

“The Little Drummer Boy”

Transcription of Ted Greene

Background

At the beginning of December, 2020, a discussion at the Ted Greene Forum (<https://forums.tedgreene.com/post/little-drummer-boy-11279959?pid=1321856519>), asked if any member had transcribed Ted’s version of the traditional Christmas standard, “Little Drummer Boy.” Circa 1996, Ted Greene gave a guitar lesson to Nick Stasinos, covering the traditional favorite. That lesson is covered in a two-part YouTube video, made available courtesy of Nick.

Forum member *xavriley* responded that he had worked on a rough and incomplete outline of the song that could be used as a starting point, adding: “...part of the problem is that (Ted) doesn't play the full arrangement, so you'll need to fill in some of the details yourself.” The Forum’s moderator PaulV asked if any member would be willing to take up the challenge to finish the transcription. The version offered here is by Mike Simonelli (aka Big Mickey).

Recommended approach to working through the transcription It is

recommended that you watch the videos before proceeding, and keep them handy as a reference as you work through the transcription:

- Part 1 <https://youtu.be/jR2vzpjH2n8>
- Part 2 <https://youtu.be/s53BV4RFB-o>

Takeaways after watching the videos:

Ted does not ever play a full end-to-end arrangement of the song during the lesson, but he does offer many parts that can serve as the basis for several alternative arrangements. Some parts Ted plays only once, for others he offers several alternatives, and for one section, namely the song’s turnaround and final refrain, he doesn’t play at all. The viewer should also notice that Ted is exploring the song real time, harmonies and positions, and occasionally results in false starts. Devotees will find these invaluable as they provide insight into Ted’s thinking around the fingerboard. The transcription does not include these false starts. Finally, conversation with Nick is interspersed with Ted’s playing, further adding to the challenge of transcription and to following along.

What’s in the transcription and how to use it?

The transcription provides faithful representation of the parts as Ted played them. Alternate parts are offered and can be inserted into specific measures, allowing for different arrangements to be cobbled together. Guitarists should adopt those alternative parts that meet their capability and aspiration. Specifically, the transcription offers (2) alternatives for measures 29-32 and (1) alternative for measures 33-34.

Playing ● × □ △
 order: ○ = opt.

THE LITTLE DRUMMER BOY

Transcribed by
 Mike Simonelli

Tune down 1/2 step.

As played by Ted Greene

Video time: 2:07

D

G D

D 2 times A D

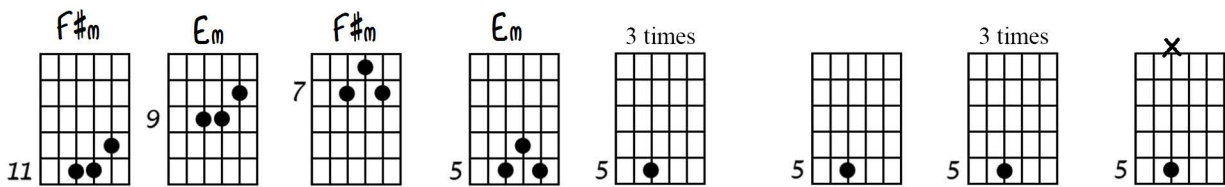
G D

Em F#m Em F#m G

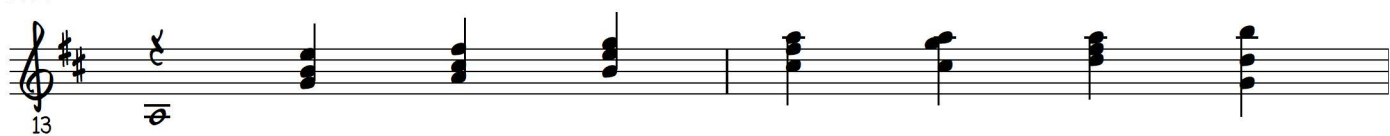
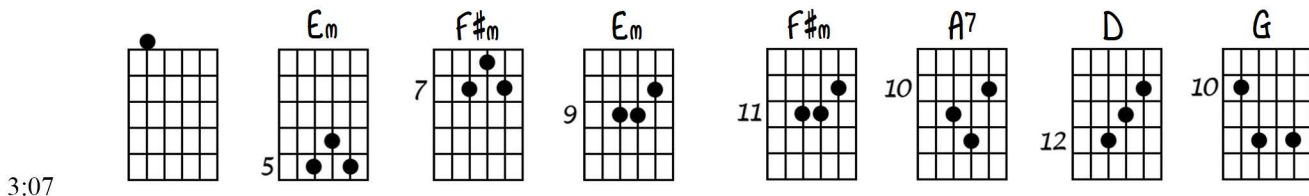
2:30

