

Lee Mendelson Film Productions, Inc.

Movies, Television, Home Video

Founded 1963

Lee Mendelson Film Productions Announces the **FIRST** Release of the **VINCE GUARALDI** Soundtrack for “A Charlie Brown Thanksgiving” in Celebration of its 50th Anniversary

**FEATURING MANY PREVIOUSLY UNRELEASED RECORDINGS FROM
THE VINCE GUARALDI QUINTET**

Set for release October 20th and available to [pre-order today](#)

First single “Is It James or Charlie? (Bonus mix with Whistling)”

Preview on [SoundCloud](#): <https://on.soundcloud.com/Rv8gQ>

LP, CD and Digital



“This is a very enjoyable and historic recording that is for anyone that likes jazz and Charlie Brown.”

-Jazz great **David Benoit**

“Avid Guaraldi fans have long selected this Emmy Award-winning TV special as their favorite, which is no surprise; the show is wall-to-wall music, bouncing between acoustic and electric keyboards...”

-**Derrick Bang** author of *Vince Guaraldi at the Piano*

“The score for “A Charlie Brown Thanksgiving” works to great effect due, in part, to the amalgamation of different Guaraldi tricks, his interest in *funkifying* his jazz style, and that timeless new *Thanksgiving Theme*.” (From the liner notes)

“Guaraldi’s *Thanksgiving Theme* is the composition at the center of this show. It’s instantly recognizable: it is fall, it is *Peanuts*®, and it has become a standard for many pianists to learn. In this newly restored, re-mixed and remastered soundtrack, the listener gets this classic plus all the other cues from the show as they were originally recorded. We’ve also unearthed new instrument timbres and brand-new takes for your listening pleasure.”

-**Sean Mendelson**, musician, and son of *Peanuts*® TV Producer Lee Mendelson

“For 50 years, we have all loved this music, but it has never been available in its entirety, from the original source tapes, until now. Plus, we found and included unused original recordings that no one has heard since the musicians laid them down in 1973.” – **Jason Mendelson**, Emmy® winning TV Producer

Burlingame, CA, August 2, 2023— Lee Mendelson Film Productions (LMFP) is thrilled to announce the release - **FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER** – of the complete **Vince Guaraldi Soundtrack** to “A Charlie Brown Thanksgiving,” the timeless 10th



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animated PEANUTS® special, from writer and creator Charles Schulz, director Bill Melendez and Phil Roman and producers Melendez and Lee Mendelson. Originally airing on November 20, 1973 on CBS-TV, the special has been broadcast or streamed every year for the last 50 years, and is currently available for streaming on Apple TV+.

The album includes the original recordings that comprise the thirteen song cues of the Special, **plus another nine bonus or alternative tracks that have never been released or heard before.**

The music perfectly complemented the story of the special:

Before going to Charlie Brown's grandmothers for a traditional turkey dinner, the *Peanuts* gang celebrates America's oldest holiday in a rather unorthodox fashion. The story, which is concocted around a rather novel Thanksgiving meal of popcorn, jellybeans, buttered toast, pretzels and ice-cream served around a ping-pong table in Charlie Brown's backyard, starts when Peppermint Patty invites herself, Marcie and Franklin to Charlie Brown's house. With his reliable pal Linus and the slightly questionable help of Snoopy and Woodstock, Charlie Brown devises the most unusual Thanksgiving menu since 1621. And not only do his *Peanuts* guests have a happy haphazard party, they also discover that the holiday is for thanking and creating family, as well as for eating.

Guaraldi lovingly created the soundtrack for the eclectic, big meal and family gathering, while also bolstering the hijinks of Snoopy and his new friend Woodstock as they "helped" Charlie Brown get ready for the party. The album also includes one of the few songs where composer Guaraldi also sang the lyrics he wrote to *Little Birdie*.

The recording features Vince Guaraldi (piano, keyboards, vocals), **Seward McCain** (electric bass), **Mike Clark** (drums), **Tom Harrell** (trumpet and brass arrangements), and **Chuck Bennett** (trombone). The soundtrack was produced by Sean and Jason Mendelson, re-mixed by Terry Carleton at Bones and Knives, and restored and mastered/re-mastered by Vinson Hudson.

By the time the Peanuts® team was working on "A Charlie Brown Thanksgiving" in 1973, they had hit their groove. The script is pure Schulz magic, taking a look at the holiday, rituals and traditions from a Peanuts® point of view. Animators Melendez and Roman are at their best, having Snoopy fighting with chairs and the accoutrements of the meal. And Vince Guaraldi is fully realized and comfortable as a composer and performer on this special, while also taking new risks and adding new sounds to the brass-filled soundtrack, which gives it a special place among any of the Peanuts® soundtracks while still perfectly reflecting the sounds of the fall.

