about five minutes." So I got as far as I could into his room, I turn to put the pipe against the door and I looked over and Roger is sitting in bed. He said "Yes?" I looked and went "Oh, right..." It was like Basil Fawlty - "I think I've got the wrong room." Then I went out with the pipe again. He had no idea what I was doing, I had no idea he was there, I thought he was in the toilet. It was the way he was sat up in bed, like Charles' Dicken's Scrooge, reading his book, because he's an avid reader. It was all very proper! "Yes, what are you doing?" "Oh, er, nothing, wrong room." I never explained what I was doing.

**With all these stories, there was talk of you doing an autobiography?**

**R:** Yeah, I have lots of stories, but I've never gotten around to a book. I have stories about John Bonham, people like that...

**C:** But with people like Jerry Bloom around, who needs Ritchie's book? (laughs) No, I'm kidding. We had so many of Ritchie's old friends from back in the day call us saying "Oh, this guy called Jerry Bloom is asking me about stories, I'm not telling him anything, this guy is fishing for information!" So we knew at that point all the people who were involved in that book either weren't part of the inner circle and didn't really know anything, or he was using stuff from old interviews that had been out there for years before.

**R:** If I gave all my stories away, I'd have nothing

to talk to my friends about when I'm drinking in the pub! One thing I did do, Cozy Powell and I had a truce, I wouldn't do anything to him so he wouldn't do anything to me - because he was too hard to handle, he'd go to extremes to get his own back. If you played a joke on him, with what he'd do to me - it wasn't worth it.

**C:** You told me all those stories about Cozy, how you wouldn't mess with him, because he'd take it to the next level. Anyway, he was playing with Peter Green at the time at a festival which was my first chance to meet him. The funny thing is, Cozy was taking the 'Shadow Of The Moon' CD and making copies for everyone he knew and giving them to people because he loved the music, that was so funny! I remember we were up in our bedroom, a few floors up and Ritchie looked out the window and said "Oh, there's Cozy doing interviews, right underneath our room." I said "Oh, that's Cozy!" because I hadn't met him yet. So Ritchie says "Yeah, keep watching him, make sure he doesn't leave, I want to do something." I'm looking out the window, I didn't realise, but Ritchie had gone into the bathroom, got a huge glass of water, leans out of the window of our bedroom and dumps it right on Cozy's head! So of course, when Cozy looks up, Ritchie's gone and there's me, with my head out the window, going "Er... I didn't do that, but I'm the only person up here..." It was so funny! Ritchie just dumped it and ran!

**(Laughs)** I could listen to this all day, but I've gone well over my allotted time - I've really enjoyed talking to you both, it's been an absolute blast, thank you both very much for that.

**C:** Thank you, it was great talking to you!

**I hope the DVD does well for you and I'll look forward to seeing you again next time you're in England!**

**R:** Definitely, we'll be back over next year I think. This year has been pretty chaotic - but we'll be going out and taking Autumn back out on the road and Rory, my other son, on the road next year with us. All the best, speak to you soon.