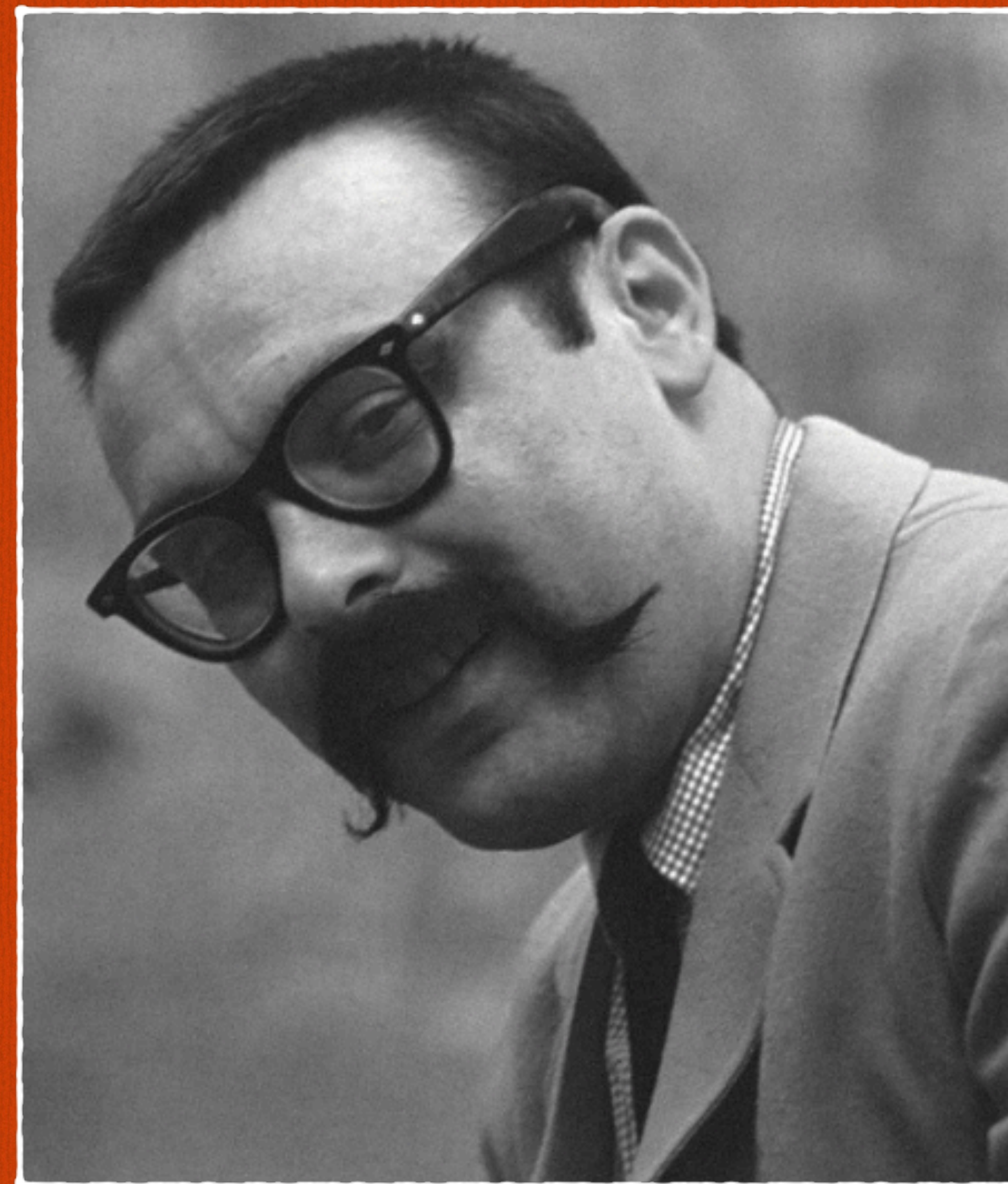
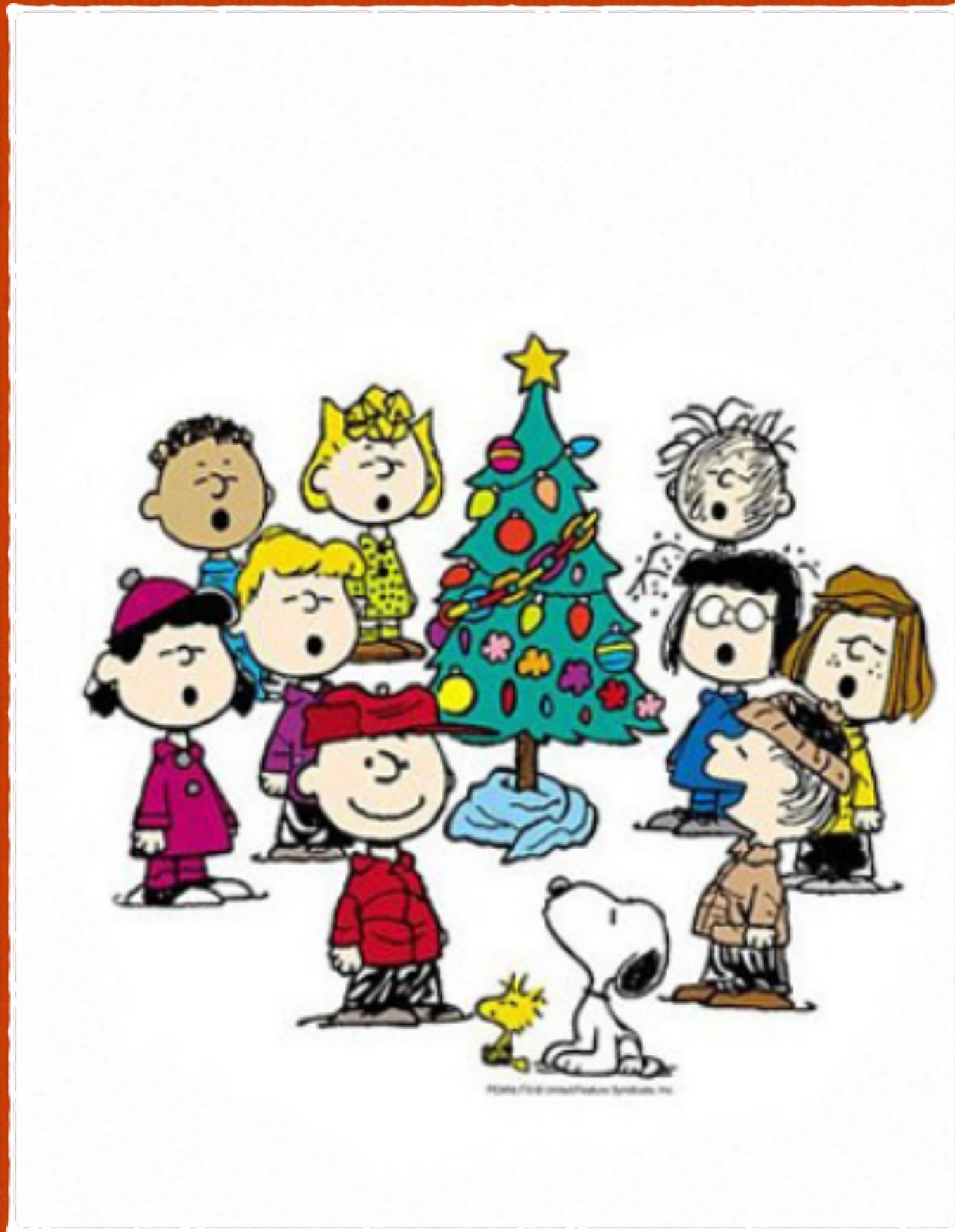
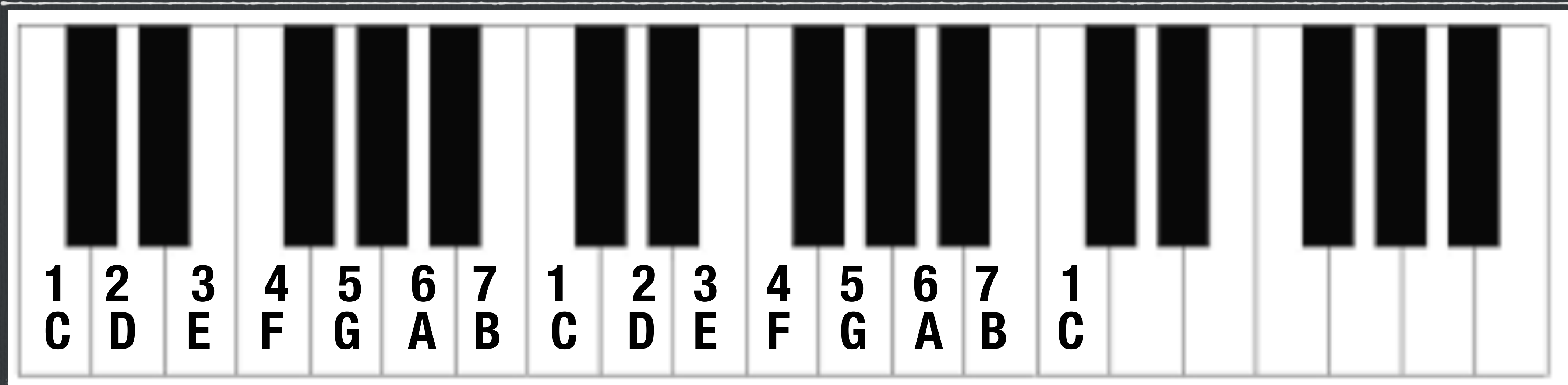


