



**THE PEANUTS MOVIE** dvd is a Second Quarter 2019 LVCA dvd donation to the Hugh Stoupe Memorial Library of the Heritage United Methodist Church of Ligonier, Pennsylvania. Below you will find Kino Ken's review of that feature animation and bonus materials.

9 of a possible 20 points

**\*\*1/2 of a possible \*\*\*\*\***

United States 2015 color 88 minutes feature animation comedy  
20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox / Blue Sky Studios / Feigco Entertainment Producers:  
Paul Feig, Bryan Schulz, Craig Schulz, Michael Travis, Cornelius Uliano

Key: \*indicates outstanding technical achievement or performance  
(j) designates a juvenile performer

Points:

- 1 Direction: Steve Martino
- 0 Editing: Christopher Campbell, Randy Trager
- 1 Cinematographer: Renato Falcão  
Stills Photographer: Kevin Estrada
- 0 Lighting: Aaron Ross (lead)  
Special Visual Effects
- 0 Screenplay: Craig Schulz, Bryan Schulz, Cornelius Uliano, based on the  
*Peanuts* comic strips of Charles Schulz  
Story Head: Jim Kammerud  
Music Supervision: John Houlihan

**Music Editing:** Fernand Bos, Ted Caplan, Terry Wilson  
**Music Mixing:** Casey Stone  
**Music Recording:** Tim Lauber, Larry Mah, Casey Stone  
**2 Music:** Christophe Beck, Leo Birenberg, Zach Robinson, Vince Guaraldi\*,  
Jeff Morrow  
**Orchestrations:** Tim Davies\*, Larry Groupe\*, Jeremy Levy\*,  
Kevin Kleisch\*  
**Art Direction:** Nash Dunnigan  
**Set Decoration:** Isaac Holze  
**Character Design:** José Manuel Fernández Oli, Dan Seddon, Sang Jun Lee  
**Color Design:** Vincent Di Nguyen (lead)  
**Layouts:** Harold Kraut, Bryan Graves  
**Lead Animation:** Joseph Antonuccio, Jeff Gabor, Lluís Llobera,  
Raymond Ross, Steve Vanseth  
**1 Animation:** Nick Bruno and Scott Carroll (Supervision), others  
**2 Sound Design:** Randy Thom (Supervision)  
**Sound Editing Supervision:** Randy Thom, Gwendolyn Yates Whittle  
**Sound Effects:** Jeremy Bowker, Ronni Brown, Jason Butler, Sean England,  
Pascal Garneau, Dmitri Makarov, Kimberly Patrick,  
Mac Smith  
**Sound Recording:** Justine Baker, Hunter Berk, Kristin Catuogno,  
John Soukup  
**Dialogue Editing:** Cheryl Nardi  
**Sound Mixing:** Lora Hirschberg, Leff Lefferts  
**Voices Casting:** Christian Kaplan\* and Micah Dahlberg\*  
**2 Voice Acting**  
**0 Creativity**  
**9 total points**

**Voices Cast:** Trombone Shorty (Miss Othmar / Mother of Red-Haired Girl),  
Rebecca Bloom (Marcie), Anastasia Bredikhina (j) (Patty), Francesca Capaldi (j)  
(Little Red-Haired Girl / Frieda), Kristin Chenoweth (Fifi), Alexander Garfin (j)  
(Linus), Noah Johnston (Schroeder), Bill Melendez (Snoopy / Woodstock),  
Hadley Belle Miller (Lucy), Micah Revelli (Little Kid), Noah Schnapp (j)  
(Charlie Brown), Venus Schultheis (j) (Peppermint Patty), Mariel Sheets (j)

(Sally Brown), Madison Shipman (j) (Violet), A. J. Tecce (j) (Pigpen), Marleik Mar Mar Walker (j) (Franklin), William Alexander Wunsch (Shermy), others

Being a tremendous fan of the *Peanuts* comic strip, books, 1960s television specials, and musicals, this reviewer hoped for the best when approaching a new addition to cherished classics. Alas, that hope was quickly dashed.

