

We've Got Rhythm, Too!



by
Julie S. Crawshaw

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Do animals have musical rhythm? Indeed they do. People aren't the only ones who love music. Four-legged animals have a sense of rhythm too, and they often hold strong opinions about the kinds of music they want to hear!

When two staff members at the Bronx Zoo disagreed on whether or not animals are affected by music, they decided to test their beliefs by playing different kinds of music to several different species of animals in their care.

Here's what they found:

- Though initially wary of the record player, the elephants soon gathered round and began flapping their ears in time to ragtime music, occasionally raising their trunks to trumpet a note or two.
- The lions absolutely loved it. One even stood on his hind legs and punched the air with his front paws in time to the music.
- While listening to "Get a Hoop and Roll it Away" a tiger acted exactly like a housecat high on catnip, rolling on his back with an expression of pure ecstasy. When the music stopped, his look changed to one of disgust and he growled and walked away.
- One of the camels—all of whom responded with obvious pleasure to the very upbeat tune "The Campbells Are Coming"—literally wept at the sound of a sad ballad, tears streaming down his huge nose during the entire time it played.

Playing soothing and beautiful music for animals who have suffered mental and emotional pain from grief, loneliness, abandonment, abuse or trauma helps them to handle their painful feelings more easily.

When workers at the West Hatch Animal Shelter in England began playing music for their animals, they discovered that the dogs relaxed to the Baroque strains of Mozart but became nervous and agitated when rock music began to play. This is actually a fairly common finding, and explains why many dressage riders love riding their horses to Baroque music such as Mozart and Bach.

Researchers have found that the consistent rhythms used by Baroque composers helps improve concentration and increase calm in people, so it's perfectly logical that animals would respond in the same way. Whatever the reason, the shelter workers report that the atmosphere in the kennels is definitely quieter now.

In a natural environment, loud, sudden or unexpected sounds usually signal danger. The dependable rhythm in Baroque music, which alternates between groups of two beats and groups of three beats, suggests peaceful conditions and encouraging relaxation and a feeling of safety.

Finally, a study done by intuitive animal communicator Dr. Kim Ogden revealed that more than 90% of the dogs who were queried about the kind of music they would most enjoy hearing said they wanted to hear songs about how much their people love them and about squeaky toys, having a comfortable bed, eating, being scratched and spending time outside—answers that led the Laurel

Canyon Music Company to create the first animal-approved music CD, *Songs to Make Dogs Happy*.

You and your pets can enjoy listening to sample clips from this CD and several others composed and recorded especially for animals at: <http://www.howtotalkwithanimals.com/music.html>.

Test runs are free, and I guarantee your pets will love it!

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