Vince Guaraldi

The Man Behind "Peanuts"



One Basic Musical Concept



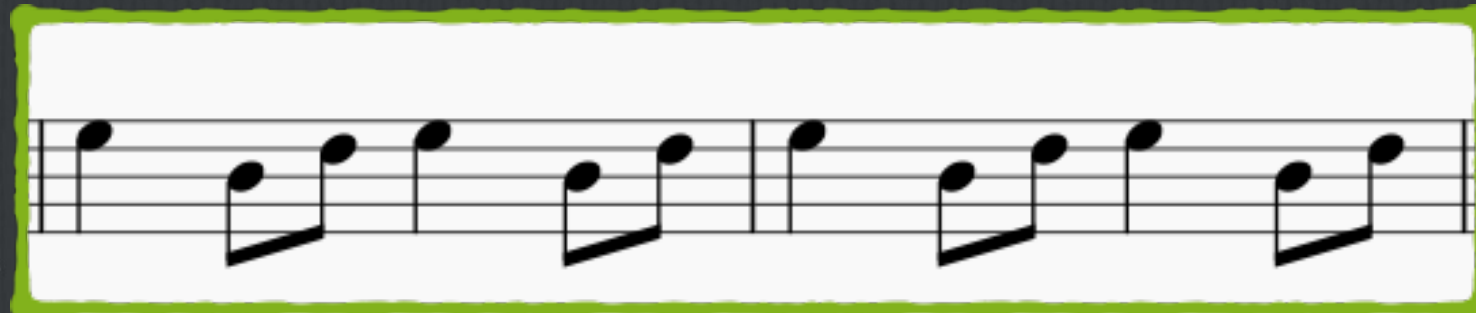
- ☐ Jazz harmony comes from chords, which come from the major scale
- ☐ The major scale has eight notes (ex. key of C has C D E F G A B and C)
- ☐ You can build a chord on each note in the scale, which is named after its numerical position in the scale
- ☐ In the example above, C is the one chord, D is two chord, E is the three, and so on

Early Life



- ☐ Born in 1928 in San Francisco, became a very important city in his musical career
- ☐ Grew up influenced by two musical uncles that led a big band in San Francisco for many years
- ☐ Served as a cook in the Korea from 1946-1948, and began his career as a musician after returning home

First Official Recording



- ☐ Cal Tjader's "Chopsticks Mambo" from 1951 - Didn't quite sound like Vince Guaraldi yet
- ☐ Three parts of Latin music - clave (the basic rhythmic pattern), tumbao (the bass line), and guajeo/montuno (the rhythmic piano parts)
- ☐ Compare elements Tjader/Guaraldi "Chopsticks Mambo" in green to a traditional mambo



Chopsticks Mambo

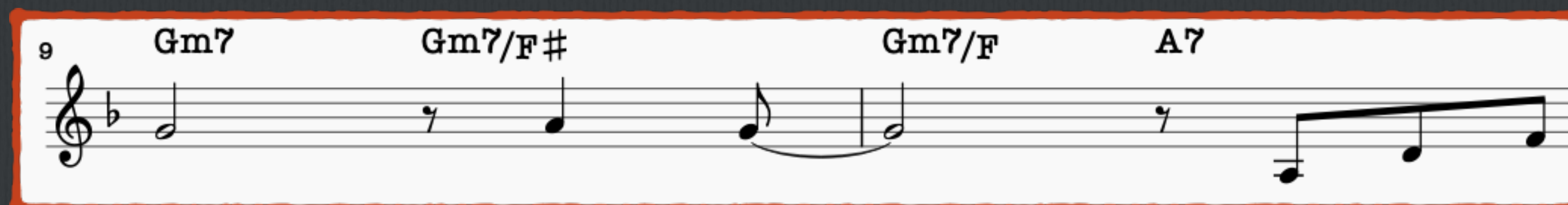
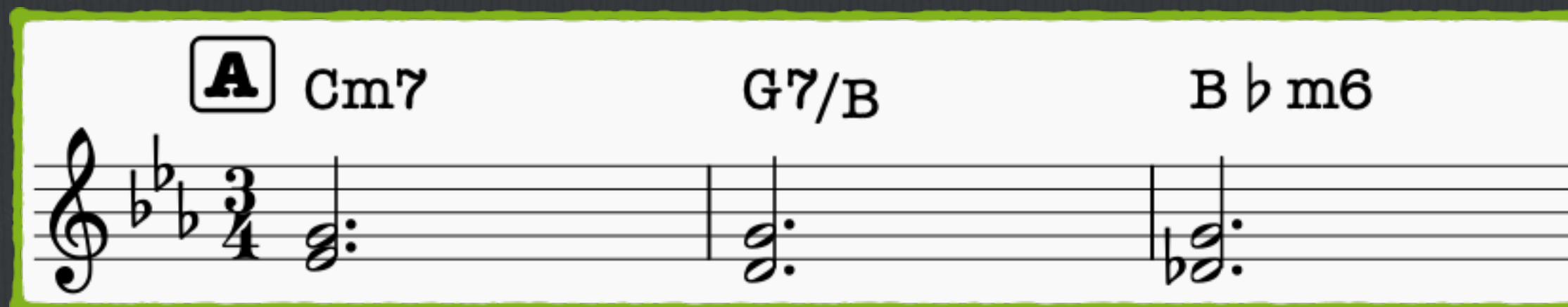
Recorded by the Cal Tjader Trio in 1951, released in 1953