"The Little Drummer Boy" - Ted Greene Transcription, p. 2

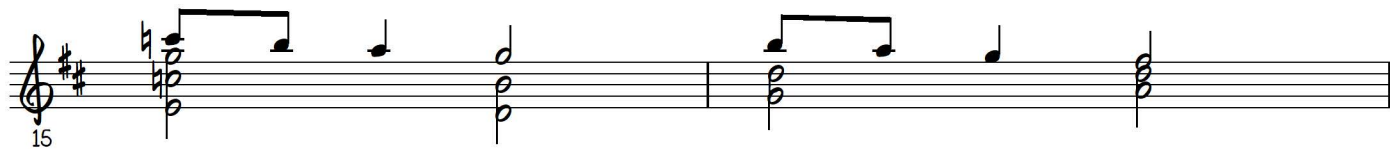
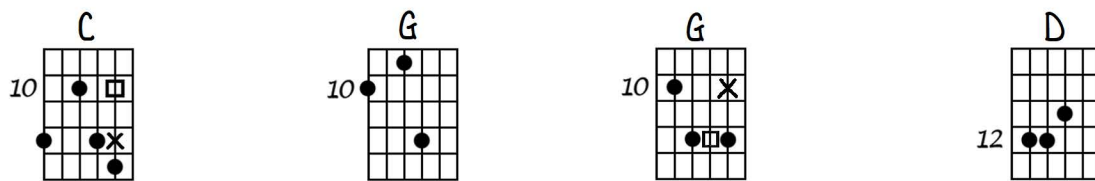
F#m Em F#m Em 3 times 3 times X



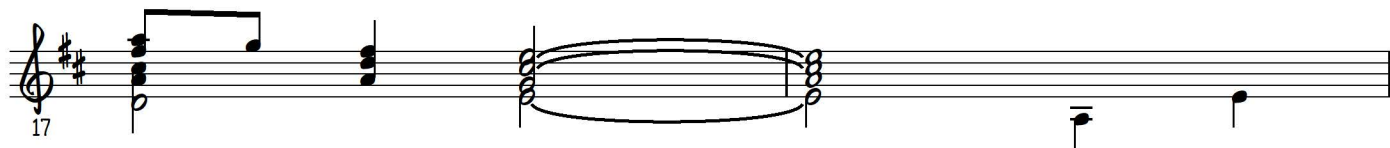
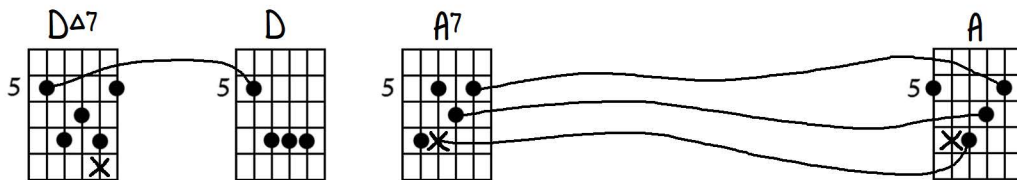
Em F#m Em F#m A7 D G



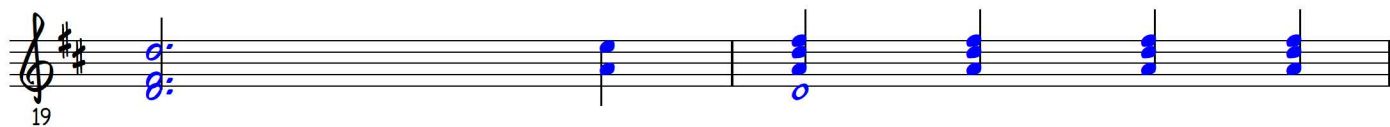
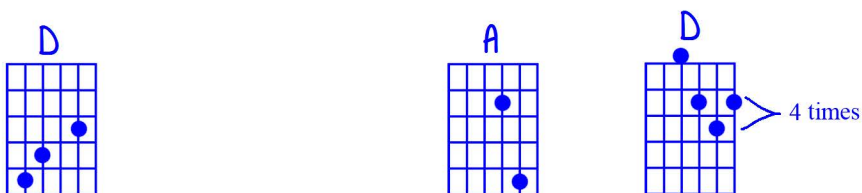
C G G D