For example, *Thanksgiving Theme* is employed four times for various purposes throughout the special. Much like *Skating* sounds like actual skating in "A Charlie Brown Christmas," *Thanksgiving Theme* sounds like leaves falling, ushering in the vibe of autumn depicted in the special. In several cases *Thanksgiving Theme* gets a brass section, thanks to the talents of Tom Harrell, the famed jazz trumpeter and arranger. *Linus and Lucy* and *Little Birdie* also get the full brass treatment as defining versions of these songs. Mike Clark, the drummer on this soundtrack, played with Herbie Hancock among other jazz luminaries. He famously pioneered the *East Bay Sound* and this directly informs the funk sound of this album. Seward McCain, bassist for this soundtrack, played with Guaraldi on seven other specials, and performed in the 70s with Guaraldi, more than any other sideman. During that same period, Guaraldi explored all the new keyboards as they came on the scene, which is why we are treated to Guaraldi playing the Fender Rhodes, Wurlitzer, and Hohner Clavinet.

The bonus and alternative mixes on this soundtrack reveal some of the other creative choices in instrumentation that Guaraldi considered for the special. There are more keyboards and whistling for the diehard fans.

Along with Craft's "It's the Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown" and "A Charlie Brown Christmas," (the top selling Christmas album of all time), this "A Charlie Brown Thanksgiving" album creates the triumvirate of Guaraldi's scores for the three most celebrated Peanuts' specials.

This is the first self-released album by Lee Mendelson Film Productions, Inc. (LMFP) - the 60-year-old production company founded by Lee Mendelson - and LMFP is thrilled to finally bring this complete soundtrack to the public for the first time



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ever. LMFP recently discovered the original studio session tapes in the vaults and transferred them to a high-resolution digital at 192kHz/24 bit for the mixing and remastering of these tracks, as they did with Craft Recordings release of "It's the Great Pumpkin Charlie Brown" in 2022. A labor of love, LMFP is excited to offer fans the opportunity to enjoy this music as much as they do, and they hope to release more of the soundtracks from these beloved specials and the great Vince Guaraldi very soon.

There are three formats on which to hear this album: CD, vinyl, and digital. The CD has a 6-page insert. Both the LP and CD will have liner notes that give a track-by-track analysis by Sean Mendelson, musician, record producer and son of *Peanuts* producer Lee Mendelson. Both versions have stills from the special and some images of the original track assignments for each instrument.

[\[Click here to pre-order all formats.\]](#)

"Avid Guaraldi fans have long selected this Emmy® Award-winning TV special as their favorite, which is no surprise; the show is wall-to-wall music, bouncing between acoustic and electric keyboards, going silent only during Linus' gentle sermon about the first Thanksgiving (a speech almost as eloquent as the one he delivers in *Charlie Brown Christmas*). That sequence aside, Guaraldi was allowed to stretch and supply longer cues, each one starting as the previous one fades. The show boasts three new tunes, starting with a lyrical title theme constructed from acoustic piano filigrees that evoke the keyboard cascades in *Skating*. An impudent cue titled *Is It James or Charlie?* adds a bit of James Brown sass to the mix, and the standout newcomer is Guaraldi's vocal on *Little Birdie*, played at length when Snoopy — tasked with setting up the outdoor dining arrangements — wrestles with a basketball net, a garage door, a ping-pong table and an impressively sentient folding chair. Returning cues include one of Guaraldi's best arrangements of *Linus and Lucy*, with brass adding a spirited counterpoint to the primary theme, and also shading a new four-chord climb at the end of each verse's fourth measure: heard while Snoopy orchestrates the Thanksgiving "dinner" of buttered toast, popcorn, pretzels, jelly beans and ice cream parfaits. The finger-snapping track pops up, here called *Charlie Brown Blues*. The final returning tune, *Peppermint Patty*, gets a quiet, leisurely arrangement on electric keyboard: perfectly echoing the girl's coquettish side, notably when she flirts with Charlie Brown over the phone, while inviting herself — and Marcie and Franklin — to a party that doesn't yet exist. The show's final reprise of the title theme introduces a sparkling brass counterpoint: a terrific conclusion to a half-hour of solid combo jazz. What's not to love?" — **Derrick Bang**

PEANUTS® historian and author of *Vince Guaraldi at the Piano* (McFarland & Company)