First Album As Leader

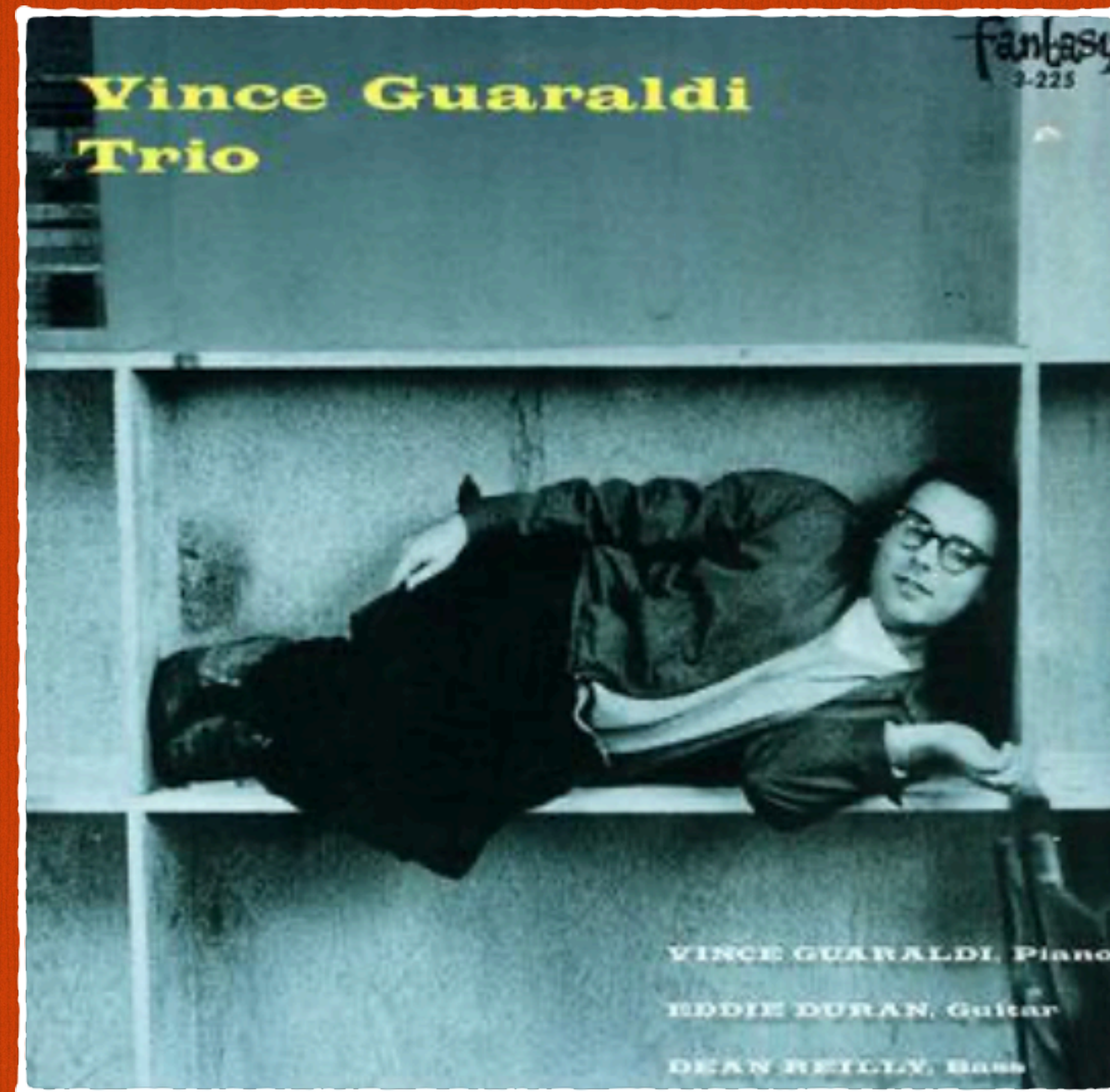


- ☐ The Vince Guaraldi Trio - 1956 - still developing his style
- ☐ Plays faster, busier lines (red) or completely blues based lines with sparse left hand (blue)
- ☐ The Charlie Brown music typically features a busier left hand and a sparser right hand featuring bent notes, as in the above example from "Skating" (green)

The Blues Scale and Minor Line Cliches, Descending Bass Lines



- ☐ The blues scale is made up of certain notes from the major scale (blue)
- ☐ Guaraldi and others use this in different ways
- ☐ Guaraldi didn't fully develop his use of it until later
- ☐ Minor line clichés - chord patterns that sound like James Bond music or Ray Charles's "Hit The Road Jack"
- ☐ Include descending bass lines, a staple of Guaraldi's later repertoire (green, "Great Pumpkin Waltz"), started on this album (red, "Fenwyck's Farfel")



Fenwyck's Farfel

Featured on The Vince Guaraldi Trio from 1956, Guaraldi's first album as leader

Large Gap Between Albums

- ☐ Guaraldi released only one more album (1957's "A Flower Is A Lovesome Thing") in the 1950's
- ☐ His next album, "Jazz Impressions of Black Orpheus," wouldn't come until 1962, five years later
- ☐ This period was largely spent with Cal Tjader, who had by then added important Latino percussionists Willie Bobo and Mongo Santamaria
- ☐ His signature piano sound and later obsession with Latin jazz developed during this time

Development of Guaraldi's Piano Sound



- ☐ Had a very particular use of grace notes
- ☐ Grace notes - notes played really quickly to give the impression of sliding up to a target note
- ☐ Every pianist plays them a little differently, every genre requires them to be played differently
- ☐ Guaraldi's grace notes are a combination of blues and country style grace notes. He also drags them out, as in "Skating" (green)

Simple Harmonies

49

C F G F

This musical snippet shows measures 49 through 52 of the song 'Christmas Is Coming'. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The melody is written on a treble clef staff, and the bass line is on a bass clef staff. Above the staff, four chords are labeled in colored boxes: C (green), F (red), G (blue), and F (red). The melody consists of quarter notes and rests, while the bass line features a steady eighth-note accompaniment.

4

E \flat 7 A \flat 7 E \flat 7 A \flat 7

This musical snippet shows measures 4 through 7 of the song 'Cast Your Fate To The Wind'. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The melody is on a treble clef staff, and the bass line is on a bass clef staff. Above the staff, four chords are labeled: E \flat 7, A \flat 7, E \flat 7, and A \flat 7. The melody features eighth-note patterns, and the bass line provides a consistent eighth-note accompaniment.

- Guaraldi's compositions often featured fairly simple harmonies
- The improvised sections of his songs often featured the one (C, green), four (F, red), and five (G, blue) chords repeating over and over (purple, "Christmas Is Coming")
- Sometimes, he'd even just use the one (E \flat 7) and four (A \flat 7) chords, as in "Cast Your Fate To The Wind" (orange)

Lee Mendelson, “Cast Your Fate,” and Charlie Brown

Cast Your Fate To The Wind

Vince Guaraldi

Straight 8's, medium



Bassline continues

- ☐ The big hit from “Jazz Impressions of Black Orpheus” was “Cast Your Fate To The Wind”
- ☐ Became a minor radio hit, and won Guaraldi a Grammy for Best Original Jazz Composition
- ☐ Also caught the attention of Lee Mendelson, who was working on a documentary film about the Peanuts comic strip
- ☐ Mendelson decided this was the music he needed
- ☐ You can hear the Charlie Brown sound throughout the song



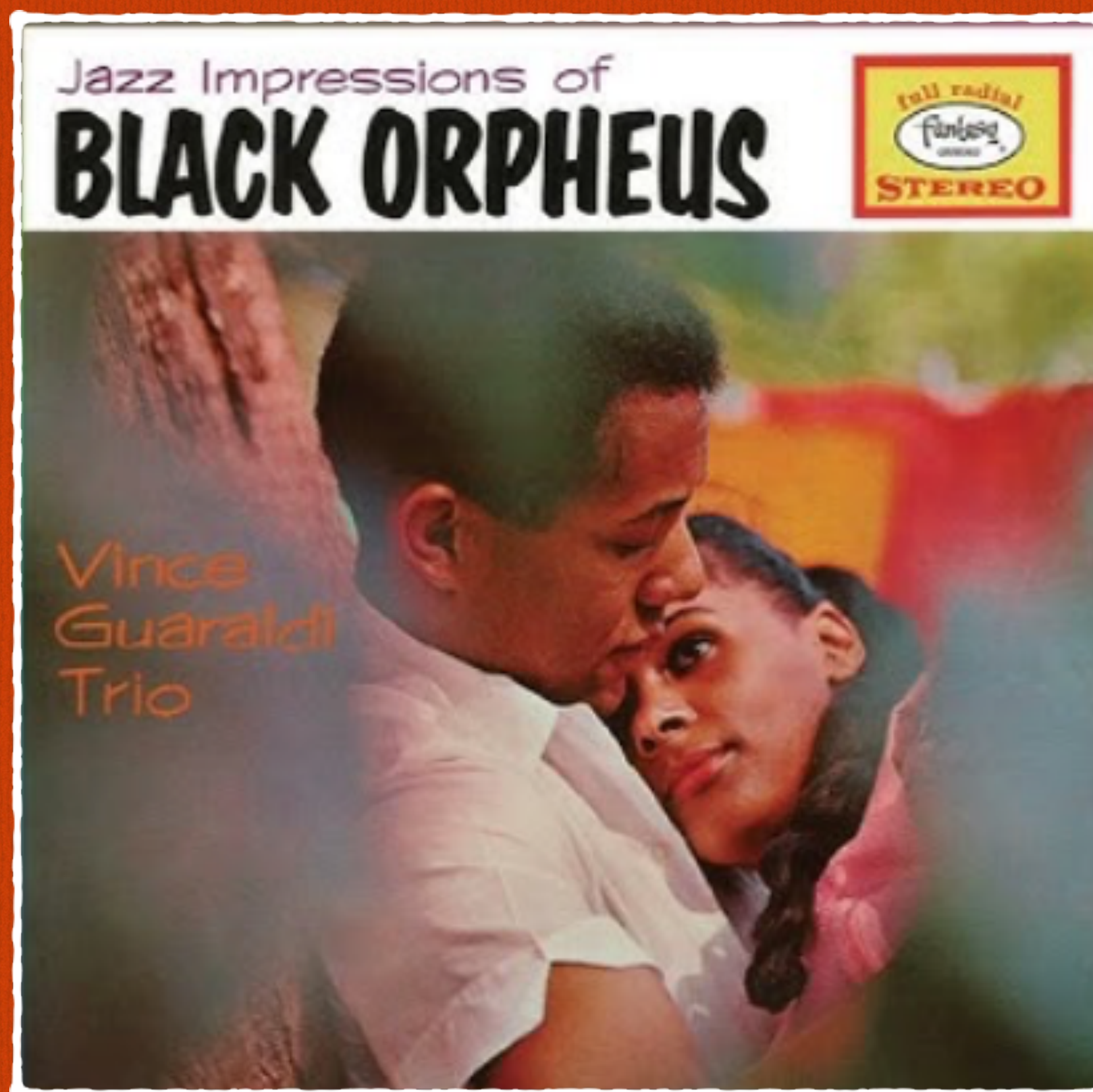
Cast Your Fate To The Wind

Composed by Guaraldi, released in 1962 on "Jazz Impressions of Black Orpheus"

