

Watch What Happens

Ted Greene, from his “Solo Guitar” album

Transcribed by Nick Stasinis

In 1977, shortly after starting lessons with Ted, I just happened upon his newly released “Solo Guitar” LP at Valley Arts. Yes, Ted not being a self-promoter said nothing about having an LP out. I was awestruck by what I heard. Who keeps this kind of thing a secret? But what I was to learn “Solo Guitar” was a mixed bag for Ted.

By 1997, I had done some transcription work for Hal Leonard, Warner Brothers, and Mel Bay. I felt I was ready to tackle “Solo Guitar” and started with this song. Unlike the CD release, “Watch What Happens” was not the first track on the LP, but being a Legrand fan, I gravitated toward this track as the first song to document...and sensing I may not get through all eight songs with Ted’s help before he felt burned-out on the project, I stacked my favorites first. Fortunately, it was also Ted’s favorite track on the album.

Ted constantly wanted to improve upon the music rather than get down what was already recorded. I had to find a balance between letting him explore, hence the variations on the YouTube video [YouTube.com/Ted Greene-Watch What Happens](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...) and bringing him back to the recording. We shared some really great times together during this process, but also some bittersweet moments in which I learned how difficult it was for Ted to endure these recordings! How could they have been better? Needless to say, we only got through two tracks before he said, “Let’s take a break from this and do something else.” I tried to prod Ted into starting the transcriptions again, but he would reply, “Nick, my album has been out-of-print for years! Who would want them?” Really?

The end of 2004 released “Solo Guitar” on CD. I overheard a fan at Spazio Restaurant ask Ted about transcriptions for “Solo Guitar.” Ted turned and pointed towards me, “My friend is doing a great job on them!” I was elated! Was this the green light? Sadly, we were never to return to those six other tracks together.

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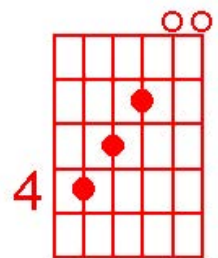
My transcription for “Watch What Happens” from Ted’s “Solo Guitar” album was literally decades in the making. At this point, I would like to give a nod to Mark Thornbury who did an amazing job of going through the entire “Solo Guitar” album within a short period after the album’s release and single-handedly nailed it. Mark, you are my hero! I had not seen his chord grid sheets until after Ted’s departure in 2005. Mark was instrumental in proofing this transcription.

If you read Jim Hilmar's 1996 Spotlight interview of Ted about "Solo Guitar" in *Vintage Guitar Magazine*, Ted introduced this song by saying his grandmother swore it was a Russian folk song from her childhood: [Ted Greene VGM 1996](#). He repeated it to me, too! Yep...or rather, Da! That's her story and she's sticking to it!

First things first! I transcribed this song at concert pitch, however, to match Ted's guitar tuning on the recording, all six strings go down a half step. The first half of the piece is played in a brisk Bossa feel. Halfway through, where it modulates from the key of E to Ab, Ted launches into a full-on swing with a lively walking bass. There are lots and lots of ghost notes sprinkled in between the targeted bass notes. Ted teaches this walking bass effect at a 1978 GIT (Guitar Institute of Technology) seminar to achieve an authentic bass player feel: [Ted Greene GIT Seminar 1978](#). There were so many ghost notes of a non-diatonic nature that I had to decide whether to include them or take them out altogether. I think I left most of them in, but you will find more.

Another point to make while transcribing recorded music is the decision of documenting a missed note or the supposed intended note. I did this twice, at measures 12 and 21, where Ted intended a note on the 6th string, but played an open E instead. Measure 66 is another place in the song where he plays the last note as a G, but the melody is actually an Ab. Ted said, "I am at odds with the Lord of Melody at this point. Leave it in!" So I did! I need also to draw attention to another measure where I think Ted overshot his target with the walking bass. Measure 46, Ted plays an Ab before landing on Eb. François Leduc has it as a G before going to Eb (measure 47 on his transcription). That will be my personal tweak there!

Here's something fun! Did I mention Ted was trying to improve upon the original recording from the onset? He introduced an alternate chord for the introduction, which sounds way cool! In measure 2, instead of playing the stock C#7#9, play this one instead! Name that chord!



