

LUTHIERY

High Lonesome Luthiery on the Continent and Back

Gary Leddington

In 2010, after being made redundant from my job as a museum technician in Manchester, I moved to Antwerp, Belgium, after being offered the position of Studio Assistant for a British expat fine artist. It was around this time that my musical tastes became more and more acoustic. After flitting here and there between Blues and Country, Townes Van Zandt and Sun House, I inevitably discovered the transcendent Doc Watson and, eventually, Bill Monroe and Bluegrass. At that moment, my fate was sealed: I knew this was not going away, and I began to seek out other Bluegrass enthusiasts – of whom it transpired that, for such a small country, there were many.

"I was hooked and knew that this luthiery thing was not going away"



Getting to grips with the finer points of guitar-building

It was also around this time that another more deeply seated interest began to percolate. Back in high school,

a fellow pupil of mine made an electric guitar as one of his DT projects, and I thought that was just the coolest thing in the world. Around 2016, I was working again in a museum as head technician – building exhibitions, installing artworks, that kind of thing. At this point, I had a fair bit of experience with woodworking, plus access to a full workshop, and so the cogs began to turn on my eventual foray into luthiery. I had vague designs on getting some jazz lessons at some point and this, coupled with the relative ease of an electric build (compared to an acoustic) meant that in earnest I began building a walnut Les Paul Jr-type thing. My heart wasn't in it though, not fully – I was and still am primarily an acoustic music-lover – and so, after getting to grips with some of the finer points of guitar-building, I eventually abandoned the electric and began work on what became my first guitar, a European spruce and padouk dreadnought. Much like with my discovery of Bluegrass, I was hooked and knew that this luthiery thing was also not going away.

"I like to think that in my absence something I made is still sympathetically vibrating"

Farewell to Belgium

Some 20 odd guitars later, in 2022, I decided it was time to say farewell to Belgium: love was calling me back to

the UK and I took the opportunity to set up as a full-time builder and repairs person based in the beautiful, historic city of Bath. Most recently I have also jumped aboard



the rebooted Chapman Cases ship, where we offer premium instrument flight cases for guitar, banjo and mandolin. I'm glad to be back, but I dearly miss the friends I made along the way. One of my regular haunts used to be at a jam session at a tulip farm in the Netherlands. In fact, that first guitar I built has now been decommissioned and hangs on the wall at that place, along with many other instruments hung up for decoration. I like to think that in my absence something I made is still sympathetically vibrating with all the music being made there.

Wolvenberg

Several years ago, I took a trip to Sicily and whilst on the flight there a melody popped into my head, kind of dark and groovy, and a bit odd. I couldn't quite place it but I liked it. Convinced it was one of Blue Highway's lesser known instrumentals, I went through their entire back-catalogue – several times, I might add – before moving on to the rest of the music I had with me

(this was pre-Spotify) but alas, to no avail. It had to be by someone, right? The melody remained in my head for the whole trip, I couldn't shake it, and when I returned to Belgium, I turned my music collection upside down, yet again to no avail. I was tearing my hair out. After one such frustrating search session I went for a de-stressing jaunt around a local park, and it was there amongst the trees that I decided I must have written it. The park in Dutch is called Wolvenberg, which loosely translates as 'Wolf Mountain', and thus the tune was named.

Like the friendships I made on the Continent, this tune is something I will always carry with me, a memento of a very special time. I'm very honoured to share it with you here and hope that one day I might meet some of you and we can play it together.



For more information, please visit www.leddingtonguitars.com

Wolf Mountain

Gary Leddington

Guitar

$\bullet = 112$

G G G G

6 C D G G

10 G G G G

14 D G G

18 F F G G F F

24 F D G G

28 G G C D G G