

LOSS OF LEGENDARY GUITARIST TED GREENE



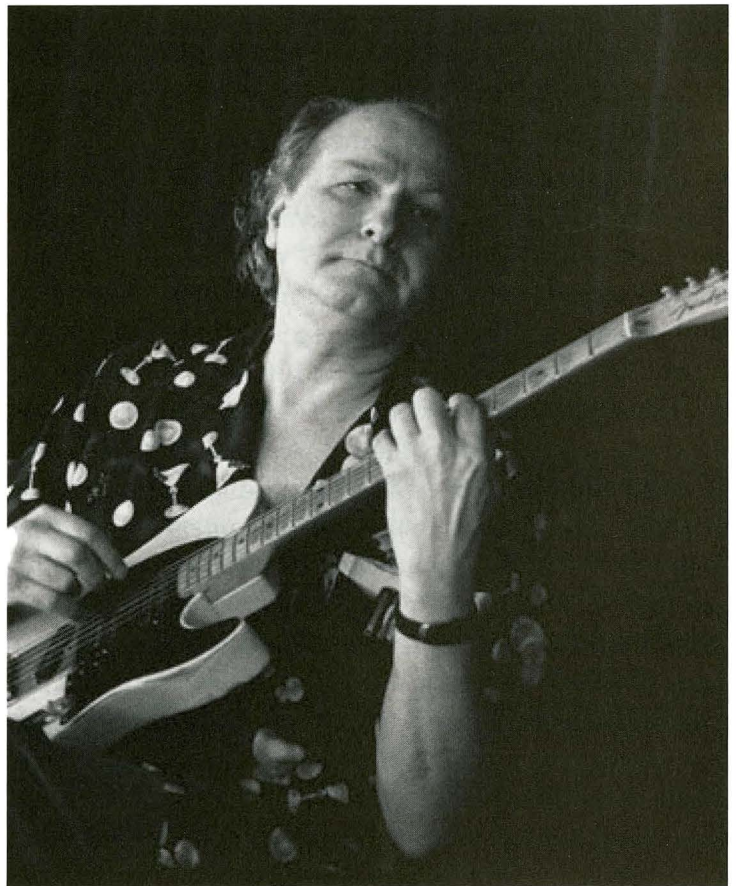
A legend in jazz guitar circles, Ted Greene passed away Saturday night, July 16th, apparently of a heart attack. He was 59. The discovery was made by his students waiting outside his apartment for their lessons. Although I had been introduced to him years ago, I didn't know him, but know some of his guitarist friends who often spoke about the remarkable musician and his unbounded enthusiasm and knowledge of the guitar. Many of them, professionals themselves, relied on Greene for occasional lessons or "playing tune-ups."

Starting his love affair with the guitar at age 11, Ted Greene thought of himself as an excellent teacher of guitar and music, rather than as a great player, although his playing had received many accolades. He was passionate about the guitar and its unending possibilities and potential. He had a unique ability to communicate musical concepts and provide comparative perspectives with colorful language and examples. A bright, bright man, he sometimes minimized his own playing abilities, but the probable reality was that his expectations were so high that mere fingers and hands couldn't always produce what his creative mind could conceive and his passion demand. Yet noted guitarists acknowledge his amazing tone, and have called him a

genius and "the chord wizard." Rather than as a genius, Greene modestly described himself as having the energy and a burning need to understand the guitar in all respects, with a lifelong inquisitiveness about the versatile instrument. He would deflect such compliments to guitarists he thought had been brilliant in a wide range of styles and music; such as George Van Eps, Wes Montgomery, Chet Atkins, Scotty Anderson, Danny Gatton, and Andre Segovia. Others he also considered extraordinary were Eddie Lang, Django Reinhardt, Barney Kessel, and Charley Christian.

Ted Greene the musician, teacher, author, perennial student of guitar, guitar philosopher, and the legend in his own time, will indeed be missed by the jazz community.

Harvey Barkan



Photographer Bob Barry had the privilege of photographing Ted at a brunch gig at Spazio several months back. He recalled that Ted played continuously for almost three hours. This is one of the images from that afternoon. Bob believes his work will continue to be a beacon of light that will guide musicians, young and old, for generations to come.