There are many Van Eps-isms throughout this piece, notably the "Fifth-finger" technique from George's 1939 yellow method book. This is where you would bar across strings with a finger on adjacent frets. You would straddle the fret with one finger to get two notes. For example, the 1st finger covers both the 2nd string at the 5th fret and the 1st string at the 4th fret.

In measure 62, I added some undetermined slide lines into the Bbm9 chord. This is typical in Ted's playing of him emulating his guitar hero, Wes Montgomery. You will notice Wes style glisses (plural form, not a real word in itself, short for glissando) and slides into chords and notes all throughout this song.

At one time, I thought the format of notation with tablature, chord grids and names was a little too much and made the page look too busy, but after careful consideration, I decided to leave it all in. After all, Ted created most of his songs and exercise sheets to be more accessible to guitarists who could not read notation. Take note: There is not a chord grid for every place where Ted plays a chord. You can break out your trusty chord stamp and add one yourself by looking at the Tab section. Some of the chord grids have fingerings to demonstrate how Ted would specifically hold a chord. I tried to add a bar line in the grid where the chord is being barred by a finger, but not when it competed for the field where I needed to place finger numbers. A very common fingering Ted uses is at measure 16, where he plays the F#9, goes to the companion minor C#m9, and then back to the F#9. You don't have to use any of the fingerings in the transcription. Experiment and find what works best for you.

Share your findings, whether it is an error in my transcription (you won't hurt my feelings), a cool fingering, an alternate chord position, or the harmonic analysis of why Ted made changes to the stock progression (Ex. measures 19 – 21). The harmonic analysis is a topic unto itself. Too vast to cover here!

Most of all have fun!

Nick

2021 Update: In the course of Gareth Rixton learning how to play Ted's arrangement of "Watch What Happens" he contacted me with a PDF, all marked up in red ink, of my transcription posted on this website back in 2016. His corrections? Many were good catches! Remember all those ghost notes I was so reluctant to add before? They are now added to this revised copy. In the course of updating my copy of "Watch What Happens," I even found more silly notations errors I had missed in my haste to post. So now that all my "Easter Eggs" have now been discovered and removed, here is my updated transcription, revised for 2021 – free for you to download from this website. A special thanks goes out to Gareth Rixton for his incredible ears, persistence, and prodding me to take this to the next level.

Watch What Happens

(As played by Ted Greene on "Solo Guitar")

Tune down 1/2 step to match recording

Michel LeGrand

Telecaster

Bossa ♩ = 138

B \flat 13 3fr. A 9 2fr. G \sharp 7(#5) 4fr. C \sharp 7(#9) 3fr. ← See performance notes for alternative chord

F \sharp 7 \flat 9 2fr. B 11 5fr. B 11(\flat 9) 5fr. E 6 2 3 1 5fr. B 7(#5) 7fr. E Maj7 6fr. B 7/6 7fr. E 6 3 3 2 1 4fr. F \sharp 13 2fr.

3

C \sharp m7 2fr. F \sharp 9 2fr. F \sharp m9 2fr.

7

Ghost note

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(Revised 2021)

Transcribed & Engraved By Nick Stasinios

Stazz Music Productions

10

B13sus 4fr. Use George Van Eps' 5th finger technique also here!

E Maj7 6fr.

F Maj7 7fr.

F# Maj7 8fr.

F Maj7 7fr.

1st finger straddles fret

13

E 4fr.

F#9 8fr.

C#7(#5) 9fr.

16

F#9 8fr.

C#m9 9fr.

F#9 8fr.

F#m9 7fr.

B13sus 4fr. Use George Van Eps' 5th finger technique here!

(Companion minor)

1st finger straddles fret

19

E Maj7 6fr.

A 7/6 5fr.

Bbm7 6fr.

D#7(#9)#5 5fr.

G#Maj7 4fr.

D#7 5fr.

22

G#6 9fr.

G#m7/11 9fr.

C#7/6 9fr.

25

F#Maj7 6fr.

F#6 6fr. Use George Van Eps' 5th finger technique also here!

F#m7 7fr.

C7/6 8fr.

1st finger straddles fret

28

B7/6 7fr.

