



BLOCK4 Recorder Quartet

# Beneath a Pale Moon

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BLOCK4 Recorder Quartet

Emily Bannister

Verena Barié

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Daniel Scott

Anonymous (arr. BLOCK4)

- |   |                                 |      |
|---|---------------------------------|------|
| 1 | Watkin's Ale                    | 1:32 |
| 2 | Lumps of Pudding                | 2:50 |
| 3 | Stella Splendens in Monte No. 1 | 4:02 |

Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina

- |   |                                    |      |
|---|------------------------------------|------|
| 4 | Deh hor fossio col vago della luna | 2:48 |
|---|------------------------------------|------|

Matthew Olyver

- |   |                |      |
|---|----------------|------|
| 5 | My Last Breath | 5:16 |
|---|----------------|------|

Francisco Guerrero

- |   |                        |      |
|---|------------------------|------|
| 6 | O Domine, Jesu Christe | 3:26 |
|---|------------------------|------|

Anonymous (arr. BLOCK4)

- |   |                                 |      |
|---|---------------------------------|------|
| 7 | Stella Splendens in Monte No. 2 | 3:49 |
|---|---------------------------------|------|

	Michael Praetorius	
8	Bransle de la Royne	1:00
9	Courante de M.M. Wüstrow	2:54
10	Volte	1:53
	Andrew Crossley	
11	Bardo No. 1 (Layers)	7:57
	Tarquinio Merula	
12	La Lusignuola	5:44
	Michiel Mensingh	
13	Wicked	6:20
	Anonymous (arr. BLOCK4)	
14	Stella Splendens in Monte No. 3	4:47
	Wojtek Blecharz	
15	Airlines	10:35
	Francisco Guerrero	
16	Alma Redemptoris Mater	4:13

Total playing time 69:15

## Watkin's Ale

Welcome, weary travellers. Come close, and gather to the fire. This is a time for tales old and new, told by only the light of the pale moon as we wait for the crow of the cockerel and the dawning of another day. Come close, and listen to the tale I will tell, one full of magic and mystery. You see, not far from this fire there is a path, and not far from that path there is a field, and not far from that field there is a forest. A forest so tall the trees seem to touch the sky, a forest so deep it seems to stretch all of Christendom, a forest so green and lush that it seems to whisper to you with its very leaves. Everyone knows that a forest is a place of Magicks; a place of transformation and treachery; of lovesick wandering and charmed romance. In the woods, all are equal: prince and peasant boy, it is all the same to the trees and those who live amongst them.

Come close, and I will tell the tale of four travellers just like yourself: Draec, Ealric, Rowara and Veric.

All were brave. All were bold. All were loyal. All were true.

But only one of them was heartbroken.

## Lumps of Pudding

"I don't care that it's dangerous," said Draec as he struggled across the field. "Melody is waiting for me, in there. I must go to them. It is a true love, our love, and that is worth any fight."

"Yes, but is it worth this walk?" muttered Ealric as she, Rowara and Veric followed behind their love-struck friend. When Melody had promised him that they would meet next under the pale full moon at the heart of the dark forest, under a tree half bent and a stream overflowing, the others had thought it a joke or a jab. But Draec had taken it as a serious promise, and now they were all about to be seriously lost.

"Are you sure we shouldn't try to find a map?" asked Veric. "If we go into this forest without a plan we may never come out."

"A map won't help," muttered Rowara, an unusual comment from the researcher of the group. "From what I hear the paths of this wood don't always stay in the same place."

Draec turned to face his friends, frowning. "If we are not well met here then you are welcome to leave. I can make this journey alone."

"I'm not just going in there for you," said Rowara. "This will be such an opportunity to learn more about Magicks."

"You know how much I love an adventure," Ealric said with a shrug. "Even ones in cursed forests."

"I just want to help keep you safe," said Veric with a sigh. "You'll need it."

Draec smiled at them, touched by their loyalty. They had made it to the treeline, the path snaking in and out of the pines and into the distance.

The four travellers stepped into the woods, the trees closing ranks behind them as they walked into the dimly lit unknown.

## Stella Splendens in Monte

They walked for what felt like an hour. They walked for what felt like a day. They walked until they could walk no more.

