

## Ted Greene Guitar Lesson with Paul Vachon

### Excerpts: Ted's Comments about His Voicing Groups System

[Below are excerpts from transcriptions I made in 1985 from a couple of lessons with Ted in which he mentioned his V-system. I had been studying with Ted for several months, mainly working on chord-melodies and reharmonization studies, and I had asked him about various chord forms and systematic inversions. He asked me to write out as much as I could on what I already knew and then add whatever other forms I could think of. Later I showed him my pages and he wrote different "V" numbers next to each row. Other than that and the comments below, that's as far as we got into the Voicing Groups material. He never explained his system to me. —Paul]

#### 1985, January 21

I backed into something years ago—that there are systems of voicings on the guitar, stuff that you know now. Eventually it became clear more and more that it's easy to organize them by their size. Like the smallest ones [Ted plays a series of close-voiced chord clusters]...you know, this kind of stuff. Then it was, "What am I going to call this?" Well, I figured, these easy-to-reach chords are the most important size for guitar players. These [Ted plays some chords that involve small stretches] are the second most important because we use them a lot. And the third might be stuff that's a little spread.

So I started saying, "small, medium, and large *density*." But the thing is there are all these others. I knew that they were there, but I'd say, "They're not important." But they *are* important. I decided not to let them take a backseat anymore. So I ran out of terms for density: "large, but shallow density." [he laughs]

So I came up with the term *Voicing Groups*. VG. I had VG-1, VG-2, etc. But that sounded too pretentious, so I just called it V. It covers everything. So "V" stands for "Voicing Groups." The other ones—the small, medium, and large—are still up there at the top, it's just that the others are nice too.

There are 14 of them. With VG chords you can usually avoid a doubling. They offer more options. Also, remember that *string* affects the *sound*. Some voicings on different strings sound more or less dark or light.

#### 1985, February 18

The VG chords with the very big spreads—some of this stuff is so unusable in the normal flow of things. I usually go right away for the big juicy ones. I'm not going to go for V-10. But if you were playing in a long arrangement, and maybe you went into an out-of-time section where you wanted some very transparent colors, especially up in the high registers—then you might use a lot of them.

You have to develop a taste for these chords by trying them in progressions first. Try them in chord scales, and get the flavor of their diatonic sounds. Then try them in cycles, etc. Try them by thinking just playing melody, inner voice, and maybe some frozen bottom ones. Things like that.