B7#5 6fr.

EMaj7 6fr.

B7/6 7fr.

E6/9 6fr.

Ghost note

31

F#13 7fr.

C#m7 9fr.

F#9 8fr.

C#m9 9fr.

F#m9 7fr.

B13sus



4fr. Use George Van Eps' 5th finger technique also here!

E 6



5fr.

B 7(#9) b5



6fr.

B 7(b9)



4fr.

E 6



5fr.

34

Musical notation for measures 34-36. Measure 34 includes the instruction "1st finger straddles fret" with a bracket over the first two strings. Measure 35 includes the instruction "Sustain.....all....notes" with a long horizontal line above the notes. The guitar part shows fret numbers for each string across the three measures.

B 7(#9) b5



6fr.

B 7(b9)



4fr.

E 6



5fr.

A 9



2fr.

B b m7(b5)



5fr.

37

Musical notation for measures 37-39. The guitar part shows fret numbers for each string across the three measures.

E b 7



4fr.

A b Maj 7



4fr.

E b 7



6fr.

F m 9



6fr.

A b Maj 7



10fr.

Swing

40

Musical notation for measures 40-42. Measure 41 includes the instruction "Ghost note" with a note marked with a circled '0'. Measure 42 also includes the instruction "Ghost note". The guitar part shows fret numbers for each string across the three measures.

B b 9



12fr.

F m 7



8fr.

B b 13



6fr.

B b m 9



6fr.

43

Musical notation for measures 43-45. Measure 44 includes the instruction "Ghost note" with a note marked with a circled '0'. The guitar part shows fret numbers for each string across the three measures.

46

E^b7/6 8fr. A Maj7 9fr. B^bMaj7 10fr. A Maj7 9fr.

*Bass corrected here:
Ted actually plays the Ghost note Ghost note
F# in the recording!

49

A^bMaj7 4fr. E^b7/6 8fr. A^b6 8fr. B^b13 6fr. F m7 6fr.

Van Eps Roll Ghost note Van Eps Roll Ghost note

52

B^b7/6 6fr. E 13 6fr. B^bm9 6fr. B^bm7 8fr. E^b7/6 6fr.

Ghost note Slide Ghost note

55

A^bMaj7 4fr. D^b7/6 9fr. D m7 10fr. G 7#9 9fr. C Maj7 8fr. G7#9 9fr.

Ghost note Ghost note

Cadd11

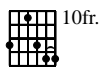
C

C m7

C m7

F#13

F 13



58

Musical notation for measures 58-60. Includes treble and bass staves with notes and fingerings. Annotations include "Ghost note" and "*Bass corrected here: Ted actually plays the D again in the recording!".

Bb

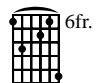
F7/6

Bb11

Bb

Bbm7

Bbm7



61

Musical notation for measures 61-63. Includes treble and bass staves with notes and fingerings. Annotations include "Slide into chord" and "Ghost note".

Eb7

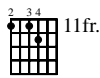
Db

Eb7

Abmaj7

Eb7 /6

Abmaj7



64

Musical notation for measures 64-66. Includes treble and bass staves with notes and fingerings. Annotations include "Ghost note".

Bb13

F 7(#9)

Bb13

E 13

Bbm9



67

Musical notation for measures 67-69. Includes treble and bass staves with notes and fingerings.

70

E \flat 7/6 8fr. E \flat 11 9fr. E \flat 7 8fr. A \flat 6 3 2 2 1 9fr.

E \flat 7 \sharp 9 10fr. E \flat 7(b9) 8fr. A \flat 6 3 2 2 1 9fr.

Slide

F 7(#9) 7fr. B \flat 13(b9) 6fr. B \flat 7 6fr. E \flat 7 6fr. A \flat 7/6 4fr. F 7(#9) 7fr.

73

Ghost note

Ghost note

Ghost note

B \flat 7(b9) 6fr. E \flat 11 6fr. A \flat 7/6 4fr. F 7(#9) 7fr. B \flat 7(b9) 6fr. E \flat 7 6fr. E \flat 7(#5) 6fr.

76

Ghost note

Ghost note

A \flat 6 4fr. A 13 2fr. A \flat 13 1fr.

79