"It should be nightfall by now," said Rowara, squinting up into the foliage above, but the branch-filled sky seemed to be much the same shadowy shade as before. "Where have we even walked to?" Ealric complained. "It wouldn't surprise me if we're about to arrive right back where we started."

"Perhaps you were all right, and this whole thing was a jape," Draec sighed.

"Does that mean we can start thinking about how to get out?" Veric was clearly impatient. "That is, if we can get out."

"Let's go," said Draec miserably. "You're right. This place is trouble."

They looked around.

"Um." It was Ealric, the usual bravado in her voice wavering at the edges. "Can anyone see the path?"

The path the four adventurers had been following through the trees had vanished, the friends left in an endless abyss of bark, roots and soil.

Draec, about to turn to his friends, was stopped dead by a voice. The song it sang was like a lark on a summer's morn, like the warmth of a setting sun, a sound which filled him with longing like he had never known. It was the voice of Melody.

"Melody! I'm coming!"

Leaving the surprised cries of his companions far behind, Draec struck out into the forest undergrowth, unaware of the lack of path, unaware of the danger, unaware of anything but the golden notes filling his mind.

Want to follow Draec as he searches for Melody? Go to track 4. Want to stay with Ealric, Veric and Rowara as they try to stick together and find their lost friend? Go to track 5.

## Deh hor fossio col vago della luna

Draec fought his way through bracken and thorn, branches and tree roots, desperate to find his beloved. With a final stumbling step, the young man fell face forwards into a clearing, the suddenly bright blue sky all but blinding after walking around in the dappled shadows for so long.

The clearing was quiet, apart from the sound of a stream running through the grass and wildflowers.

"Hello?" Draec called to the voice. "...Melody?"

*"It is I,"* came a whisper, the grass seeming to move in susurrance as it sounded. *"Drink from the stream, my beloved. Drink from the stream, and thou shalt see me."*

"What? Why?" asked Draec, but his mind seemed oddly clouded.

*"Come, is this not the place on which we agreed?"*

Sure enough, Draec saw that there was a sapling tree, half bent, in the middle of the clearing, next to the stream. Just as Melody had described. Had the tree been there when he arrived? He couldn't remember.

As if in a dream, he wandered to the water's edge, knelt, and was about to cup his hands ready to bring them to his mouth when a different voice seemed to rip through the clearing, a voice that seemed to come from the forest itself.

**Danger.**

Draec dropped his hands, staring around him.

"Hello?"

*"Ignore him"*. It was the first voice, the voice that he was now quite sure was not and had never been Melody's.

"I'm not sure that I should," he said slowly. "Who are you? Who is he?"

*"He is no-one"*, came the voice of not-Melody, but now Draec realised the glamour trickery under which he had been placed..

*"And I am your one true love. Drink from the stream, and we can be together for all eternity."*

**Drink from the stream, and all will become hers, your body, your mind. Even your spirit.**

It was the other voice, the one rooted in earth and soil.

Draec felt his stomach give a lurch as the full severity of the situation hit him, the last of the glamour finally broken. His friends. How could he have left them in such a way?

"Enough, I want no part in your games. Where is Melody?" The voice laughed, a sound which chilled Draec to his bones, as the sky above him darkened to a dangerous hue and a wind began to torment him.

*"You wish to know my name, boy? Very well."*

The stream was now a river, turning into a swirl of whirling spray which seemed impossibly deep.

*"My name is Nimue, the lady of the water. You wish to know me? Look upon me and know your death!"*

He fumbled for the knife on his belt, numbly realising the pointlessness of trying to fight the figure which was beginning to rise out of the churning stream. The voice of the forest sounded once more, and its command brokered no argument.

**Draec. This is not your war. Run.**

Draec obeyed, turning his back on the clearing, away from that unnatural stream and its terrible secrets. His friends. He needed to find his friends. And then they all needed to get out of these woods, leaving its secrets far behind.

*Want to find out what happened to the others whilst Draec met with Nimue? Go back to Track 2 and try the other route.*

## My Last Breath

"Draec!" screamed Veric, without really expecting an answer. The three women had been walking for what felt like an age, and there was still no sight of him. They stopped in a small clearing the circle of trees around them identical to all the other ones they'd walked past.

"Did you hear Melody when he ran off?" It was Ealric.

"No." Rowara's voice was grim. "Whatever was calling, it only wanted Draec. It must have cast a glamour on him."

