

Steve Louvat : guitarist & banjo player

Originating from Liège, adopted by Namur and mainly American in the heart, since his early childhood Steve is passionately fond of the Bluegrass 5 string banjo and the finger picking guitar.

Being a hard worker and an enthusiastic traveller, his outstanding performances quickly bring him to play on several stages all over the places. In the United States, he finds the completeness of his art by sharing his talent and his musical favorite discoveries with the best transatlantic musicians of today's Bluegrass stage : Bill Keith, Béla Fleck, Mark Schatz, Wyatt Rice...as to name only a few.

During his american shows he was highly applauded by amateur audiences and recognized by his peers. Steve retained a touching memory of this. These unforgettable moments will boost his personal inspiration. Also becoming very much in demand in Europe, he plays in France, Germany, Switzerland, Spain, Czechoslovak Republic, Ireland, Holland

Born in Rocourt on the 17 July 1974, Steve has been brought up in a musical environment and this has influenced him since his early childhood.

He was only a few months old, he could not walk yet, however the open chest containing the Martin D-28 guitar from his father occasionally became his playpen and his playground.

His parents, mainly loving to the american music listen to **Clearwater revival** , **The Marshal Tucker Band** , **Rory Gallagher** , **Johnny Winter** , **Commander Cody** , **Manfred Man Earth Band** , **John Mayal** ... but also **Marcel Dadi**. Always on the look out for new musics, they extatically discover the banjo and the bluegrass played by the **Newgrass Revival** or through the avant-gardist attempts of **Tony Trischka** . Then, Steve listens to his father playing the electric guitar but unfortunately he can not touch it yet..

Quite early, his parents, anxious to develop the taste of music for Steve and his young brother Jefferson, make them listen to children songs carefully selected from **Jacky Gallou**, these happy melodies included the banjo, the mandoline and the accordion, these sounds did fascinate the two boys to the extend that they knew the whole repertoire by heart.

Steve remembers very well the first time he could hold a guitar, he was around 9 years old. He already felt very attracted by the instrument and this moment was so magical that nothing else would exist anymore.

This is what happened when his hungarian grand-mother lent him a real classical guitar for one day saying: "In the future, you will be a great musician and you will be

in concerts all over the world." ! Steve is very touched and these words are the trigger of a long and marvellous adventure !

One year later, he goes with his family to a concert given by the prestigious banjoist **Tony Trischka**, this memory left him with a very strong feeling. He did not know that ten years later he would take part of a workshop with him !

An special Christmas

At the age of thirteen, he seriously asked his parents to learn to play the guitar. His mother reminds him the tones and the originality of the banjo which he chooses straightaway. He will receive a banjo for Christmas and as soon as February 1988, Steve starts his first lessons with a Professor in Liège : Guy Donis. Captivated and amazed by the sounds, Steve instantly feels that the magic has happened in his life ! His crave for learning is so high that he started working from home on the same day ; his personal musical journey had started.

During this same year, his father bought a folk guitar to play with Steve. One year later, Jefferson, drowned in this musical atmosphere, starts to play the mandoline at 11 years old. The father and his two sons are an enthusiastic trio, very quickly, the mother joins them to play the fiddle. The first group is born : **The Louvat Family** !

Between 88 and 91, Steve follows several trainings on the banjo and also on the picking guitar (as soon as the year 89) under the guidance of **Guy Donis** , **Philippe Corthouts** , and of course the amazing **Jacques Stotzem** .

At 16 years old, Steve meets his idol **Bill Keith** during a Master Class in Brussels. The well-known style and the sound of this famous american banjoist dazzles him. It is like a revelation and an amazing turning point in his starting career.

First concerts

As from the year 1990, Steve plays in several concerts with **The Louvat Family** and at that time, some of the musical trainings are followed by all members of the family.

For the Cerex 91 festival, he creates with his brother the **Steve & Jefferson Band**, they are accompanied by **André Vandomber** on guitar and the vocal and **Wally Lauwers** on double bass. From there, there will be many concerts in Belgium.

During this period, he works simultaneously on the guitar and on the banjo ; from 91 to 92, finishing then his secondary school, Steve vanishes at each lunch time to work on the **Marcel Dadi** pieces of music.

First steps in the United States

In 93, after his secondary school, he took a break during a year and used this time to dedicate himself to his passion which is playing the banjo eight hours a day, this will enable him to record his first demos with the group of the moment **Bluegrass**

Junction (**Steve, Jefferson**, their **father** and **Raph van Wymsberghe** playing the bass and singing) and the duo with his brother **Jefferson** .

In July, the same year, he realizes one of his biggest dream and flies to the United States to play with **Bill Keith** in **New York** , in **Pennsylvania** , in **Connecticut** , in **Washington** ...

Back home, and knowing that a career choice has to be made, he decided to study a Master in Biochemistry in Liège. Three years of study during which he plays with the **Wesport Drive**, group composed with **Steve** , **Jefferson** , **Yves Aerts** (guitar and vocal) and **Jef Van Peer** (bass and singing). There will also be several concerts.

