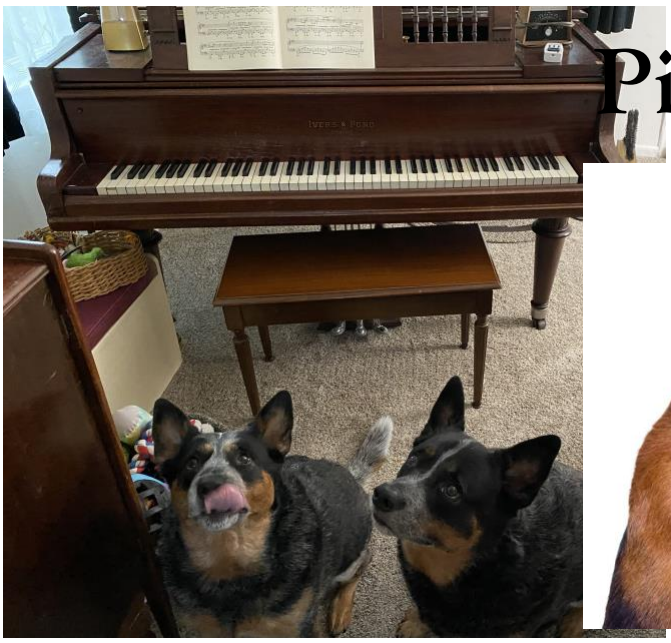
Issue 94
August 2025

Pianos Vs. Dogs



Like a piano, each collection of sounds of their barks presents different colors, intents, and feeling for what they want to express. If you listen carefully, you can hear their music.

Dogs are fantastic animals and are known to bring families together. Dogs are “man’s best friend,” they say. I’ve kept the company of a Doberman, a Pug, a Papillon, and two Chihuahuas during my formative years. I currently am caretaker for two Blue Heelers, siblings, and the wildest dogs I’ve ever met. They keep me company while I play my piano, either resting underneath it or to the side of me. They usually don’t care for the sounds of my piano, but they do sing, yip, whine, and howl with a variety of different intonations. Bred to herd cattle, they have a robust language of their own. Like a piano, each collection of sounds of their barks presents different colors, intents, and feeling for what they want to express. If you listen carefully, you can hear their music. And as wonderful as that is, it can also be quite distracting when I want to hear what my piano has to say.

I am no stranger to dogs, but they have their time and place, like anything else. When I see a client to work on their piano, I ask that the dog(s) be put in a separate room. I ask this for a couple reasons. I will have the piano open, case parts carefully placed around the surrounding area, and my tools on the ground and do not want any mishaps that may hurt the dog or myself to occur. I’ve had dogs damage my tools and step on or knock over piano parts, causing damage to the piano, so at this point I would rather just avoid the possibility entirely. I am also aware that dogs are territorial and want to avoid any accidents that may occur because I move differently than the family they are used to. Not to say that I wouldn’t mind meeting your dog at the door or after everything is cleaned up and put away, but just not while I’m actively working on your instrument.

Written By Kestrel Curro BM

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Removing myself from the equation, one must be careful about younger dogs around pianos. When they are teething, they need to chew and piano legs provide a tempting solution. For a small dog, they might only attack the bench legs, but for a larger dog with a wider mouth and a longer snout, you may find, to the detriment of the piano, that the legs are thoroughly crunched and mangled if a close watch is not kept and proper chews are not provided. Another issue to watch out for is the dog using the legs as a fire hydrant, to use the euphemism. I have seen highly corroded piano wheels more than once due to such an occurrence.

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Well regulated and trained dogs are truly a pleasure to have around your piano during musical experiences. I've heard a story, though I don't remember his name, of a famous drummer who would bring his dog on stage during performances. The dog would lie next to him patiently during the course of the evening. When the final songs were being played, the dog would recognize the tunes and start stretching and waking up because it knew it was almost time to go. A better support animal is rarely found.

If you have a dog, say hello for me.

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