

## Playing a Different Tune For Your Dog

**Calming music soothes stressed-out dogs, advocates say.**

*Patricia Kime*

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"When we play the softer channels, the classical music, the dogs are much quieter," Grady said. "On the other hand, if they hear a persistent sound, a harsh sound something like a car alarm or some types of music there's more stress. It bothers me; why shouldn't it bother them?"

Dogs probably hear music differently from humans, because their hearing is far better. At low frequencies, dogs hear almost the same as people. But at high frequencies, dogs hear beyond the human range. A human's auditory range peaks during childhood at about 30,000 cycles per second. That dips to 20,000 cycles per second as adults. By contrast, young dogs have an upper limit of 35,000 to 40,000 cycles per second.

In fact, dogs may enjoy a wider musical range than people because they discern subtle rhythm changes that humans can't detect, said Maurice Burton, author of *The Sixth Sense of Animals* (Taplinger Publishing Co., 1973).

But there's no concrete evidence of this. Katherine Houpt, VMD, an animal behaviorist at Cornell University in Ithaca, N.Y., said she has concluded that music soothes animals because it tunes out other distractions.

One study she did on separation anxiety caused her students to quibble about what music to play but didn't reveal anything about animals' preferences.

"We couldn't seem to agree on country and western, jazz or classical, but it didn't seem to matter," Dr. Houpt said. "That's why I think the music was simply masking out other noises."

Dr. Houpt often instructs her patients' owners to leave a radio on for their pets. She frequently deals with destructive dogs, and believes the radio and television can become part of a daily routine, reducing stress that aggravates destructive behavior.

"If your dog is barking at the garbage truck, then by all means turn on the radio so it can't hear it," Houpt said.

In San Francisco, the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals built a new kennel and chose not to install a sound system.

Playing music in the kennel caused more problems than it solved, president Rich Avanzino said.

"We used to play it but discontinued," he said. "It was hard to find something that pleased everyone. A beat that pleased the animals wasn't the music the employees wanted to listen to."