

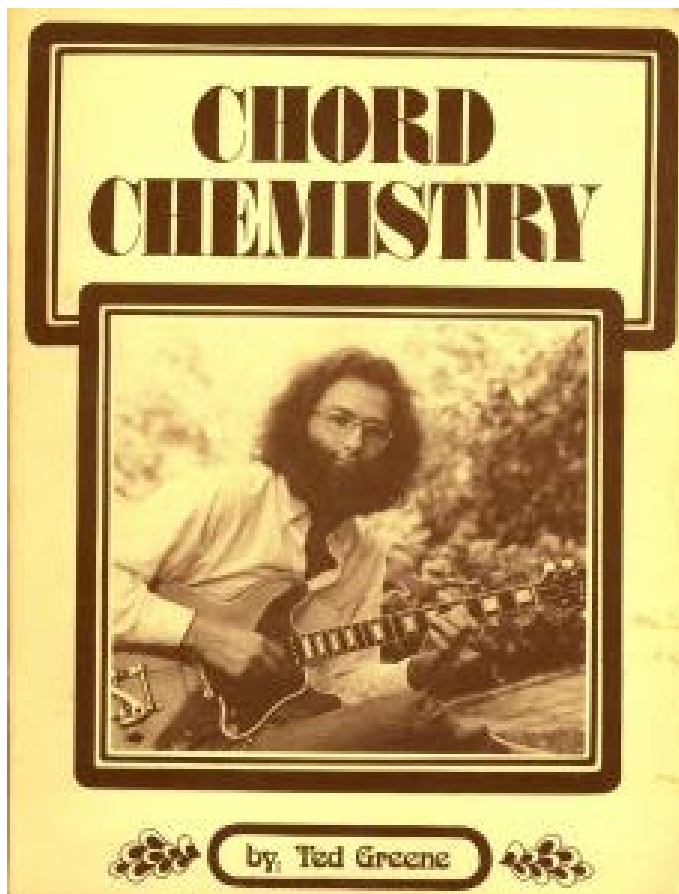
TED GREENE – CHORD CHEMISTRY

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Written by LA based musician, Justin Scott Lucas, January 26, 2012

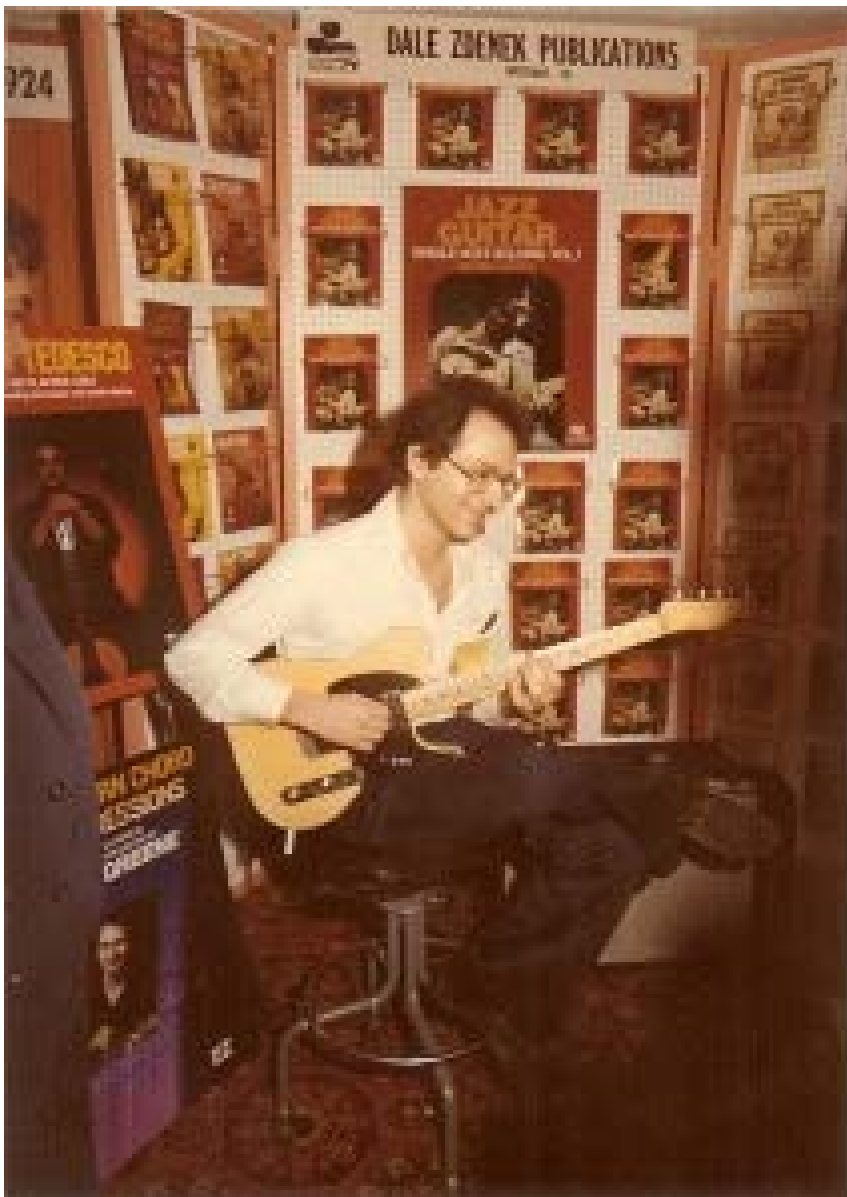
As in any field of study, countless volumes have been written about music. With the increasing popularity of the guitar, particularly in the last 50 years, **a wealth of guitar literature has been established, much of it penned by the instrument's greatest masters.** Today, many of us learn from teachers, in person, but truth be told, if we were all well-disciplined, self-motivated students, we could learn everything we would ever need to know about the guitar from books. Although it is immensely helpful to have a teacher synthesize and communicate this information, some books hold a special knowledge only receivable through the intimate reading, studying experience.