"These great new, remastered recordings feature outtakes of Vince Guaraldi working out the piano voicings right on the spot in the studio. It is fascinating to me to be a fly on the wall for these historic sessions featuring drummer Mike Clark (who played on Herbie Hancock's *Thrust*) and bassist Seward McCain on bass. It's especially notable that Vince on this recording is making heavy use of The Fender Rhodes electric piano thereby keeping up with the times. These tracks are also much funkier and groove oriented than their predecessors which were more straight ahead. This is a very enjoyable and historic recording that is for anyone that likes jazz and Charlie Brown." — **David Benoit**

Grammy nominated jazz composer and recording artist (and Guaraldi torchbearer)

CD 50th Anniversary Configuration – A *Charlie Brown Thanksgiving*

Show score:

1. Charlie Brown Blues
2. Thanksgiving Theme
3. Thanksgiving Theme (Reprise)
4. Peppermint Patty
5. Little Birdie
6. Thanksgiving Interlude
7. Is It James or Charlie?
8. Linus and Lucy
9. Fife & Drums Theme
10. Charlie Brown Blues (Reprise)



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11. Thanksgiving Interlude (Reprise)
12. Thanksgiving Theme (2nd Reprise)
13. Thanksgiving Theme (3rd Reprise)

Bonus/Alternate tracks:

14. Thanksgiving Theme (Alternate)
15. Peppermint Patty (Bonus Mix)
16. Linus and Lucy (Bonus Mix)
17. Thanksgiving Interlude (Alternate take 2, 4, and 6)
18. Thanksgiving Interlude (Alternate take 10)
19. Thanksgiving Interlude (Alternate take 14)
20. Is It James or Charlie? (Bonus mix with Whistling)
21. Clark and Guaraldi

Vinyl 50th Anniversary edition – A *Charlie Brown Thanksgiving* Side A

Show score:

- A1. Charlie Brown Blues
- A2. Thanksgiving Theme
- A3. Thanksgiving Theme (Reprise)
- A4. Peppermint Patty
- A5. Little Birdie
- A6. Thanksgiving Interlude
- A7. Is It James or Charlie?
- A8. Linus and Lucy
- A9. Fife & Drums Theme

Side B

- B1. Charlie Brown Blues (Reprise)
- B2. Thanksgiving Interlude (Reprise)
- B3. Thanksgiving Theme (2nd Reprise)
- B4. Thanksgiving Theme (3rd Reprise)

Bonus/Alternate tracks:

- B5. Thanksgiving Theme (Alternate)
- B6. Peppermint Patty (Bonus Mix)
- B7. Linus and Lucy (Bonus Mix)
- B8. Thanksgiving Interlude (Alternate take 2, 4, and 6)
- B9. Thanksgiving Interlude (Alternate take 10)
- B10. Thanksgiving Interlude (Alternate take 14)
- B11. Is It James or Charlie? (Bonus mix with Whistling)
- B12. Clark and Guaraldi

About *Peanuts*:

The characters of *Peanuts* and related intellectual property are owned by Peanuts Worldwide, which is 41% owned by WildBrain Ltd., 39% owned by Sony Music Entertainment (Japan) Inc., and 20% owned by the family of Charles M. Schulz, who first introduced the world to *Peanuts* in 1950, when the comic strip debuted in seven newspapers. Since then, Charlie Brown, Snoopy and the rest of the *Peanuts* gang have made an indelible mark on popular culture. In addition to enjoying beloved *Peanuts* shows and specials on Apple TV+, fans of all ages celebrate the *Peanuts* brand worldwide through thousands of consumer products, as well as amusement park attractions, cultural events, social media, and comic strips available in all formats, from traditional to digital. In 2018, Peanuts partnered with NASA on a multi-year Space Act Agreement designed to inspire a passion for space exploration and STEM among the next generation of students.



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About Lee Mendelson Film Productions, Inc.:

Lee Mendelson Film Productions (LMFP) is the Publisher of the Vince Guaraldi musical catalog associated with *Peanuts*. LMFP is also the producer of the classic *Peanuts* television specials, including *A Charlie Brown Christmas*, *It's the Great Pumpkin Charlie Brown*, and *A Charlie Brown Thanksgiving*, along with the Hollywood animation studio Bill Melendez Productions. LMFP also produced over 50 other network *Peanuts* specials, 12 prime time *Garfield* specials, 121-program series "Garfield and Friends" and many other film and television animated, documentary and entertainment specials. Founded by the late Lee Mendelson in 1963, Lee Mendelson Film Productions, Inc., has received 11 Emmy Awards (from 45 nominations) and four Peabody Awards, as well as Grammy and Academy Award nominations.

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