

CHARLES M.

SCHULZ

MUSEUM

Girl Power in Peanuts

Through November 8, 2021
Strip Rotation Gallery

Charles M. Schulz referenced many empowered women in the *Peanuts* comic strip, including Billie Jean King, Farrah Fawcett, Cheryl Tiegs, and Peggy Fleming. One inspiration for two strips, a daily strip and a Sunday strip both on display in this exhibition, was Ellen Taaffe Zwilich, the first woman composer to be awarded a Pulitzer Prize for Music. Born in 1939 in Miami, Florida, Zwilich attended The Juilliard School for music in 1975, and was also the first woman ever to receive a degree in Doctor of Musical Arts.

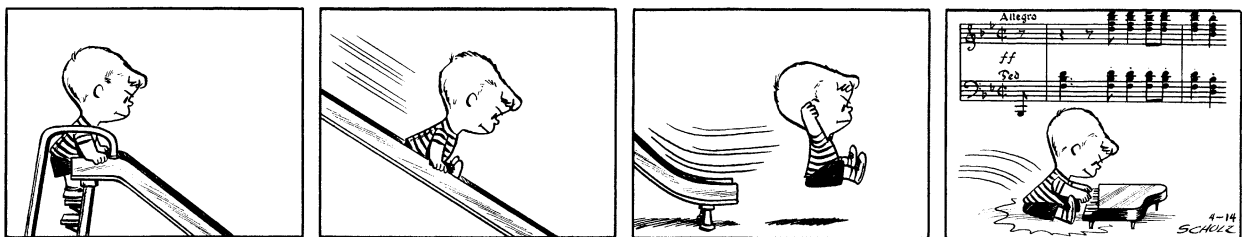
Schulz heard about Zwilich through *The MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour* in 1990 and incorporated her into a *Peanuts* comic strip on October 13, 1990, which can be seen in this exhibition and on the back of this handout. The initial strip led to a friendship between the two, and in 1997 Zwilich composed a 13-minute piano concerto inspired by the *Peanuts* Gang.

Of the concerto, Zwilich said, "I've tried to capture something in the nature of each *Peanuts* character in six short musical sketches." Each of the six movements is inspired by a different character. The piece for Schroeder, called "Beethoven Fantasy", is based on a few bars of the Hammerklavier Sonata, which Schroeder plays on his toy piano in the 1952 strip below. The strip is a visual joke about the dynamic force the pianist must engage to play the opening chords of Beethoven's sonata—a joke that every pianist will surely appreciate.

The other characters honored in the concerto are Linus, with a lullaby, Snoopy, with a Samba dance, Charlie Brown's Lament, Lucy Freaks Out, and Peppermint Patty and Marcie. Zwilich referred to the October 13, 1990, *Peanuts* strip when she explained her last movement by writing, "For Peppermint Patty and Marcie, with thanks for encouraging me in my work ("Good Going, Ellen!") and because you're such good campers: "Peppermint Patty and Marcie Lead the Parade".

Charles Schulz attended the debut performance of *Peanuts Gallery* in New York at Carnegie Hall in March 1997. Look for a framed print of Schulz and friends at the premier when upstairs in the Museum's recreation of Schulz's studio. Also, look for a photograph of Schulz and Zwilich together at the same Carnegie Hall event.

Zwilich was recently the Artistic Partner for the Santa Rosa Symphony's online season from January – May 2021. The season finale was a live online performance of *Peanuts Gallery*.



Originally published on April 14, 1952. *Peanuts* © 1952 Peanuts Worldwide LLC

THE ANATOMY OF A STRIP

CHARLES M. SCHULZ MUSEUM AND RESEARCH CENTER

The Charles M. Schulz Museum has access to approximately 8,000 of the nearly 18,000 original *Peanuts* comic strips drawn by Schulz during his fifty-year career. This gallery contains a selection of original Schulz-drawn comic strips. That is why you will often see pencil lines under the ink. You might also notice eraser marks, correction fluid, and places where text or images have been glued over something else.

Charles Schulz did not “ink in” as did many cartoonists. That is, he didn’t first draw the strip in pencil and then go over the pencil lines with pen and ink. Rather, he used light pencil lines to provide guidelines for spacing. He preferred the spontaneity of drawing with the pen. He said when he drew a smile or a frown, he was actually feeling that emotion. Be sure to look at the “doodle” case to see more about Schulz’s process.

Look for these other elements in the *Peanuts* comic strips on display:

The original date of the strip

Although Schulz drew his strips six-to-eight weeks in advance, he hand-lettered the month and day of each strip’s eventual publication inside one of its panels. For example, a strip published on April 14 is dated 4-14 or 4/14. The publication year is printed, with the copyright information, on a piece of paper glued to the strip. That process was originally done by someone in the syndicate office before the strip went off to be reproduced for the newspapers.

Throw-away panels

The top third of a Sunday strip is called the “throw-away panel.” Depending upon the amount of space each newspaper has for its Sunday comics, they might print only the bottom two-thirds of a strip. Thus, the top third must relate to the rest of the strip but cannot be integral to the story.

Zip-a-Tone

Zip-a-Tone was a brand of the graphic tool screentone that Schulz sometimes used to add shading and dimension to his strip. Find the original strip (duplicated below) in Case number 2 in the exhibition and you will see a transparent adhesive film covered with patterns of dots applied to the artwork—this is Zip-a-Tone and it was used to produce gray tones. Zip-a-Tone sheets came in several different patterns. The adhesive film was placed over the portion of the strip to be shaded and the remainder of the film was cut off with an artist’s knife. About 15 years ago the Zip-a-Tone and other screentone sheets became difficult to find. Today cartoonists employ computer software to achieve the same effect.



Originally published on October 13, 1990. *Peanuts* © 1990 Peanuts Worldwide LLC