Afro-Cuban Piano Playing



- ☐ Based on the clave pattern, either 2-3 or 3-2
- ☐ Piano part has to fit in with the clave pattern - beat one happens on the two side of the clave
- ☐ Guaraldi would play the patterns only in his left hand, like the example shown in the middle from "Alma-ville"



Alma Ville

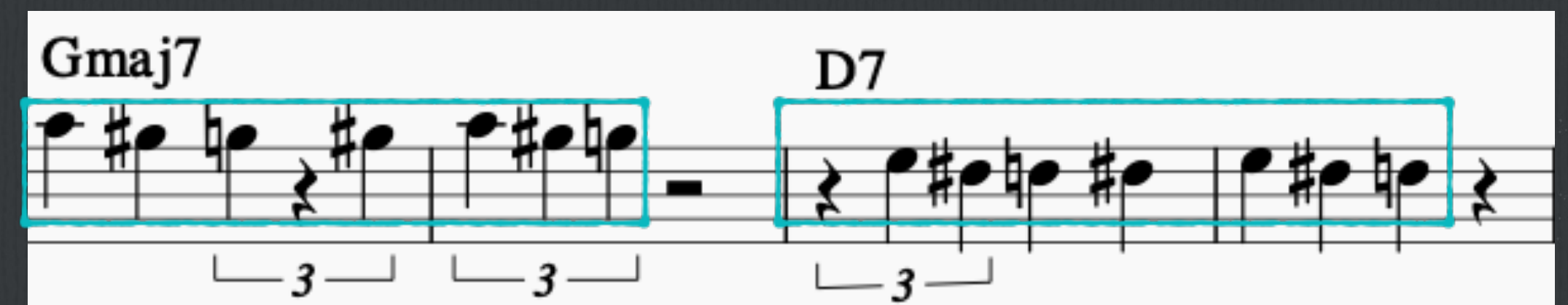
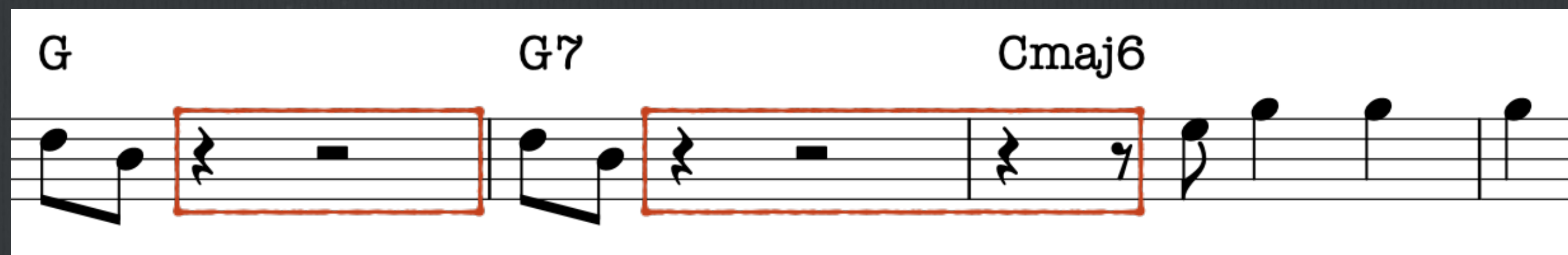
Composed by Guaraldi, released in 1962 on "Jazz Impressions of Black Orpheus"

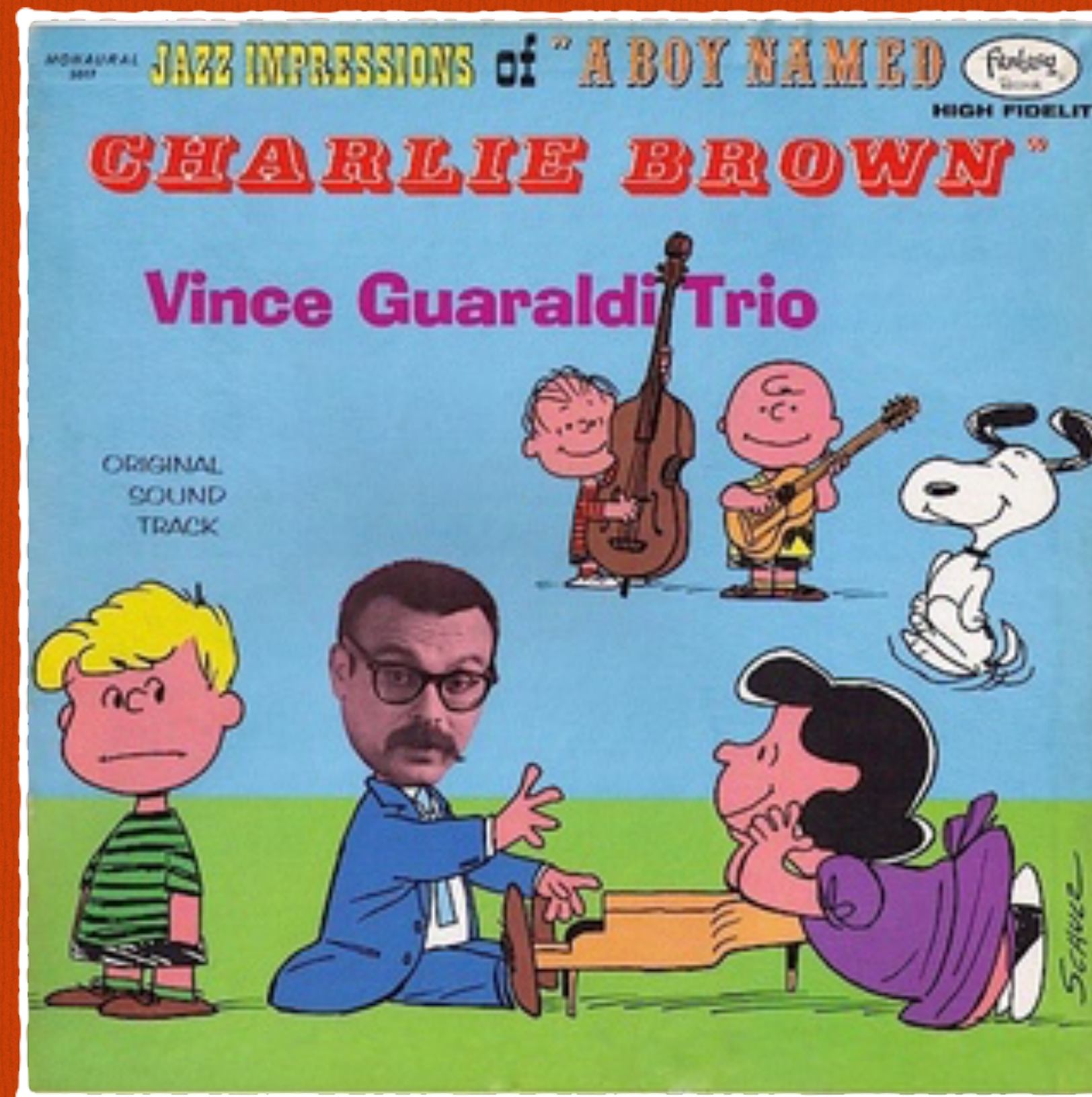
Origins of the Charlie Brown Specials

- ☐ Lee Mendelson had produced a TV documentary on Willie Mays, the world's greatest baseball player. Decided to produce one on Charlie Brown, the world's worst baseball player
- ☐ Mendelson heard "Cast Your Fate To The Wind" on the radio while crossing the Golden Gate Bridge, leading to Guaraldi's hiring
- ☐ The documentary was screened for the Greater San Francisco Advertising Club in 1964, but didn't get sponsored and was never aired
- ☐ At the same time, Coca-Cola approached Mendelson about the Christmas special, and after a rushed six month production period, the special aired in 1965
- ☐ The music from the documentary was released in 1964 as "Jazz Impressions of a Boy Named Charlie Brown," featuring some of the songs that would become staples of the special

Simple Melodies in Charlie Brown Music

- An important part of the music is the simplicity of the main melodies
- Simple, sparse melodies help capture the essence of the characters and the atmosphere of the specials themselves
- Some examples include: “Pebble Beach” (bottom right, repetitive phrase in blue), “Charlie Brown Theme” (bottom left, lots of space in red) and “Linus and Lucy” (top, just three notes in green)