"He'll be fine," said Ealric, unconvincingly. "It's us we have to worry about right now. Do we have a plan? I'll support any that don't include death. My death in particular."

"There's a relative lack of study into enchanted forests," said Rowara. "Those who find themselves in magical woods... well, they don't often come back out again."



There was a beat of silence between the three of them.

"We should light a fire," Veric said eventually. "Draec might see the flames and come and find us."

None of them said what they were all thinking- that Draec wouldn't be coming to find them, but other things might.

They sat in the impossibly eternal dappled dark daylight, staring at the small, flickering fire in front of them. "It'll be fine," said Ealric, unconvincingly. "We'll be fine. He'll be fine. It's all going to be fine. We just need to—"

"Shh!" Veric held up a hand and Ealric fell silent.

"What?"

"I heard something. Strange. More like — I can feel something. Something... something that's coming."

Veric's eyes widened. "No. They're not coming... They're already here."

Out of the darkness of the forest stalked four hounds, their gait languorous in its menace. Their coat was a sleek pitch black, the colour of nothingness. Foam and spittle at their mouth. A jawline of teeth, ferocious in length and stained with dirt and blood and gore. Eyes the colour of hot coals and raging fire, scarred noses switching at the scent of new hunt.

"Wisht Hounds," breathed Rowara, trembling. Ealric slowly fumbled for a hold on one of the branches on the edges of the fire. They would need to fight their way out of this.

As the largest hound lunged for the kill, Ealric waved the burning stick in front of her face so the flames flickered and roared. The animal reared, backing into the other dogs as Veric and Rowara also grabbed branches, their stabbing and waving motions keeping the unsure beasts at bay as they stumbled backwards towards the edge of the clearing. The leader of the pack shook his head and finally charged forwards with a howl, the others following his lead.

"Run!" screamed Ealric and they dropped their branches, now more ash and soot



than fire.

"Our packs!" cried Rowara. "We've left our packs behind!"

There was no time to go back. They crashed through the undergrowth only concentrating on getting far away from where they had just been.

Want to find out what happened to Draec as the others fought the Wisht Hounds? Go back to Track 2 and try the other route.

## O Domine, Jesu Christe

Deep in the woods, there is peace. There is quiet — well, that's not quite true. There is also the sound of four people all running from that which scares them, scrambling and stumbling as they try to find a path which seems to have deserted them. They are lost, all of them, but only one of them is lost on his own. Not for long however, for just as he turns a corner, despairing at ever finding his way—

Ealric, Rowara and Veric crashed into Draec at full force, all four of them ending up on the forest floor. The reunion was short but full of relief, and garbled explanations.

"I fear that Melody is dead, if they did come to this cursed place." Draec felt terrible.

"I must offer my sorrows, friends, for having dragged you here."

His friends were less concerned about his apologies and more about his colourful story.

"Nimue? You met with Nimue, the lady of the lake? You're quite sure?" asked Rowara. "I thought her a myth."

"Outside of this forest, perhaps. But here, I fear we are practically in her domain."

*"Ha! Her domain! If you let the Queens hear this, all in your lives would go remiss!"*

A cheerful small voice came from the shadows, causing all four friends to scream and grab for weapons as they spun around. A boy sauntered forward from the tree on which he'd been leaning, hands in pockets, straw blonde hair flopping over his

freckled brow. The only clue that he was not what he appeared were his teeth, which were entirely too sharp, and his eyes, which were entirely too hungry.

*"Robin at your service,"* he said with a little bow. *"If it's the end of your journey you seek, follow me and it shall be complete."*

## Stella Splendens in Monte No. 2

"Follow the creepy rhyming child," muttered Ealric with suspicion. "Sure."

*"Come with, and do not fear,"* insisted Robin with a shark-like smile, taking Veric's hand. *"Come hither, chime girl, the path will soon appear."*

"Chime girl?" asked Draec as they reluctantly began to follow the boy as he scampered away. Robin glanced behind, still holding Veric's hand.

*"This woman was born when the chime hands did sound, the supernatural she senses all around."*

"That's why you could sense the hounds and we couldn't!" said Rowara.

Veric was pleased to feel like she might be of help, but the moment soon passed. The travellers focussed on following their strange new guide and his labyrinthine route through the trees. After some time it was Rowara who broke the silence between the four humans as they walked.