From: Rich Severson of Guitar College

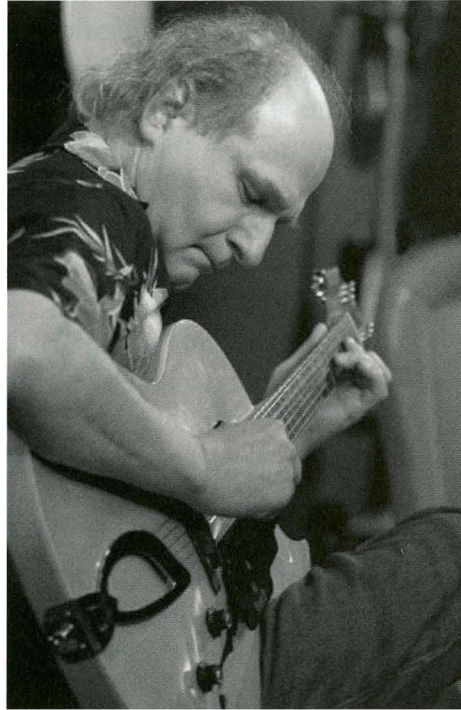
It's with a heavy heart that I read all of the comments on the web page dedicated to Ted Greene. Ted was one of the kindest and gentlest souls I've ever met. He was always very nice to me. Last time we spoke, he was reminiscing about the guitar I had 30 years ago. Ted remembered everything. He was a one of a kind.

I first met Ted in 1973. I was playing at a bowling alley in Reseda, Ca., and the drummer of the band knew Dale Zdenek, who owned a local music store. He invited Dale to come down to hear me play. Dale soon after offered me a job teaching at the store, and that's when I met Ted. At that time, Ted looked like a crazed hippy with his long hair and full beard. I had heard of Ted as a blues player, but soon realized he was into every form of music. The first piece I heard him play was Bach, on his Gibson 345, which had more switches on it than the space shuttle. He had installed capacitors to make it sound like a harpsichord. What a blessing it was to teach in the room next to Ted. When most teachers had a cancellation they would take a break. Ted would say "Come on in; let's play," or "Come on in; I want to show you something." What a treat! It was like a family at that store with Ted and Dale and his wife Linda and the others teachers. During a cancellation, Ted rewired my '68 335 because the volume control affected the tone! It was a Gibson flaw that he pointed out to them, which they later corrected. Ted showed me so many things: One evening as we were leaving the store after teaching all day, I told him how I would really like to learn how he did those harmonic rolls of his, so right there in the parking lot he pulled out his guitar and gave me a lesson. That's how Ted was. When I am playing, I can often say "Ted showed me that," even how to adjust a guitar neck. All of my teaching materials have the fingerprints of Ted's work.

I remember the day Dale received the first shipment of Ted's "Chord Chemistry" at the store. You could say that day changed everything. Ted's book took off, and so did Dale's publishing business. Soon after, Dale closed the store and opened another in publishing, and Ted moved his teaching to his home.

It was another blessing to have three books published with Dale along with players like Tommy Tedesco, Joe Diorio, John Kurnick, Ron Anthony, Leon White and, of course, Ted. Most of those books are now out of print except for Ted's. Ted has always had an underground following from students searching for something new. After the store was sold, I saw Ted only

at company parties, where sometimes we would play together, but the real treat was to hear him play solo guitar. I still remember hearing his arrangement of "Angels We Have Heard On High," and seeing Tedesco's jaw drop. Ted's use of counterpoints, walking bass lines, harmonics, unusual chord voicings, and great harmonic sense was mind-boggling.



The last couple of years, I bugged Ted to come up to our Yosemite workshops. He said "Someday I will," but everyone knows he barely got out of his house. I also wanted to interview him for our video magazine, but we never got together. Sadly, I dropped the ball on seeing him my last trip to LA. and didn't call him. I did go to California Vintage Guitar that trip, and found a Guild x50 I really liked. When Dan, the owner, said Ted had just brought it in, I snatched it up. I was holding off on telling Ted because I wanted to surprise him with a video segment I did for the magazine where I used that guitar, but that surprise is gone as well.

Here's a Ted gem: I've been sending him issues of our video magazine for his students, and when I spoke with him last, he wanted to give me a free phone lesson for them. I was just happy he'd looked at them.

Thousands of guitar players have been touched by his work, and thousands more are yet to come. I will miss him and never forget him, and I know he is with his Creator and He is enjoying the fruit of his genius.

Photos courtesy and © Bob Barry

TED GREENE MEMORIAL

A One-Of-A-Kind Man

The Grand Ballroom at the Beverly Garland Hotel in North Hollywood was already filled beyond capacity on this Sunday afternoon, but people kept arriving for the Memorial for Ted Greene. Those closest to him wanted this to be a celebration of his passions, his music, his humanity, and his friendship. Each of those areas was full and wide, often mixing and flowing together so that much of his life simultaneously involved them all.