Charlie Brown Theme

Featured on 1964's "Jazz Impressions of a Boy Named Charlie Brown"

Collaborations with Bola Sete

- Guaraldi was also collaborating with Brazilian guitarist Bola Sete
- Sete played Brazilian folk music, classical music, and samba.
- Was discovered by trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie and found success after performances at the Newport Jazz Festival
- Sete helped to expand Guaraldi's rhythmic palette, including with the choro style of Brazilian folk music (basic percussion pattern in red, applied to piano in green)



Pedal Tones In Charlie Brown Music

A

5 Pedal F

(F⁷ Bdim⁷ B^b m⁷ Am⁷ Gm⁷ C⁷ Fmaj⁷)



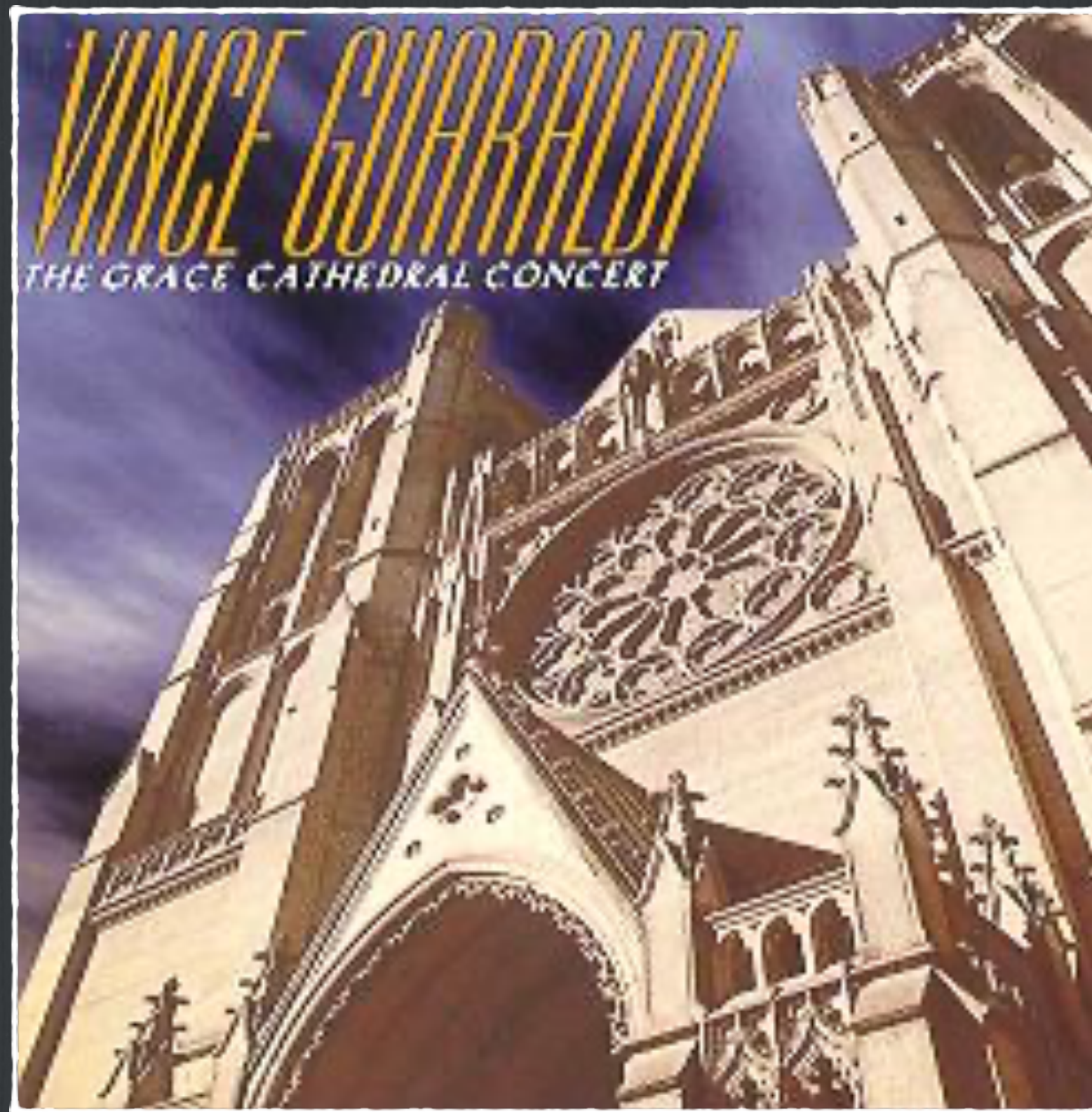
- ☐ Pedal tones create harmonic tension even within simple harmonies
- ☐ Essentially hold a single note underneath an entire chord progression, whether that note is in the chord or not
- ☐ Ex. the chord progression above is not particularly dissonant until the F pedal tone is added



Menino Pequeno De Bateria

Featured on 1965's "From All Sides," featuring Bola Sete

Catholicism and Jazz Mass



- ☐ Guaraldi was a practicing Catholic
- ☐ Was approached by a San Francisco reverend in 1965 to write “a modern setting for the choral Eucharist”
- ☐ He considered this the most challenging thing he’d ever attempted
- ☐ Spent 1.5 years rehearsing with a 68 voice choir to record the live service/album
- ☐ Considered groundbreaking, as there had never been jazz performed in a Catholic church setting before

17 **A** Bm7 \flat 5 B \flat maj7 Am7 Dm7

All - e - lu - jah

21 Gm7 Em7 \flat 5 A7 Dm7 D \flat 7 Cm7 F7

All - le - lu - jah

9 **B** Bm7 \flat 5 Em7 \flat 5/B \flat Am7 Dm7

Ah Ah

13 Gm7 C7 Am7 \flat 5 D7 Gm7 C7

ah

25 **C** Bm7 \flat 5 Em7 \flat 5/B \flat Am7 Dm7

Ah All -

29 Gm7 Dm/A Gm7/B \flat C7 Fmaj9

le lu jah

A-B-A-C



Linus and Lucy


Featured in "A Charlie Brown Christmas" from 1965, written by Vince Guaraldi

Favorite Chord Progressions

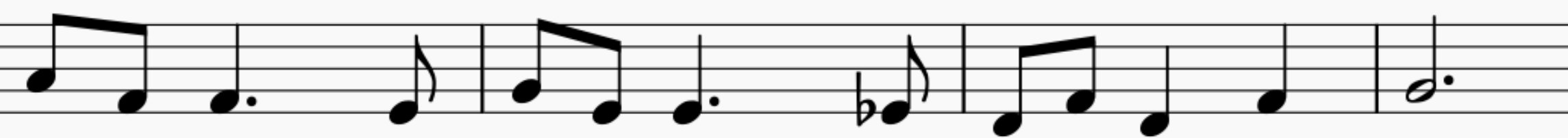
10 Am7 A \flat dim7 E \flat /G F \sharp dim7 Fm7 B \flat sus E \flat maj7/B \flat



85 Am7 A \flat m7 E \flat /G F \sharp dim7 Fm7 E \flat maj7



Bm7 \flat 5 B \flat m7Am7 A \flat m7 Gm7 C7sus Fmaj9



- ☐ The same chord progression appears in many of the Charlie Brown songs
- ☐ This progression starts on the sharp 4 chord and works its way down from there
- ☐ Examples include: “Christmastime Is Here” (red), “Christmas Is Coming” (green), and “Great Pumpkin Waltz” (blue)

The Vince Guaraldi Chord



- ☐ We build chords based on scales
- ☐ Most basic chords are based on the 1st, 3rd, and 5th notes (in green)
- ☐ We can extend the chords to make them more interesting, most commonly with 7ths and 9ths (blue)
- ☐ Guaraldi's favorite extension was the sharp 11th (red), uses it everywhere, especially "Christmastime Is Here"

Christmastime Is Here

- ☐ Best known because of the children's choir that sings on the original recording
- ☐ The children from this choir were part of the same choir he worked with for the Grace Cathedral concert
- ☐ Children were paid five dollars each for their part in the recording, and were taken out for ice cream afterwards
- ☐ Originally written as an instrumental, but Mendelson liked it so much that he looked for someone to put lyrics to it
- ☐ When he couldn't find anyone a month before the special was to air, he wrote the lyrics in his kitchen on the back of an envelope in ten minutes

[Verse 1]

Christmastime is here
Happiness and cheer
Fun for all that children call
Their favorite time of year

[Verse 2]

Snowflakes in the air
Carols everywhere
Olden times and ancient rhymes
Of love and dreams to share

[Bridge]

Sleigh bells in the air
Beauty everywhere
Yuletide by the fireside
And joyful memories there

[Verse 3]

Christmastime is here
Families drawing near
Oh, that we could always see
Such spirit through the year

Christmastime Is Here

Featured in "A Charlie Brown Christmas" from 1965, written by Vince Guaraldi

1-4-5 and Non Functional Harmonies Combined

The image displays two systems of musical notation, measures 10-17 and 18-25. Each system consists of a treble and a bass staff. The treble staff features a continuous eighth-note arpeggiated pattern. The bass staff contains a sequence of chords, each highlighted with a colored box: red, blue, green, blue, red, orange, orange, and orange. The first three boxes (red, blue, green) represent functional 1-4-5 harmonies, while the subsequent five (red, blue, orange, orange, orange) represent non-functional harmonies. The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 4/4.