"Tell me, Robin. Would your name end in Goodfellow, by any chance?"

The urchin turned to smirk at her, eyes alight with mischief.

*"I am he, I am indeed. Have you heard warnings you wish to heed?"*

"It's not the only name by which you go, is it Robin?" Rowara's face was grim. "Some might know you as Puck. Servant to the Faerie Realm." The sprite giggled, and it was a wonder that they had ever mistaken him for a boy.

*"Your knowledge is good and true, to follow me you all were fools!"*

Veric pulled her hand away from his as the four humans stumbled back, away from

Robin and his unnatural smile.

"We've changed our minds," said Draec as they backed away.

Robin shrugged. *"Why bother when you have made it here, to a land most lively and food so near?"*

As he spoke he pushed away the branches of the nearest tree, and there, in front of them all in a clearing so large as to be a meadow, was a party like none of them had ever seen.

Music erupted into the air, wild and joyous, and everywhere they looked there was dancing, drinking, eating and merriment.

*"Welcome, friends,"* said Puck, clapping his hands with glee.

*"Welcome, all. Welcome to the Faerie Ball."*

## Bransle, Courante, Volte

The four travellers slowly entered into a party unlike anything they had seen before. Fae of all sizes, shapes and skin tones were dancing in strange, fluid movements, the sound of flutes, pipes, viols, drums and shawms ringing through the air. There were tables groaning with more food than could be imagined and goblets of wine the colour of fresh blood. Draec's stomach growled as he smelled the scent of chicken — his favourite — but Rowara swiftly grabbed him by the arm.

"No-one should eat the food," she whispered. "Faeries and trickery go hand in hand." Puck scampered in front of them and clapped his hands, demanding attention.

*"Most illustrious queens, hear what I say: I have found a great sport for us today!"*

The crowd of strange dancers parted to reveal two female Fae, sitting on thrones made of twisted bark, lush green leaves and blossoming flowers of impossible hues, and wearing crowns of carved wood and twine. The older Fae, a statuesque Black woman whose dark skin was adorned with endless gold necklaces, bracelets, rings and tattoos, leaned forward with interest at the sight of the nervous humans.



Her companion, a woman who looked to be not much out of girlhood, simply sighed as she pushed blonde hair out of her pale, freckled face.

"These travellers have spoiled our celebrations, and just before my favourite dance," she pouted. "Can we kill them, Mab?"

Queen Mab shrugged as the friends looked at each other in alarm.

"You're always so bloodthirsty, Titania." A horrible little smile passed between them. "Of course, it's one of the reasons why I married you. But sweetpea, think about the other kinds of fun we can have with humans this deliciously hapless." She gestured to Ealric. "This one would make an excellent pet, since your Thomas ran off on that horse."

"Oh, absolutely not," muttered Ealric.

"Let me handle this," hissed Rowara, kneeling down on the perfectly green grass. "Your majesties, we come to you most humbly, grateful for an audience with Fae so famous, so beautiful, so full of power. It is an honour to be before Queens as mighty as yourselves."

"You speak prettily, mortal," said Queen Mab, "What would be your request?"

"We only ask that you let us go, with no snare, trap or enchantment. We are but travellers, with no jest or folly to offer."

All might have been resolved, and without too much trouble, had Draec not decided to help things along. Spying a patch of the foxgloves which were growing around all the trees surrounding the clearing, he grabbed a few and pulled enthusiastically, intending to offer them to the Queens. The moment that the foxgloves were yanked out of the earth, however, it was like a silent alarm had sounded; every Fae turned to stare at him, the music suddenly ground to a halt.

## Bardo No. 1 (Layers)

The Queens were on their feet, somehow even more fearsome than they had been just moments ago.

"This mortal has desecrated our holy flower!" cried Mab.

The Faeries were showing their true selves now, their forms twisted into nightmares, their faces an awful meld of fangs, scars and eyes hot with hate.

"Come on!" yelled Veric, dragging Rowara off her knees as the four friends made a break for the treeline, the whole of the faerie court on their heels.

"Draw weapons!" cried Rowara as they stared at the circling faeries, hungry for blood. "Anything which has iron in it!"

