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# CAT FANCY

THE AUTHORITY ON ALL THINGS CAT

JANUARY 2013

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▶▶ **HOW TO**  
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PG. 12

▶▶ **EASY WAYS TO**  
**Keep**  
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▶▶ **DISCOVER**  
**BREAKTHROUGHS** IN  
**Medical Research**

**Music** Can  
**Soothe Shelter Cats**  
**... and Yours**

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**Chausie,  
Ocicat  
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# Sounds to the Feline

LEARN HOW MUSIC CAN IMPROVE

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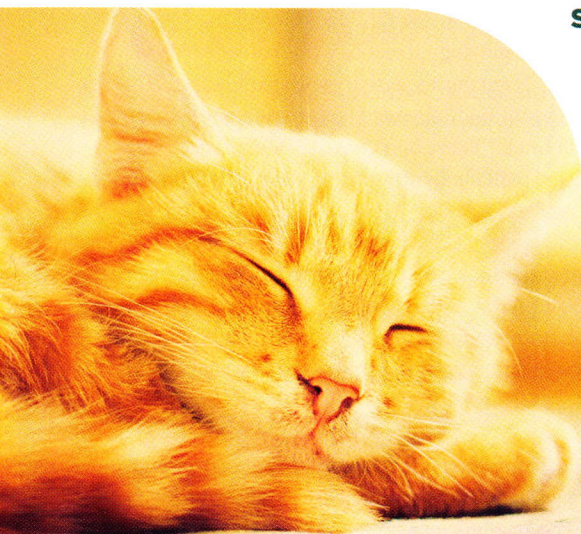
ur beloved felines have amazing hearing abilities. With ears shaped like large funnels that can turn 180 degrees and bend individually to best capture sound waves and vibrations, cats can accurately pinpoint the source of almost any noise. This bionic hearing is essential to feline survival in the wild, as it helps them locate and capture prey. • With hearing three times better than that of humans, cats listen to many sounds that are undetectable to us. Fortunately, some of the sounds we can share with our cats include the melodies of music.

## Sounds Right

You might think that whatever music you like, your cat will like, too. This is not necessarily so. Hard rock or music with thumping bass notes can actually agitate a cat. High-frequency sounds and low vibrations, similar to those made by a rodent or a predator rustling through the leaves, put a cat into fight or flight mode. He must be ready to react, whether it's to chase a mouse or run from danger.

"Music has frequency, tone and volume, so it is a language that animals relate to because those are the things that they respond to in nature," says composer and researcher Janet Marlow, CEO of Pet Acoustics, Inc., producers of calming cat music.

Research done on the hearing range of animals and how music affects them has revealed that mid-range frequencies, mellow tones, slow tempos and



BY HELEN JABLONSKI

# Soothe Soul

THE LIVES OF CATS.





simple arrangements have the most calming effect. Using this data and their own observations of animals' reactions to their compositions, the musicians and composers who produce music for pets create melodies that promote a relaxation response.

"Music is merely the sculpted version of raw vibration," says sound researcher and composer Joshua Leeds, co-founder of Bio-Acoustics Research and Development, producers of "Through A Dog's Ear" and their most recent "Through A Cat's Ear" calming music. "It is ultimately the tone and tempo of the music that is affecting the animals, not the melodic content."

The most effective compositions utilize gentle instruments, such as classical guitar, piano, flute and harp, and avoid harsh instruments, such as trumpets and drums. As opposed to playing just any song, music for pets avoids jarring tempos and complicated passages.

"A [random] classical piece may start out as soothing and then contain loud or aggressive sections that would agitate a pet," points out Tom Nazziola, president and creator of Music My Pet CDs. "Once [our] pieces have been selected, they are further edited to remove dramatic content in order to maintain a soothing effect from start to finish."

## Hearing, Healing and Health

Soothing sounds also benefit feline health. "Music vibrations can help promote healing and lessen stress," says Pamela Fisher, DVM, of North Canton, Ohio. "As a veterinarian for 30 years, I have seen the positive effects of pet-calming music in my practice." This music can effectively lower an animal's heart rate and respiration.

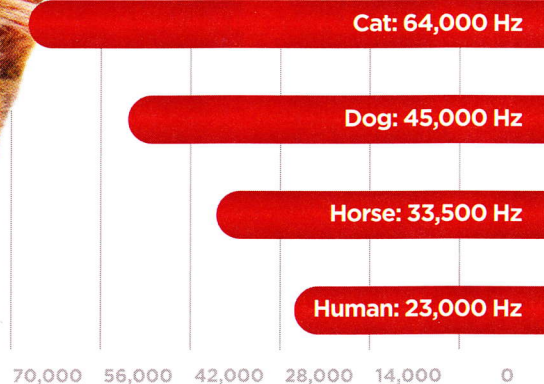
When played in veterinary hospitals, calming music can mask the high- and low-frequency sounds of machinery and equipment that can keep a cat on alert. In the home, this music promotes health and well-being by lowering stress levels and anxiety.

Surrounding your cat with soothing music can positively influence his behavior in many circumstances, including:

- Moving, separation anxiety and time spent home alone
- Masking undesirable nocturnal noises
- Night-time yowling or excessive vocalization
- Aggression, inter-cat fighting and mealtime rivalry
- Fear or hiding behavior
- Car travel and veterinary visits
- Boarding or vacations
- Introducing new people or pets to the household

(continued on page 56)

*Helen Jablonski is a feline behavior consultant and an award-winning writer. Her six cats enjoy listening to their pet CDs and can often be found relaxing together in front of the stereo speakers.*



**MAXIMUM ANIMAL HEARING RANGES**



## MUSIC MAKES SHELTER STAYS SWEETER

Pet cats aren't the only ones to benefit from the language of calming music. An increasing number of animal shelters across the country play these melodies to soothe and comfort their four-legged residents, who are often frightened and confused as they try to cope with these stressful environments. Cats are especially distressed when their sensitive hearing is bombarded by the sounds of strange people, equipment, and barking or whining dogs. Helping to aid shelters in their quest to calm these animals is the Rescue Animal Mp3 Project.

Founded by North Canton, Ohio, holistic veterinarian Pamela Fisher, DVM, the Rescue Animal Mp3 Project is a nonprofit organization that provides Mp3 players pre-loaded with specially selected music to any shelter or rescue group that requests one — all totally free of charge. "Playing soothing pet music promotes relaxation by creating a calming environment," Fisher says.

Donations fund the purchase and distribution of these Mp3 players, and since the Project's inception in December 2011, more than 16,000 animals have reaped the rewards.

Fisher's love of animals inspired her to undertake this worthwhile endeavor. "I wanted to enrich their lives in the present, not knowing what their future might be."

If a simple solution like playing soothing music can make both cats and dogs calm and well-behaved in shelters, they are much more desirable to adopt and have a better chance of acquiring forever homes. And that's a worthy cause in any language.

For more information, go to [www.rescueanimalmp3.org](http://www.rescueanimalmp3.org).