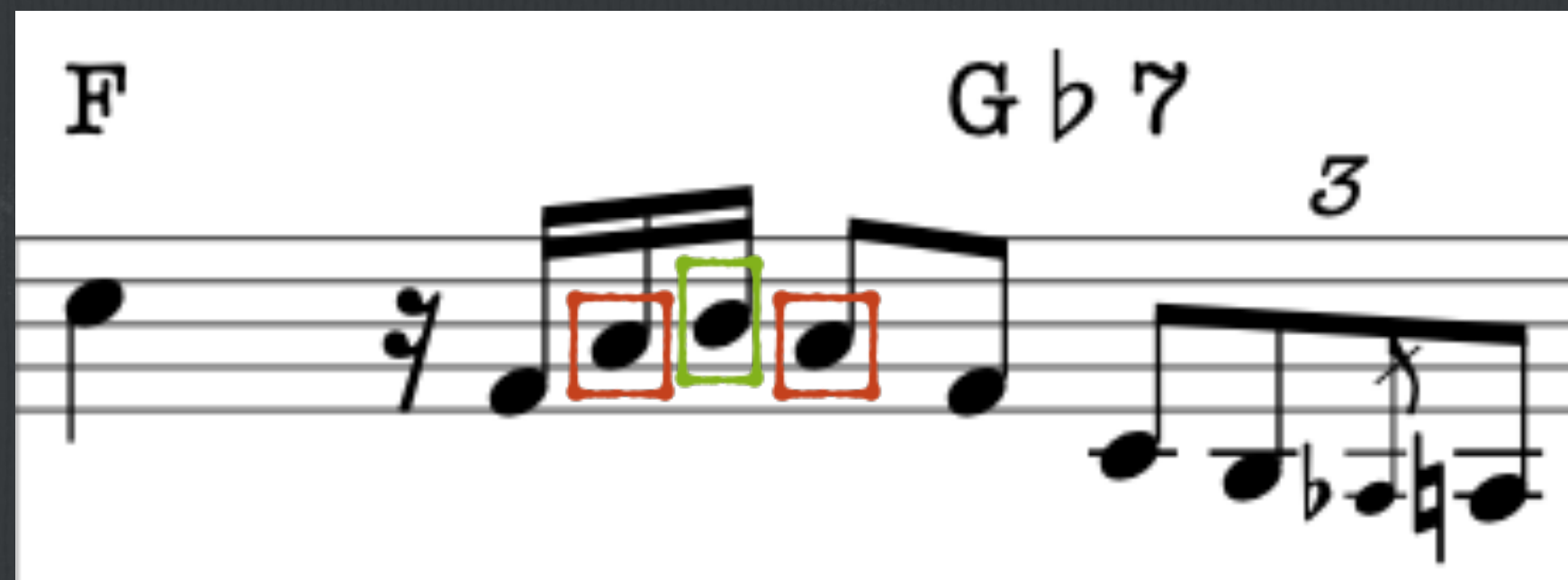
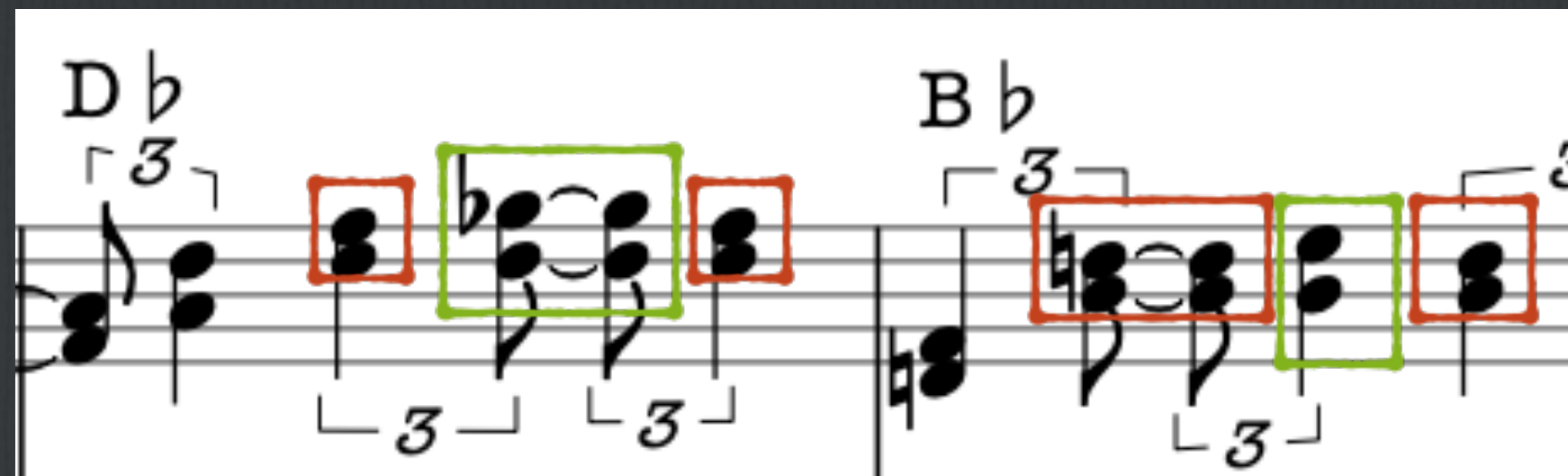
- ☐ Guaraldi made use of the simple harmonies based on the first (red), fourth (blue), and fifth (green) notes of the key
- ☐ To spice things up he'd use chords built on notes not in the scale (orange)