Draec and Veric grabbed their swords, Ealric the necklace around her neck, holding them out in front of them; the Fae hissed and scratched at them but were suddenly unable to come closer now that they felt the power of the metal.

"This won't hold them for long," panted Veric, the four of them back to back in a tight circle as they stared down their would-be killers.

They sprinted for the shelter of the trees, breath coming in gasps as they threw themselves into the forest once more. As they ran the heavens seemed to open, a terrible wind dragging their clothes and bending their backs as rain battered down with a ferociousness none had seen before.

When the wind finally died down, the rain slowing to splatters, Rowara and Veric found themselves hiding under a fallen stump, the other two nowhere to be found.

In another part of the wood, Ealric and Draec realised with sinking hearts that they too were unexpectedly a duo, shaking rain water off their clothes as they crawled, shivering, out of the ditch in which they were trying to find shelter.

"Here we go again," muttered Ealric as Draec looked down at his hands, fingers stained purple by the foxgloves he was still clutching in his fist.

"I will keep us both safe," he vowed. He had to make it up to his friends, somehow. Separated by distance, and Magicks, the four looked around with weary and fearful hearts, wondering what might be coming their way next.

Want to stay with Draec and Ealric? Go to track 12. Rather go with Veric and Rowara? Go to track 13.



## La Lusignuola

Dripping wet and shaking with cold, Draec and Ealric helped each other out of the ditch, skidding around in the mud as they pulled themselves back onto something that might have been called some sort of path, if you were a hopeful sort of person. "We should stay where we are," said Ealric through chattering teeth. "That ditch is a good hiding place."

Draec pointed out that if they didn't start walking they were going to freeze half to death.

"But walk where?" said Ealric miserably, her natural bravado finally worn off. "We have no way of knowing if we're walking to the others, or away from them!"

He was about to admit that he didn't have an answer, when their conversation was interrupted by the shrill cry of a bird, which swooped down and settled on the branch above them.

"A nightingale," murmured Draec. "Do you have something to tell us?"

"I bring tidings of sorrow," sang the bird, its voice a strange, shrill staccato.

"Talking birds," muttered Ealric. "Why not."

"Friend, I know that nightingales give portents of love. You tell me that you bring tidings of sorrow. Is it my beloved, Melody, of which you speak?"

The nightingale ruffled its feathers, seeming to take a moment before delivering bad news. "Your beloved was a lie, a false truth to lure you here. The one you call Melody was but a trick, a magick, an imagining conjured by Nimue to bewitch you into these woods."

"Melody... Melody never was anything more than a lie?" asked Draec, seeming to feel his heart break in two.

"An illusion," agreed the nightingale. "Nimue needs you to drink from her waters. Then she will suck the very life out of you, you being so young, and so willing of heart. You are not the first she has tried to tempt here, to the glade in the heart

of these woods where her power is greatest. Without your life, she will always be unable to truly regain her power and overcome the magickal chains Merlin made to hold her in place."

"... Merlin?" stuttered Draec. "The mage, from the stories? Is that who..."

"He tried to protect you back there in the clearing, and protect all of us. If Nimue succeeded, all would be lost. He tries to protect you still, by leading you away from Nimue as she lured your friends towards her lair."

"What do you mean, lured our friends?" demanded Ealric.

"It is better for you to stay here," replied the bird. "If your heart is still hers, she could use you—"

"My heart is mine, and mine alone," said Draec. "I see now I have been foolish from the start, my head too full of romantics to see the truth my friends tried so clearly to impart to me. Most noble bird, I implore you; lead us to our companions."

The nightingale seemed to sigh, a weary sound for such a small creature.

"Very well, I will show you the way. I am not sure if they require help as you fear, however. You have chosen well in your companions, Draec."

"If only they had chosen as well in me," he said miserably as he and Ealric struck out into the trees, following their tiny guide into the darkness.

[Want to see how Rowara and Veric were faring in Nimue's lair? Continue to track 13](#)

## Wicked

Rowara and Veric crawled out from their sheltering place, grabbing onto upturned roots turned slick with rain. Veric went to shout for Draec and Ealric, then stopped, thinking better of it. She had learnt her lesson on what else might be listening in these woods.

"Do you think we should stay here?" she asked Rowara as they tried to wring water out of their clothes.