DΔ7 D A7 A



D A D 4 times



"The Little Drummer Boy" - Ted Greene Transcription, p. 3

4:31

G D G D

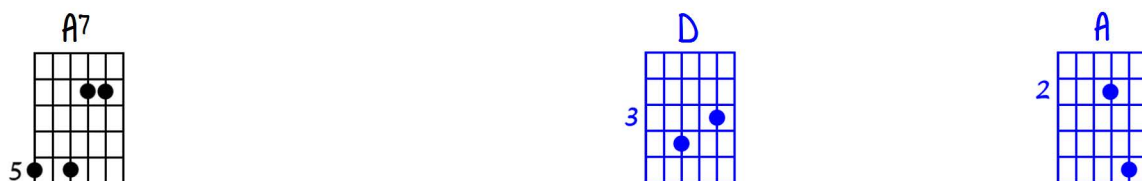
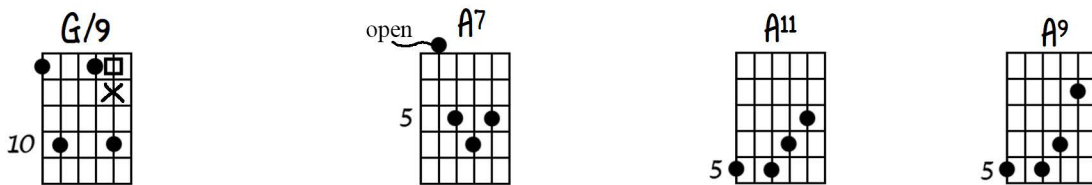
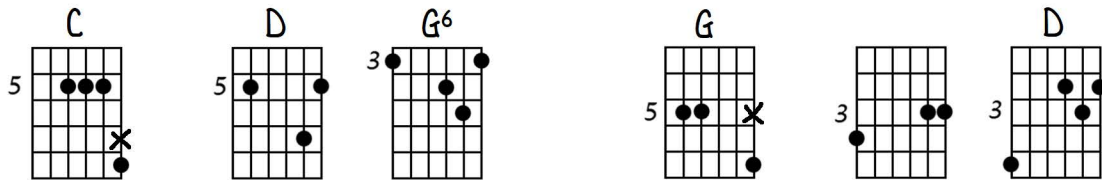
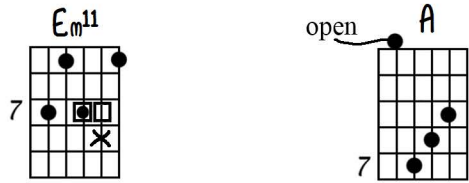
A7 A7 D D D D D

D D D DΔ7 2 times

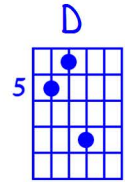
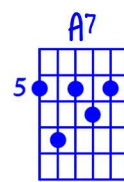
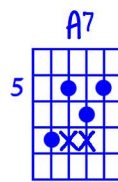
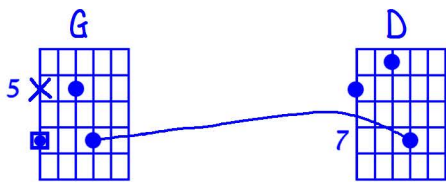
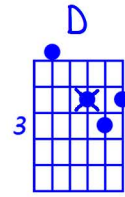
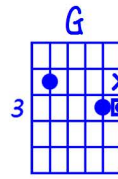
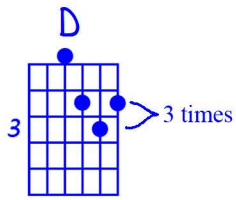
G D D 3 times D 3 times

Em7 F#m7 G6 A7 Em7/11 F#m7 GΔ7

"The Little Drummer Boy" - Ted Greene Transcription, p. 4



"The Little Drummer Boy" - Ted Greene Transcription, p. 5



Add your own ending.

"The Little Drummer Boy" - Ted Greene Transcription, p.6

Alternate #1 to measures 29-32:

video 1: 4:52 to end, then video 2: 0:16

Chord diagrams for Alternate #1:

- Measure 29: E(m) (2), F#m7 (2), GΔ7 (5), A7 (7), Bm7 (9), G/9 (10), A7 (10), Em6/9 (12)
- Measure 30: F#m7/11 (9), G6 (10), A7 (7) 3 times, Am (7) 3 times
- Measure 31: F#m7/11 (9), G6 (10), A7 (7) 3 times, Am (7) 3 times
- Measure 32: F#m7/11 (9), G6 (10), A7 (7) 3 times, Am (7) 3 times

Musical notation shows the corresponding notes on a treble clef staff with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#).

Alternate #2 to measures 29-32:

video 2: 1:14

Chord diagrams for Alternate #2:

- Measure 29: Em7 (5), A13 (9), G/9 (12), A7 (10)
- Measure 30: Em11 (12), Asus (12), G6 (10), A (5)
- Measure 31: Em11 (12), Asus (12), G6 (10), A (5)
- Measure 32: Em11 (12), Asus (12), G6 (10), A (5)

Musical notation shows the corresponding notes on a treble clef staff with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#).

Alternate to measures 33-34:

video 2: 2:09

Chord diagrams for Alternate to measures 33-34:

- Measure 33: open, F#m (5), G (7), A6 (7), F/G# (6), G6/9no3 (3), G6 (3)
- Measure 34: open, F#m (5), G (7), A6 (7), F/G# (6), G6/9no3 (3), G6 (3)

Musical notation shows the corresponding notes on a treble clef staff with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#).