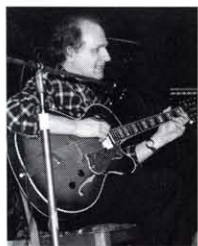


ter how often I listen to it, I still experience the same feelings that I initially had when I played it for the first time.

George is gone but his memory and inspiration will live on forever.



Ted Greene

An extra large portion of beauty was added to my life from the moment I first heard George Van Eps play live, and from the day he accepted me as his student. He showed me how to play a beautiful little piece he had written for his grandson, "Scott's Lullaby" and my heart was full of joy and gratitude. Many years went by and I never could seem to find a way to thank him properly. Then one day a golden opportunity appeared: I was asked to write a cover story for the August 1981 issue of *Guitar Player* magazine. The time spent interviewing him, listening back over and over to the many hours of tape and trying to craft a readable story out of it all, remains one of the most wonderful highlights of my life.

Some years later when I had reached a point of great disappointment in my own playing and had almost stopped, George somehow heard about this and called to encourage me not to give up, telling me I had too much to say to throw it all away. Though this alone did not break me out of my rut, it meant so much to me and most certainly had to have helped get me over the hump.

He changed guitar playing forever in many ways and I will always cherish the time I spent with this beautiful man. He had a way of making you feel so great just to be around him. Thanks for everything George.



John Leitham

First had the pleasure of playing for George Van Eps soon after moving to L.A. in 1983. I was scrambling all over the place, trying to get started all over again in a new town. I must have played in every rehearsal band in existence here. Fortunately I stumbled upon Tony Rizzi and his "Wire Choir" thanks to Jimmy Bruno, my buddy from back home. Tony was a very successful studio guitarist who was probably best known for being the

mandolin player on "The Godfather." He wrote a whole book of harmonized Charlie Christian solos for 5 guitars and a rhythm section. They did a weekly rehearsal at Local 47 in Hollywood and I soon became a fixture. Tony was a wonderful man.

After a month or so Tony asked if I could play for him and George Van Eps at their weekly gig in Sunset Beach. It was a bit of a drive but I jumped at the chance. The club was a beach bar called "The Sunset Pub." It was a half block from the beach on Pacific Coast Highway. Most of the time it was full of beach bums getting juiced and listening to rock and roll. But on Sunday afternoons it was a Jazz Mecca.

My first impression of George was totally wrong. I thought, "Here's another old guy coasting through his golden years resting on his past laurels." Then we played the first set. What an incredible experience! Here was pure creativity, a complete disregard for physical limitations, the ears completely in control of the mind and body. I had never heard anyone like George.

Some people ask me how it was possible to play bass for George while he was using that seven string guitar. Didn't you have problems because of the closeness of your range? The answer is a resounding NO. George would use a device to get you to zero in on the musical paths he would be taking. He would often start playing and compose a tune on the spot (after you started playing along) just to see if you could follow him. Once he had your attention and he had confidence you could stay with him, you were off on the most interesting harmonic rides you can imagine. He had a way of letting you know where he was going by playing leading tones into the next chord. And he could also be very supportive when it was my turn to solo. He laid down great bass lines.

But I think the most amazing thing was to hear him play solo. He had the melody, chords, and bass lines all going at once. I'll never forget hearing him play "Lap Piano."

George was one of the most interesting people away from music as well. He could discuss at length any number of highly technical subjects, from aerospace engineering to steam engines. He had a quick wit and could make you laugh with just a twitch of his eyebrow. And he gave me invaluable counsel. He encouraged me at a time when things were not easy. We continued playing almost every Sunday for 4 years. I started my tenure with Mel Torme' in 1987