Steve Marino and his team replaced most of Vince Guaraldi's effervescent music with lackluster Latin-tinged pop. This was appropriate enough for dance music but devoid of characterization cues. Relatively slow rhythms of early incarnations of this gang are missing in favor of totally illogical action sequences involving secondary characters and an unnecessary parallel romance. Every time the primary plot about Charlie Brown, perpetual loser, and his red-haired dreamgirl begins to get interesting attention is diverted to Snoopy and aviatrix Fifi, a French beagle as mechanically skilled as her heartthrob is inept.

Snoopy is besieged and undermined by incompetents, Charlie Brown a virtual lodestone for accidents. Spending eighty-eight minutes with hopelessly bashful boy and his Dr. Jekyll / Mr. Hyde schizophrenic pet hardly seems rewarding for anyone. It doesn't help matters that screenwriters ultimately turn born loser into ultimate victor. Not once, but twice within the same story. In neither case is his transformation undergirded by any growth in character.

Chance flips the tables each time instead. A mixup in test papers makes C.B. an unlikely champion scholar. Temporarily. Later, an accommodating breeze blows America's Number One junior milquetoast right to the open door of a school bus where his obsession hesitates inexplicably. Is that the kind of behavior a schoolgirl bound for summer camp displays?

Such incredible flauntings of logic abound, nearly always necessitated by a plot in stall mode more than fifty percent of the time. Since no character really alters during the course of events, distractions are absolutely essential to give an illusion of momentum and progress. The Red Baron, Eiffel Tower, aerodrome scenes, and multinational smooching divert alright. Negatively. Their frantic pacing kills the emotional heart of comic strip panels and television specials. In those earlier creations, wordsmiths were unafraid to slow down the pace, allowing music, insightful dialogue, or a combination of the two to carry the story forward without hopping madly from one disaster to the next.

The story line, insofar as one actually exists, involves a crush luckless Charlie Brown develops on his flame-tressed new neighbor and classmate. Someone who immediately inspires envy in arrogant, conceited Lucy Van Pelt. It appears juvenile psychiatrist and default villainess is upstaged. A clearly intolerable situation. The rest of her world comfortingly remains stable: kite-eating tree behaves normally, Charlie Brown still can't throw strikeout pitches, Miss Othmar mandates her usual book reports.

However, it's the interloper who dances most energetically when it counts and earns unflagging attentions from Lucy's best customer, the kid whose predictable stream of nickels covers Miss All-American Entrepreneur's minor weekly expenses. Apparently, there's a triangle developing.

But writers couldn't spot it. Instead, they focus on providing screen time and predictable comments from each of the comic strip's familiar characters: Shermy, Peppermint Patty, Marcie, Pigpen, Sally Brown, Schroeder, Violet, Linus Van Pelt, Lucy Van Pelt, and Franklin. Each gets at least one quip and moment in the limelight.

Viewers learn nothing new about them, though. Lucy woos Schroeder unrequitedly. Peppermint Patty bullies Marcie mercilessly. And Sally Brown capitalizes on all opportunities to pair off with Linus.

No payoff occurs from mere rehash of customary attitudes, taglines, and appearances.

The sole grace notes in an otherwise unremarkable production are its finely calibrated, wide-ranging sonics, a music score demonstrating vivacity and variety notably absent from most other aspects of the movie, and voicings adequately differentiating juvenile characters.

Anyone wishing further submersion in such tepid waters is welcome to explore the dvd release's many minor bonus features. These consist of about three minutes of Snoopy snippets for those hankering after additional pet antics, three Learn to Draw featurettes enabling children to imitate sketches of Snoopy, Woodstock, and Charlie Brown (about eleven total minutes), three music videos totaling approximately ten minutes and featuring Meghan Trainor's rendering of syntactically challenged "Better When I'm Dancing" lyrics, three minutes of "Behind the Scenes" footage, one hundred sixteen frames of Gallery illustrations, and five trailers for the film altogether comprising nine and one-half minutes of runtime.

**Informative and surprising?**

**No. Just as cursory and colorless as the main feature.**

**For what it's worth, the movie is harmless enough for all ages. Only don't expect either inspiration or artistry. For those qualities, try offerings from Cartoon Saloon or Pixar. Those studios still place considerable emphasis on originality, suspense, and dazzling designs, while being no jot backward in delivering entertainment value.**