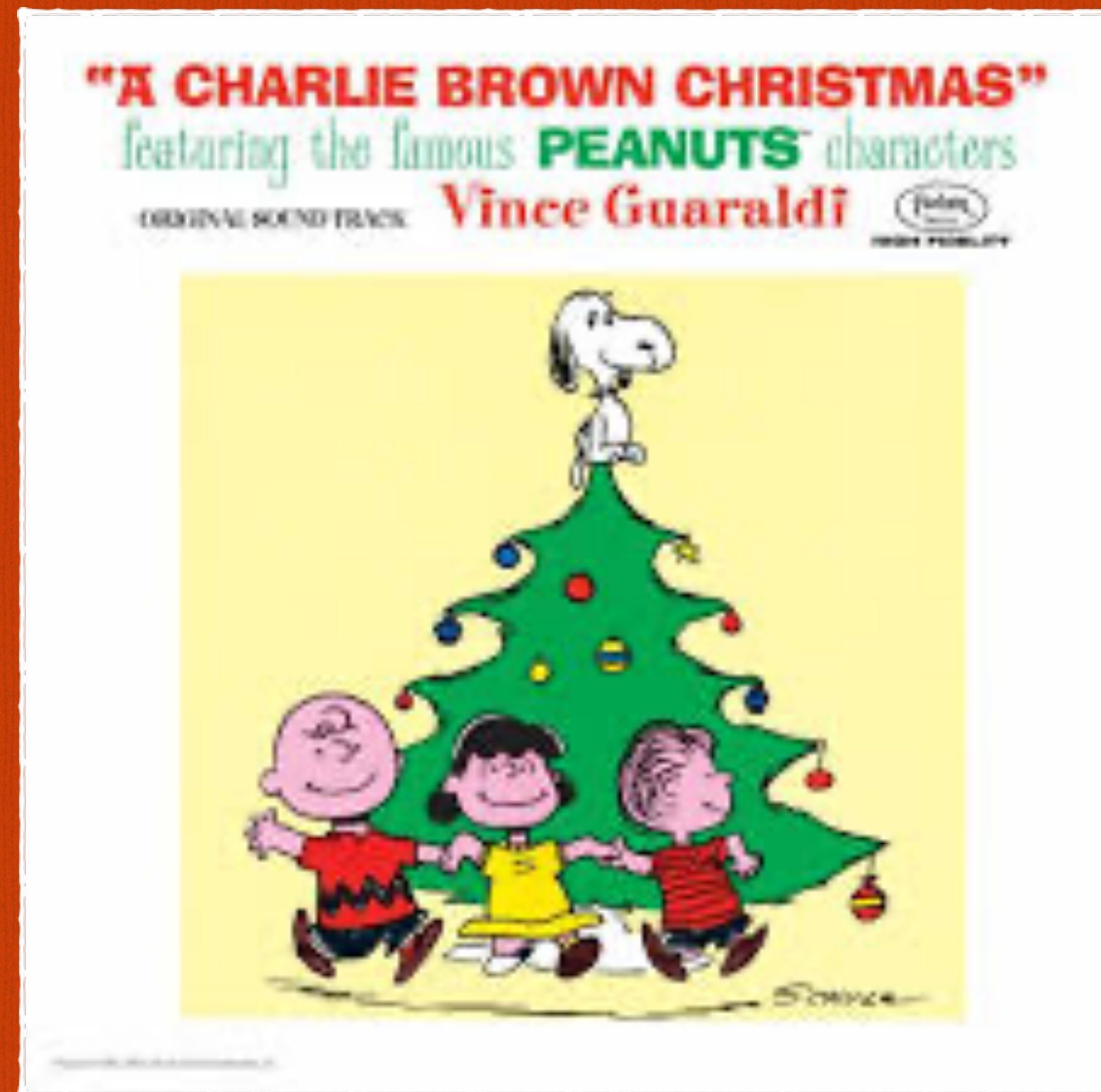
Skating

Featured in "A Charlie Brown Christmas" from 1965, written by Vince Guaraldi

4-3 Solo Lines



- ☐ Guaraldi consecutively uses the 3rd (red) and 4th notes (green) of the scale
- ☐ Sometimes, he'll pair these notes with the first note of the scale (top two examples)
- ☐ Examples: "Linus and Lucy" (top), "What Child Is This" (middle), "O Tannenbaum" (bottom)



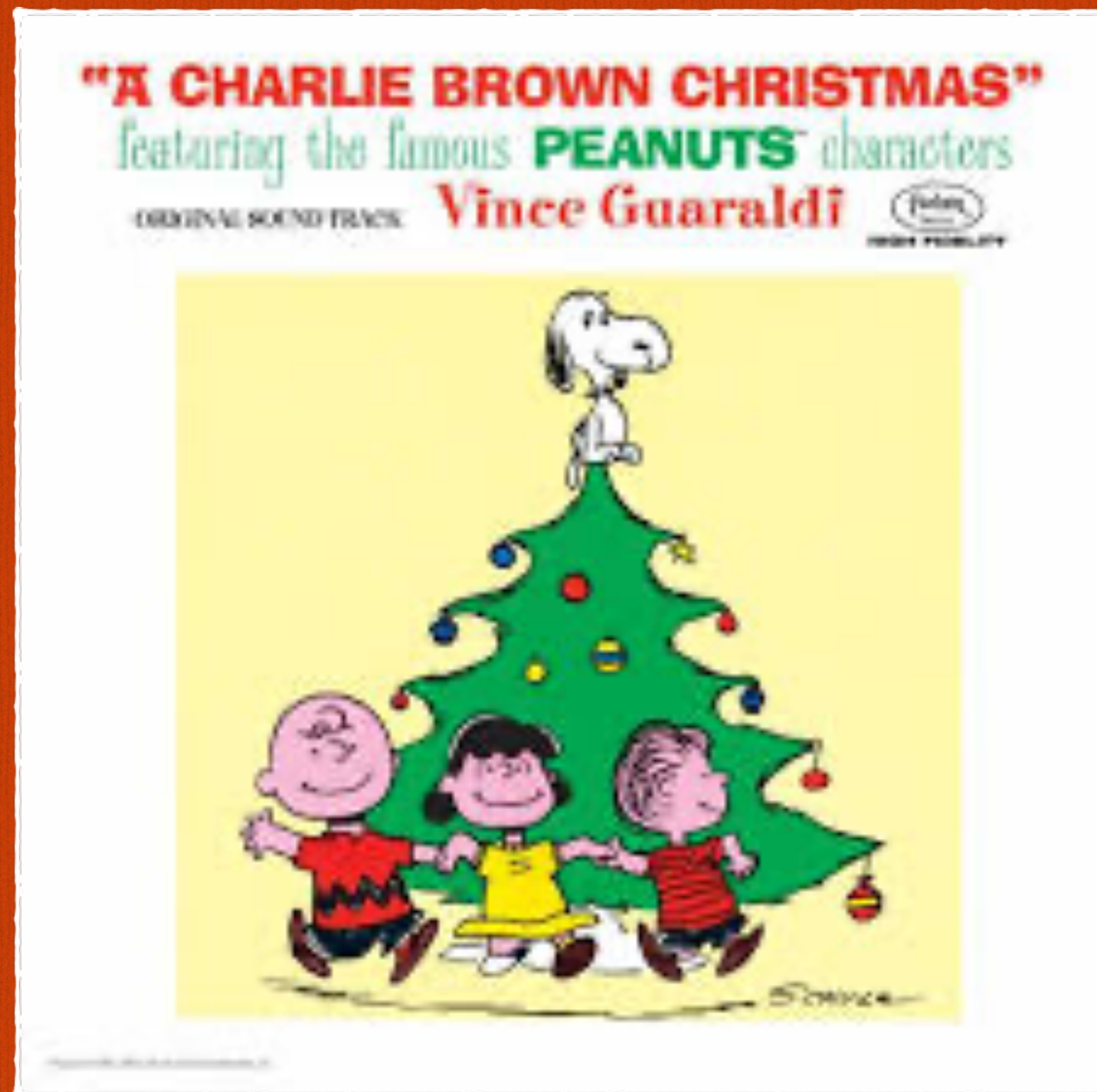
What Child Is This

Featured in "A Charlie Brown Christmas" from 1965, written by Vince Guaraldi

Playing Behind the Beat



- ☐ Every musician has their own way of playing the same rhythm
- ☐ This is because each beat takes a certain amount of time, and musicians can place their notes anywhere in that amount of time
- ☐ A musician can play in front of the beat (center), in the center of the beat (left), and behind the beat (right)
- ☐ Guaraldi plays very, very far behind the beat



O Tannenbaum

Featured in "A Charlie Brown Christmas" from 1965, written by Vince Guaraldi

After the Christmas Special

- ☐ Became massively popular after the special. The soundtrack is the second best selling jazz album of all time
- ☐ Capitalized by doing jazz covers of pop hits from artists like the Beatles and Bob Dylan
 - ☐ His style of playing and writing worked well for this because of the simple harmonies
- ☐ He also kept using choirs, using the same children's choir from the Charlie Brown album on his next album
 - ☐ He'd later begin to sing himself and experiment with electronic keyboards