Ted Greene was passionate about the guitar and its still unfulfilled musical potential. No day was ever long enough for him to do all of the things he wanted to do with it. Recognized as a superb guitarist by other noted guitarists and guitar educators worldwide, he modestly seemed more comfortable as guitar teacher, where his abilities were legendary. One of today's speakers, a former student, commented that rather than motivate, Ted inspired! There was a two-year waiting list for lessons from him, disclosed some of his students, who talked about his extremely modest fees for guitar lessons. Many fine professionals said they relied on Ted for "tune-ups" of their playing, or increasing knowledge of advanced chord or harmony theory. But he also took on the dedicated novice player if he thought that student really loved the instrument with dedication.

There were numerous truly excellent guitarists at the Memorial to pay tribute, but just a few played, and briefly, some featuring Ted's arrangements. Even though many considered him a musical genius, that was just a part of the remarkable Ted Greene. There were stories of how he changed lives, and touched many others, for the better. Stories of his acts of kindness caused a lot of tissues to appear out of pockets and purses. An out-of-work guitar student once found money on his couch after Ted left, but Ted wouldn't accept it back. "Just pass it on when you have it!" The end of that story came years later when the student did pass it on to another that needed it --- Ted, himself, who couldn't pay his rent that month! It felt good, when Ted promised to pay it back, to tell him, "No; Just pass it on when you have it!" It was a life-lesson in ethical decency he learned from his teacher.

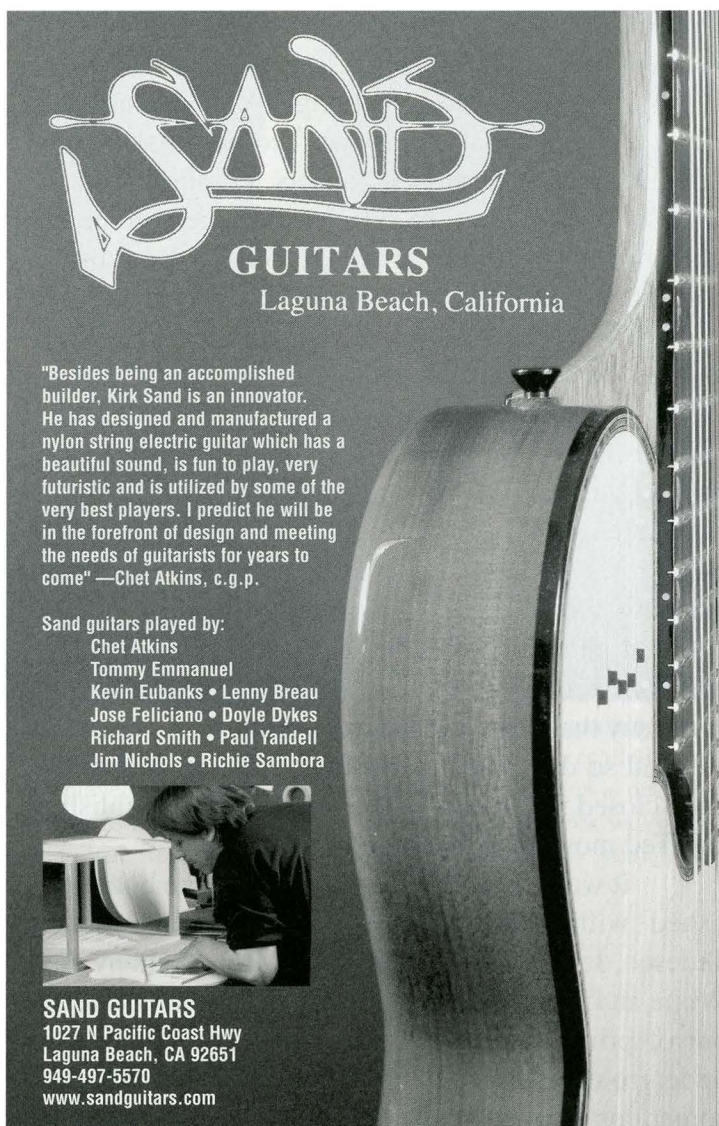
Each of the many impromptu stories about Ted had the substance to bring out audience response. Some were emotional; others were light and hilarious

tales about the unique and often eccentric man. It seemed that the related stories themselves were eloquent, as speaker after speaker was articulate and moving, perhaps still inspired by the Ted factor. This was a deeply felt experience for all of us there.

Ted's longtime companion, Barbara Franklin, sister Linda Jainehill, and brother Ron Greene spoke first to open the Memorial. Following, there were many others who spoke, many of them prominent in the music business there. Even though Ted may have been too modest to have done it, interest was expressed in putting together some of his recordings and numerous arrangements, to amaze some and inspire others, in the future.

As a video of Ted playing was shown, the Memorial went well beyond the scheduled closing time of 5 pm; the assemblage didn't seem to want to let go of Ted Greene.

Harvey Barkan



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