

We discovered his hidden musical aptitude shortly after I started violin lessons. At each practice session, as soon as I lifted my violin out of its case and started plucking the strings to tune up, my family would flee quietly (in terror?) and I would be left with Louis.

Louis, wherever he was in the house, would come bounding over to take his place by my side. As I began scraping my bow on the strings, Louis would plop down by me and start to whine—a high-pitched, soft whine, which got progressively louder as I went on.

The more I played, the more he whined. When I played two notes at a time (not by choice but due to lack of skill), his whining escalated until he started barking and wailing wildly.

Finally, after ten minutes or so, as if he had finished his part of the music, his howling died down to small whines and he would fall fast asleep at my feet.

This became a nightly ritual—kind of a bedtime lullaby, which he seemed to eagerly anticipate. If I was delayed for any reason, he would nudge me with his nose and give me the STARE, fully expecting me to read his mind and begin the music.

At first, I thought he was whining and wailing because he was in pain. Maybe my playing was just that awful. But then I really couldn't explain why he would come bounding over, when my other loved ones (the humans) chose to hide. And why would it eventually lull him to sleep so comfortably?

Unfortunately, the lessons fell by the wayside as I got into other activities and we moved to a new town. I stopped playing regularly, and forgot all about how much Louis loved my music. He was really the only one who appreciated it! (No surprise, there)

Louis did enjoy piano music too—whenever my daughter played, we would find him at her feet, or under the piano. But his favorite was violin music—MY violin music. He would not sing to recorded music (at least the CD's by professional violinists)—he preferred the live, raw, unpolished sounds of my scratchy violin. A true connoisseur!

So for a few years, Louis stopped singing. Which is the one thing I regretted about not continuing the violin. Until...

Now: My youngest daughter (the sleepless wonder baby who grew up to be a sleeping champion preteen) has started trumpet lessons. Louis is happily singing again. He knows good music when he hears it!

If you have a dog or pet, why not play some music for them? It may surprise you. And if you already have a musical dog, let us know all about it!