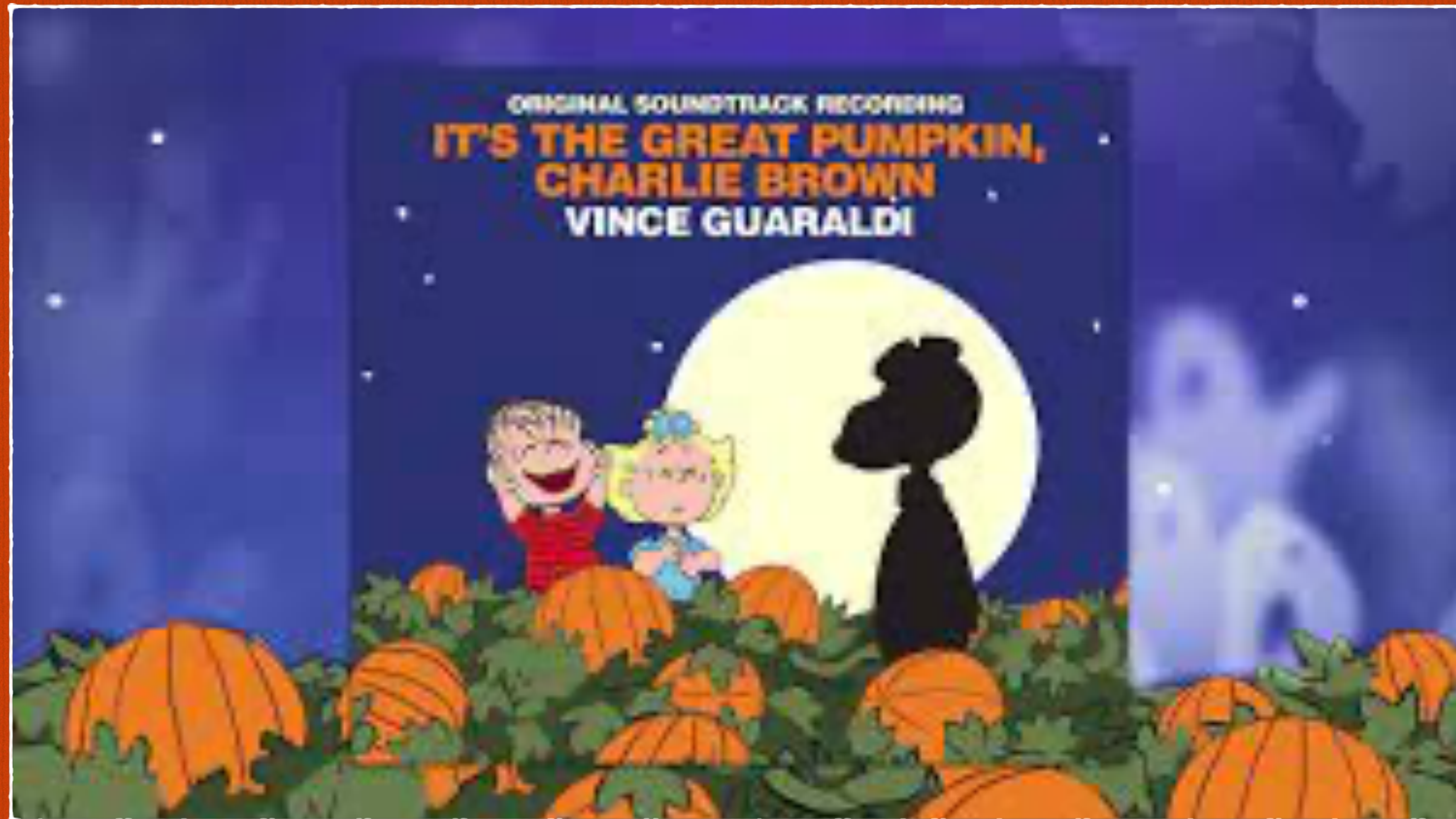
Eleanor Rigby

Featured on "Vince Guaraldi with the San Francisco Boys Chorus" from 1967

Other Charlie Brown Specials

The image displays a musical score for the "Great Pumpkin Waltz" from the Charlie Brown Specials. It consists of two staves of music in 3/4 time, with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The first staff begins with a measure labeled 'A' in a red box, followed by a red box containing the chord progression Cm7, G7/B, and B-flat m6. This is followed by a measure with E-flat 7 and a measure with Am7 in a blue box. The second staff starts with a measure labeled '6' in a blue box, followed by a blue box containing the chord progression A-flat m7, E-flat/G, F# dim7, Fm7, and E-flat maj7. The melody is simple, with notes often beamed together in groups of three.

- ☐ Used his signature sound to create songs for future Charlie Brown specials
- ☐ “Great Pumpkin Waltz” uses the minor line cliché (red) and the Guaraldi #4 descending chord progression (blue), and a very simple melody line
- ☐ After the success of the Christmas special, he released “Oh Good Grief,” another album of music from the other Charlie Brown specials



Great Pumpkin Waltz

Featured in "It's The Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown" from 1966, released on Guaraldi's 1968 album "Oh Good Grief"

Later Life and Final Albums

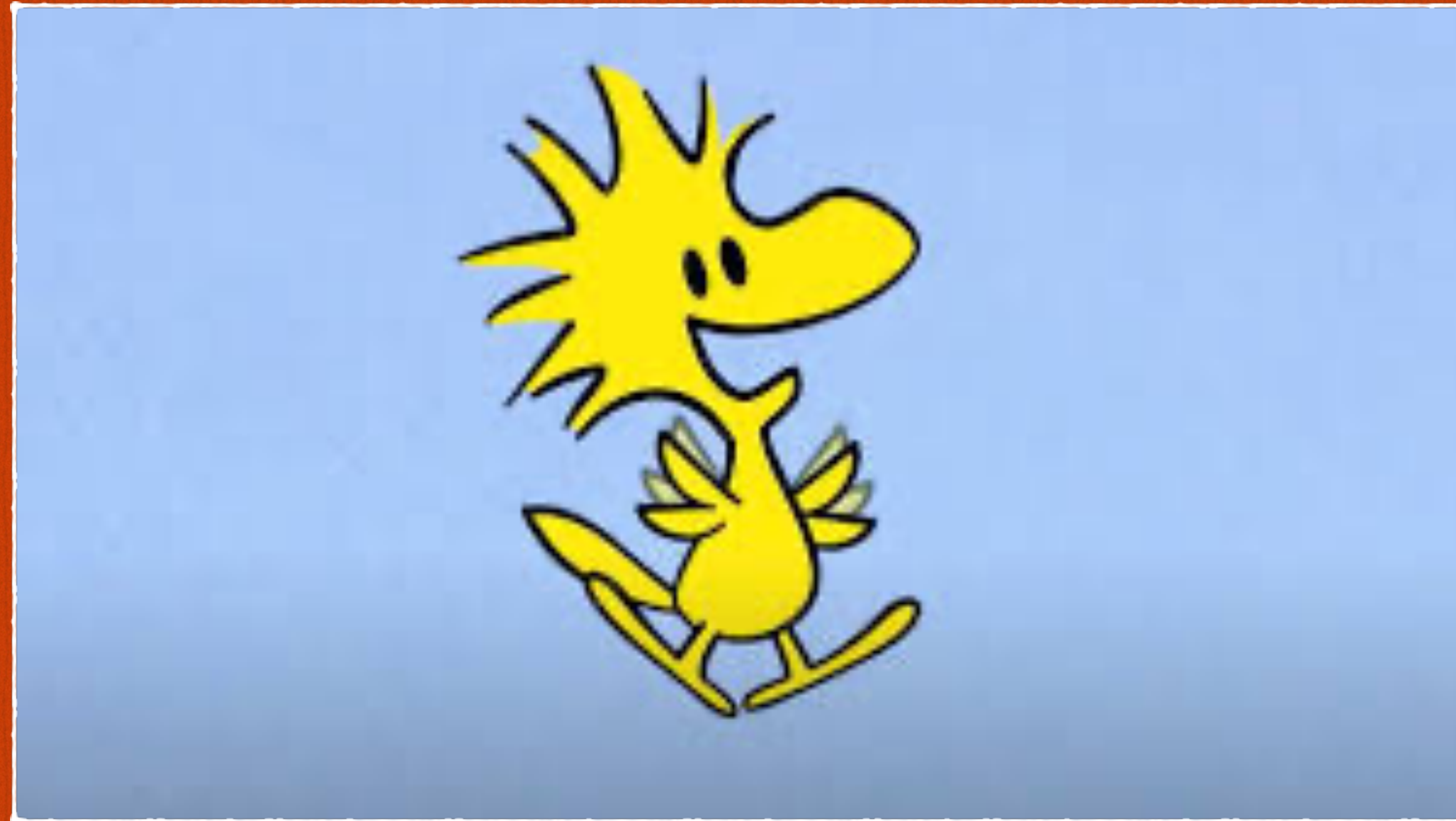


- ☐ His final albums, “Alma-Ville” and “The Eclectic Vince Guaraldi” included rerecordings of old compositions or new Charlie Brown compositions, but both fell into obscurity
- ☐ Leaned into arpeggiated left hand accompaniments
 - ☐ Breaks up chords in his left hand
 - ☐ Ex. above: Fm7 chord has F, Ab, C, and Eb in it. He arpeggiates the F’s and the C’s (red). Ebmaj7 – Eb, G, Bb, and D, outlines the Eb’s and Bb’s (green)



The Masked Marvel

Featured in "It Was a Short Summer, Charlie Brown" from 1969, released on Guaraldi's 1969 album "Alma Ville"



Little Birdie

Featured in “A Charlie Brown Thanksgiving” from 1973, with Guaraldi on vocals

Legacy and Recognition

- ☐ Guaraldi died very suddenly of a heart attack at the age of 47
- ☐ Left a legacy of the 2nd best selling jazz album of all time, was said to have “reinvented the sound of modern American Christmas”
- ☐ Is often listed as among the earliest exposures to jazz for many musicians, and people at large
- ☐ Dozens of covers of all of the Charlie Brown Christmas music
- ☐ Arguably the most widely listened to jazz musician of the 20th century
- ☐ Also, debatably, was briefly a member of the Grateful Dead



Christmas Is Coming

Featured in "A Charlie Brown Christmas" from 1965, written by Vince Guaraldi