*"Why wait in the cold, when such warmth awaits?"*

The voice was a seductive whisper, an invite which snuck through the air towards them like a secret promise.

"I see no warmth around here, witch." Rowara aimed for courage but her voice wavered as the two women stared at each other in fear. They both suspected that they knew exactly to whom this voice belonged.

*"And you, such a clever girl, too."* The voice said with a laugh which set Rowara's teeth on edge. *"Why, all you have to do is turn around."*

Veric and Rowara's bodies seemed to turn of their own accord, the two of them finding themselves at the entrance to a clearing. The air was warm with gentle sunshine. A river ran through the grass, a tree bending towards the water.

*"I have a most wonderful idea,"* whispered the voice, and Veric and Rowara found themselves certain that whatever the idea might be it was sure to be quite lovely.

*"I am sure you are suspicious, and worried about dear Draec. How about Veric goes to bring him back here safe and sound, and Rowara stays here, with me? Come closer to the water and I am sure we could come to trust each other..."*

Rowara felt the pull of helpless infatuation, a desire to declare love nearly as strong as Veric's sudden inclination to sprint into the trees to search for Draec. She took a step towards the inviting stream when another, stronger voice resounded through the glade.

**The boy, I understood. But I thought the two of you were more clever than this.**

Rowara gritted her teeth, instinctively annoyed at this random, judging voice. "Who are you?" she demanded, grappling with her unwanted undying adoration. "Are you here to help, or just another trick?"

**I am Merlin, the wizard known once in all the land. Nimue tricked me many years ago, condemning me to a life in these trees. But in condemning me she condemned herself, my powers not vanquished when I lost my physical form but turned into the energy of the forest itself. I keep her trapped here with me, unable to break loose**

**into the mortal world.**

*"Not for long, old man," snarled Nimue. "You may have taken Draec from me but this girl will do nicely."*

"I am not your pawn, old woman," managed Rowara.

**Strike the tree. This will weaken her enough for me to help you escape. Quickly!**

Nimue roared, her Magick a tide of will which buckled Rowara at the knees, but Veric managed to get her sword out of its sheath, doing to her best to cover the sound of Nimue's demands with a yell of her own as she ran towards the tree, feet splashing into the river, and plunged her weapon into the trunk with all her might.

For a second, nothing happened. Veric feared Merlin to be mistaken.

Then, all at once, the whole glade seemed to glitch and shimmer with a shrieking wail as if from the air itself.

Veric stumbled back in horror as she realised that the tree was weeping black blood from the wound in its bark, the liquid terrible in its wrongness as it oozed down onto the grass.

The river turned the darkest blue they had ever seen, the waves turning into choppy ripples like something was trying to get out from under the water.

**Go now, and quickly,** said the voice of Merlin, but the women didn't need to be told twice: Rowara grabbed Veric's hand and they ran, the sword still stuck fast in the dying tree.

**Find your friends and leave this place.**

## Stella Splendens in Monte No. 3

Veric and Rowara sprinted through the wood, yelling the others' names, all stealth abandoned. Rowara suddenly stopped, hearing the chirping tat-a-tat of birdsong, and a second later, the sounds of crashing undergrowth and distant voices. "Where is she?" yelled Draec, sword drawn, eyes wild. "I will slay the sorcerer before the

day is out!"

"Good news — no need." said Rowara cheerfully, beginning to drag him along the path, Ealric close behind. "Merlin's holding her off. Our only task is to get all of us out of this godforsaken place. You in particular. She's awfully keen on getting you in her special glade for some reason."

"She needs my youth to grow to her full power," said Draec miserably. "Melody was only ever a false conjuring, a trick to lure me here. If it wasn't for you I would be long dead, and her Magicks inflicted on the realm."

"Good thing we decided to tag along, then." said Ealric, copying Rowara's determinedly positive tone. Draec looked like a kicked puppy.

"I have failed you, friends. I should never have been so foolish."

Veric sighed. "You're a romantic. You took a chance. So what if it didn't work out in the way you hoped? Nimue will have only truly won in this game if you shut your heart because of it."

"Yes, absolutely, although maybe you two could do this later...?" Rowara was scanning the trees, searching for a single clue as to where they were. "How does Merlin expect us to get out of here when he hasn't shown us where we're meant to go?" The four travellers paused, no-one able to offer an answer.

