

MY GUITAR IS...

Ronnie Lane's 1971 Zemaitis resonator... Keith Smart explains how he fulfilled a lifelong dream



Above: Keith Smart (right) with Stan Lane

Ronnie Lane was a founder member of the Small Faces and The Faces. During his time in the bands he started buying Zemaitis instruments. I met Stan Lane (Ronnie's brother) years ago. Over 10 years I asked if he would sell me the Zemaitis resonator of Ronnie's that he kept in his loft. He brought the guitar to a Small Faces convention, I had a strum... and I dreamed of owning it one day. Every year I would ask Stan if he wanted to sell it.

September 2005: Stan wanted to sell the guitar. I said I would raise the money, but I had a slight problem in that I had no money! I previously told Francine (my wife) that I wouldn't be buying any more guitars! She is very understanding about my guitars and suggested I sort out a loan, selling other guitars to pay it off. In October 2005 we went to Stan and Jan Lanes' place. I expected the guitar to look a bit worse for wear, but it seemed to be in excellent condition. We spent a wonderful evening, even getting to see Ronnie's Ivor Novello award... When we left, Stan had a tear in his eye saying I was the only person that he would let the guitar go to. I think he

likes the fact it will be played.

I have a video of Ronnie playing the guitar in concert in 1974; playing Ooh La La and Debris. I looked through one of the heart holes on the body and saw 'Ron Lane 1971' in Tony's hand, putting the guitar alongside Ron Wood's Zemaitis metal front and disc front.

I noticed a small crack on the front, nothing to worry about, but all the same I took the guitar to Knight guitars – sought out by those in the know (Townshend, Harrison, Page etc). He repaired the crack and his son Rob photographed the inside. Tony had written 'Repaired 1974' and 'Repaired July 1976 ACZ'. I use the guitar in the studio and intend to play it on stage too: it has such an unusual voice, not resonator like, almost banjo like depending on where you play it.

Keith Smart, Addlestone

Did your guitar come with a story attached? If so, we want to know about it! Please send your My Guitar Is pictures and 400 word story... to My Guitar Is, Guitarist, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW or e-mail guitarist@futurenet.co.uk