During the summer of the year 96, Steve goes back to his prestigious mentor **Bill Keith** for a new transatlantic journey.

Handling both, his professional career and his passion for the music, he plays with his brother at the **International Bluegrass Festival in Oklahoma** in 97 and year 99, they travel and play in **Nashville, Memphis, Texas** ... the american audience is overwhelmed! In year 98, he records a cd clip in duo: **Steve & Jefferson Louvat**.

Concerts, festivals, european shows

In 2000, he plays in several concerts and festivals, '**Jamboree**' in **Czechia** , '**Sur la route de Tullin**' in **Grenoble** , concert at the '**Palais des Beaux-Arts**' in **Brussels** and plays at the **IBMA** (International Bluegrass Music Association) in **Louisville** with **Jefferson** and the fantastic **Marc Schatz** on bass.

They will also animate the '**Jeunesses Musicales 2000-2001**' season accompanied by the bass player **Jacques Pirard**.

An inextinguishable musical thrive drives him beyond limits and make him accept more and more challenges. The encounter with the canadian singer **Tammy Fassaert** is a revelation and a new mutual project will be born : **Le European Tour 2001** with **The Tammy Fassaert Band** composed by **Tammy** , **Steve** , **Jefferson** and the suisse **Markus Fritzsche** (bass and vocal). They play in **Germany** , in **Holland** , in **Luxembourg** , in **Zwitzerland** and in **Barcelona** ... Unforgettable moments !

He ends the year at a concert with the bassist and friend **Jeff Van Peer** at the **AEGC** in **Paris** .

During the summer of the year 2002 the band **Mélotrolls** will be created including **Michel Vrydag** playing the bass, **Bruno Grollet** playing the alto saxophone, **François Dethy** playing the drums and **Steve** playing the banjo, a group from which emanates innovative and jazzy sounds. We can very quickly hear them playing in several concerts and festivals: '**La maison des musiques**' in **Brussels**, '**Festival de Dhuy**' ... but Steve also plays in solo, '**La maison de la culture**' in **Namur**, '**Namur en mai**' ... In fact, he just recorded a cd on which he is playing the **guitar** with some re-entries from **Dadi** and the **banjo solo**.

The years 2003 and 2004 are quite busy : the recording of a cd clip and more and more concerts with the **Mélotrolls** : '**Palais des beaux arts**', '**Musée Charlier de**

BRX, '**Ferme rose**', '**Namur en mai**', '**Estiv'art**', the **EWOB** in Holland, '**Le temps des pommes**' ... this list is not exhaustive. Concurrently, Steve pursues the ability to be alone on the stage where his human and musical performances radiate and win out the audience. He plays in solo in several concerts such as the renowned '**Gaume Jazz Festival**' or at the '**Musée des Instruments de Musique**' in Brussels where was organized an exhibition dedicated to the banjo. A journey in Ireland at the '**Longford festival**' will reinforce his taste for the celtic music.

He will animate the '**Jeunesses musicales 2003 – 2004**' season with the **Mélotrolls**.

He went back in the United States in 2004 for the '**Grey fox Festival**' with **Bill Keith** where he received his new **Larrivée** guitar as an endorsement. This new success encourages him to work intensively at the creation of his personal compositions and in Novembre, he records a new cd demo including them.

In 2005, the Mélotrolls record for "**Le monde est un village**" from **Didier Mélon** under the care of the **RTBF**, and for the **Compilation 2005 Young Folk** at the Smiske. The group also plays in several festivals and concerts : '**Nam'in Jazz**', '**Concert des Nuits Nomades**' for the **RTBF** in the **Théâtre 140** in Brussels, the '**Brosella Festival**' in Brussels, the '**Picnic Festival**' in Namur, the '**Concert en aide pour la Louisiane**' in Namur ... and in September 2005, obtain the '**Arts & Vie**' status.

This same year, Steve carries on in solo, he has the opportunity to play in prestige clubs: **Rotary**, **Leo's**, **Kiwanis** and **Lions** . In September 2005, he was awarded the **1st price of the Sabam** and the **2nd price Jazz** given by **Guy Cabay** during the competition in '**La maison du Jazz**' in Mons, his banjo and picking guitar demonstrations were highly appreciated by the jury. He also played at the concert '**Des guitares de l'espoir**', for the '**Kaléidoscope de la guitare**' , and at the '**Château de St Victor sur Loire**' in Lyon...

In March 2006, he encouraged the **Ingrid Betancourt** case in giving a picking guitar concert in solo in **Montbrisson** . He played with **François Sciortino** at the '**Picnic Festival**' in **Namur** where endorsement possibilities became available with the prestigious **Nechville** american banjo trademark. In December 2006, after a last concert at the '**Casino de Namur**' , Steve entirely devoted himself to the recording of his new solo guitar album "**A new morning**" which will be available in Septembre 2007.

This website will be created and online in 2007, also a solo album and several concerts out of which one at the **Botanique** in Brussels to be expected the year 2008...