Then, slowly, Veric turned from Draec with a frown.

"Is it... getting colder?"

Indeed they all realised that, yes, the air was turning more and more frosty, their breath fogging in front of them.

"... Um... So just to check... Does anyone else see...?" asked Veric, her voice much higher than usual.

"... See what?" said Rowara, feeling her stomach sink.

"Oh, you know... the... ghosts."

## Airlines

The others turned to stare at Veric, who grimaced. "Apparently not."

"Ghosts?" Rowara's academic interest was piqued even as they all nervously stared around them. "Can you describe them?"

"They're sort of... shimmers. Like flames, smoke, only... not. They're sort of... you can see the people they were. At the edges. Like it's the... memory of them."

Veric struggled to find the words, the wispy, burning figures she saw in front of her defying description. But Rowara was nodding in excitement.

"I think they're will o' the wisps. Lost souls, destined to wander around here for eternity. They might be here to lead us out."

"Or to make us one of them..." muttered Ealric, but Veric ignored her. She could hear words now, the wisps' delicate speech more breathy air than coherent sentences.

*"We are... those who... could not leave... We wish to help... We... We wish..."*

"We accept your offer," said Veric with a bow, remembering Rowara's formality when she addressed the fae. "Please, honourable spirits. Help us find our way home."

And so, following wisps only Veric could see, breath misting from the chilly winds of souls long gone, the friends wearily wound their way through the treacherous forest.

Back, though the undergrowth. Back, splashing through streams and clambering over tree roots. Back, until the foliage above them finally began to thin, the sky visible in glints and glimmers. Back, until Draec pushed back branches and saw fields, a path, a village in the distance.

They were out of the woods. They were safe.

Veric turned to thank the spirits, but they were already flickering into nothingness. The last one to fade looked at her, for a moment, and Veric felt familiarity in her kind eyes and greying braided hair, and wondered what had lured her to such a



treacherous death.

*"We wish..."*

Then they were gone, and only the living remained.

Exhausted, hungry, thirsty, bewildered. But oh, so gloriously alive.

## Alma Redemptoris Mater

Despite their tiredness and their aching bodies, the friends took the path back to the village at a run, so scared were they that they had somehow spent a hundred years inside that impossible forest.

Once they managed to get the first person they met to understand their garbled, panicked questions, however, they discovered that barely an hour had gone by.

Were it not for their missing packs, Veric's missing sword and their torn, wet and muddy clothing they would have scarcely been able to believe that their adventures had happened at all.

They told no-one of what had befallen them — well, perhaps apart from Ealric when she'd had one too many beers at the tavern — and determined to go on with their travels, a little wiser, a little more sober, a little more wary of the unbelievable. Draec found true love in the end, though not where he was expecting. Rowara read many wonderful books, and Veric discovered her powers led to many more wonderful things.

But those are all tales for another time. I hear the sounds of the day finally dawning, and my time with you is finally at an end. If you believe yourself to be brave, why not try to find Nimue yourself? I hear that she still waits in the forest, chained to Merlin for all eternity, the two destined to fight until the end of days. It is still possible to find that wood, if you know where to look. Just remember some places are easier to enter than they are to leave...









## Biography

BLOCK4 are a British-European quartet whose dynamic programming aims to introduce audiences of all types to the versatility and unique sound world of the recorder.

Storytelling and narrative has always been at the centre of the group's programming, allowing audiences new to the Recorder to experience the varied repertoire in new and exciting ways. Their debut recording *Beneath a Pale Moon* is no different. A story written by writer, theatre maker and folk artist Essa Flett guides the listener through the album, depicting a journey through an enchanted wood, where magic lurks around every corner.

Formed in 2012, The quartet's innovative style resulted in them being the 2014 winner of the Royal Overseas League ensemble competition - the first recorder consort to receive this accolade in the competition's 65 year history - and propelled them to success at the Chesapeake Chamber Music Competition (USA), where they were awarded first prize in 2016. BLOCK4 was a Live Music Now ensemble from 2015 - 2019, bringing educational workshops to schools around England, and was the Ensemble-in-Residence for Handel & Hendrix in London between 2016 and 2018.