In the “books” section of *Riffs of Wisdom*, I will **shed light on some literature that could greatly help all guitarists on their journey towards musical nirvana.** Some will be advanced, theoretical books, some will be instructional methods, some will be important collections of scores, and some will just be plain fun reads! Ultimately, these books have helped me gain many *Riffs of Wisdom*, and will hopefully teach you a few too.



The first book I'm writing about is **a guitar classic, and can be found in many guitar players' bookshelves** – *Chord Chemistry*, written by Ted Greene. Although Ted wrote four significant works about the guitar, this is by far his most well-known. Ted was primarily a solo, finger-style guitarist. He is most commonly depicted with a vintage Telecaster and Fender amp, staples of his signature tone. A master of music theory and harmony, Ted became famous for his intricate solo guitar arrangements, often turning jazz standards, pop tunes, and Beatles' songs into gorgeous guitar ballads. He also was well-known for his mastery of the blues, on which he could improvise endlessly, implementing walking bass lines, harmony, and melody. Much like his contemporary, Lenny Breau, Ted was also well-known for his use of artificial harmonics and close-voiced harmony, similar to that of a pianist. Overall, he was an amazing, unique player – check him out on YouTube.

But more so than a player, **Ted was a great student of the guitar – and as a result, a great teacher.** Ted had Asperger Syndrome, a mild form of Autism, that made him an extreme introvert and an obsessive person. Ted hardly left his apartment (his number of public performances can be counted by hand), and **his greatest obsession was studying the guitar.** He hosted a vast number of students in his guitar den, which was cluttered by stacks upon stacks of papers, many pertaining to his studies. He would conduct in depth analyses of J.S. Bach, Wes Montgomery, and different musical styles. He could improvise any tune in accurate Baroque styling, and had an impeccable ear for harmony. Many students were fortunate enough to learn from this guitar master in person, **but for the rest of us, Ted left four jam packed books – *Chord Chemistry*, *Modern Chord Progressions* and the two-part *Single-Note Jazz Soloing*.** And although these books may seem thin, they are dense!



As Ted writes, *Chord Chemistry* “examines chords and their application.” **This is not a beginner’s book,** but Ted makes an effort to bring the reader up to speed, explaining different chord types and their purposes. The rest of the book is an attempt to **translate Ted’s complex harmonic language.** Some of the most valuable sections discuss specific chord substitutions, when they are appropriate, and the effect they will have. There is also a dense portion of the book where Ted diagrams all of the chord voicings he uses – and believe me, you would not have thought of many of these! They are also important sections about the Blues, right-hand technique, rock progressions, and counterpoint.

Overall, this book is dense! **Don’t expect to take it all in the first time.** It’s been on my book shelf for years, and I constantly revisit it, always learning something

that I couldn’t previously comprehend. If you put in the time and effort **this book will greatly help you progress, not only on your guitar, but on your journey towards musical nirvana.**



“Nobody loses at guitar if they put in the time. Something good always shows up. It’s all consistent with life’s big lessons. Patience. Determination. Love. Goals. Finishing a job.”
~ Ted Greene

Check out [the Ted Green website](#) for more info

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<https://riffsofwisdom.wordpress.com/tag/ted-greene/>