To date, BLOCK4's performances have included concerts at prestigious UK venues including the National Gallery, the Queen Elizabeth Hall, the Wigmore Hall, St. Martin-in-the-Fields, the Brighton Early Music Festival, and the Greenwich International Early Music Festival. International appearances have included the Styriarte festival in Graz, Austria, a concert series in Chesapeake, USA, and performances of world premieres at the Iš Arti Festival, Lithuania, and Les Goûts Réunis series, Netherlands.

BLOCK4's debut album *Beneath a Pale Moon* was recorded by: Emily Bannister, Verena Barié, Rosie Land and Daniel Scott.

Supported by Help Musicians UK and Angel Early Music

With huge thanks to the crowdfunders who made this recording possible: Alexander Hyndman, Alyson Elliman, Andrew Crossley, Beatriz Ferreira, Brian and Janice Capstick, Catherine Bannister, Dave and Biggi, Dave Huxley, David Manning, Diana Green, Ellis Hillinger, Gareth Devlin, Gayathri Ramesh, Guillermo Rosas, Harriet Harrison, Irmel Weber, James Land, Lourdes and Peter Crossley, María Martínez Ayerza, Marcella Ballina, Matthew Bannister, Michele Mazzini, Mike Fitzgerald, Nazzareno Giovanni Mazzini, Oliver Bannister, Patricia and John Malin, Ruth Huxley, and Sindhuja Shriananda.

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Instruments: Renaissance consort recorders by Adriana Breukink (tracks 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 13, 15, 17). Paetzold recorder consort by Kunath (tracks 5, 11, 12, 14, 16). Bassett recorders by Yamaha and Küng (tracks 11, 12, 16). Tenor recorder by Yamaha (tracks 11, 16). Tenor recorder by Musch (track 16). Alto recorder by Rohmer (track 11). Alto recorder by Hulsen (track 16).



In the heart of what we do lies a simple truth: music should be felt as much as heard. Our label is founded on the idea that the purest form of listening replicates the magic of a live performance. It's not about grandeur; it's about authenticity, about capturing the essence of the moment when music comes alive.

With each recording, we try to craft an auditory journey, where the walls of your listening space dissolve to reveal the vaulted grandeur of a concert hall, the sacred quiet of a church, or the intimate warmth of a studio. Our role is that of a careful curator — we blend into the background, allowing the artists and the space to speak through the music.

We choose artists who resonate with this philosophy: musicians who inspire us not just with their talent, but with their drive to push boundaries whilst maintaining a heartfelt connection to their audience. It's this balance that guides our collaborations and helps us fulfill our pledge to bring forth recordings that honour the integrity of high fidelity sound, and the essence of musical storytelling.

At TRPTK, we quietly step back and let artistry take the spotlight. We're here to capture rather than enhance, and to deliver not just the sound, but the very soul of the music to you.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Brendan Heinst'.

*founder & senior recording and mastering engineer*

# Equipment used on this recording

## Microphones

Josephson C617 with Microtech Gefell MK221 capsules *main mics*

Josephson C42 *height mics*

## Microphone preamplifiers

Grace Design m801mk2

## AD/DA conversion (11.2MHz 1bit)

Merging Technologies Hapi mkII

Merging Technologies Anubis

Grimm Audio CC2 *master clock*

Weiss Engineering Saracon *samplerate converter*

## Monitoring

Grimm Audio LS1be *main loudspeakers*

Grimm Audio SB1 *subwoofers*

KEF LS50 Meta *height loudspeakers*

Hegel C55 *amplifier*

## Cabling

Purecable Optimus Link *microphone cables*

Purecable Optimus Power *power cables*

Grimm Audio TPR XLR *microphone cables*

Grimm Audio TPR8 *breakout cables*

## Tuning

Pura Power Supplies the Dodo *linear power supply*

Pura Power Supplies the Sauroпода *line conditioner*

Pura Power Supplies the Nautilus *power distributor*

Computer Audio Design GC3 *ground conditioner*

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WEISS

Grimm | AUDIO



## Credits

Recording & mastering engineer **Brendon Heinst**

Editor **Hans Erblich**

Artwork **Evie Thomas**

Story **Essa Flett**

Recording dates **April 20<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> 2023**

Recording location **Lutheran Church, Haarlem (NL)**

Recording format **11.2MHz 1bit in 5.1.4-channel immersive**

[www.trptk.com](http://www.trptk.com)