

## Dog Ballet – Audio transcription

**Dog Ballet** is a celebration of the community around the dogs and dog owners of London, and the joy and tenderness that can be found in these relationships of mutual care.

This summer, artists Nigel Barrett and Louise Mari, with Amy Pitt and Lewis Gibson, talked to people in the parks of London about their dogs.

The recorded conversations have been mixed with the profoundly beautiful music of composer Lewis Gibson, to create Dog Ballet Solo, a soundscape to watch dogs play by.

Presented by LIFT and Artsadmin. Dog Ballet is supported by ACT (Art, Climate, Transition) through the Creative Europe programme of the European Union.

03:30

A good day so this is Kato and that's Luna, lovely Luna

03:46

My dog's called Blue and he's a rescue and he's kind of between a Mini-Pinscher and an Italian Greyhound but not so sure, really. But he's Blue.

03:56

Milo's a Pomeranian.

03:59

Moshe he's a schnoodle

04:01

Morgan she's supposed to be a Russian Chihuahua.

04:06

Fernando - a Greyhound I think?

04:10

Ellie and she's a Dalmatian

04:12

He's called Frank and he's a Bernese Mountain dog - Labrador mix.

04:17

Dandelion is a keeshond, which no one can pronounce.

04:21

Oh, her name is Kiana. She's a French Bulldog.

04:24

Shabu. He's a shiba inu.

04:27

Name is Zebedee and he is a Springer- Collie cross.

04:32

Missy. She's a mastiff

04:35

He's a Border Terrier cross and he's called Cecil.

04:38

Eddie. Eddie is his name. He's a Jack Russell.

04:41

Her name is Mauricia. She's not a breed. She's just a brown dog with a beard.

04:48

He's a staffy, one of them lickle staffs and his name is Mandela. Just because it's a strong name - strong man. You know what I mean? So just call him that really. I well I literally, literally found him really when he was a puppy. In Clapham Common. You know, so I pick him up. I pick him when I find him, I put him in my coat and I carry him home. And I phoned the RSCPA and they told him to bring him around so they could check him and see if he has a chip and then they check him - and he have no chip and they tell me I could keep him and I said yeah, I want to keep him. And I had him ever since then. Eight years now. Beautiful personality. Beautiful, really beautiful personality. You know what I mean, he likes to play, gets on with everybody. I don't think I could do without him. I had a hip replacement and if I never had him, I don't think I would have come out of the house. Otherwise, I wouldn't have otherwise I wouldn't have recuperated. No, I would've still be stuck in those- still be on my crutches. You know but, because I had the dog forced me to come out. Otherwise, I wouldn't come out. So it's a great I can't do without him. I know they've got a bad name. But it all depends on how you grow your dog. Because with him, I could leave him with my grandkids, I could leave him with anybody. And they will be safe. No problem at all. So it's all depends on the how we grow him, really it all depends on how you grow your puppy in. You know what I mean, if you grew up from our age, and you're growing beautifully, it'll behave beautifully. Yeah. And that's the way mine does.

06:35

Oh it was the first thing I did when I got my student loan at university, as soon as the money dropped, I got a dog. I didn't even think about it, I got his bed everything. And I just went straight to get Mikey.

06:46

I saw his picture and I fell in love Love at first sight, you know, like dating didn't work. So doggy worked.

06:53

I kind of fell in love with it. And then came up with lots of excuses to have one basically.

06:58

So we were like, Okay, time to add a little pup into the mix.

07:02

I remember when I moved in with her. I said I'll be here for a couple of weeks. You know, I'll find somewhere. And then two weeks I was head over heels in love with the dog - it was a staff and me and him were together forever.

07:17

Family friend gave them to us, yeah. Sadly, she passed away while he was a puppy. And no one else was able to take him. So we said of course we will. You know,

07:28

I saw one in the garden centre. And it was the fluffiest dog I'd ever seen.

07:33

And I've been waiting for 30 years to get a dog basically, as I looked at every dog that changed hands, the whole of the UK. And then this was what I found.

07:42

Oh, I had an old dog and she was just she was old and passed away. So it was just give a bit of time for that to get in and get used to it. And I just thought we just need another dog, you know they're just lovely animals, they can bring a lot to you.

07:58

I had a dog before. And I needed needed something. And I parted from my partner and living on your own. She's a little face to wake up to I just needed a dog.

08:15

And my dad passed away. So I thought my husband's thought it would be a good idea to and it sort of got me out the house and sort of instead of working and sort of doing shops. So I just thought no go for a walk with a dog.

08:26

And then we went to see him and of course it was all over. As soon as we saw him it was like okay, we need to we need to bring him home.

08:32

Oh my god, I grew up with dogs. And so I actually can't imagine life without a dog Snips! So the moment I could get a dog that I could look after by myself. And I could have for my own I got one the moment I could actually afford to do that and just the right time in life. And I've never regretted it is the best thing I've ever done. Definitely he's enriched my life and just made me appreciate everything in the moment.

09:04

Well, he's actually my sister's dog. He was bought for our sister by my daughter for her 50th birthday a birthday present.

09:10

It was a nice surprise. He was in like a shoe box. And he was very small. And then since I've had him he has been a very good boy and we take him for a walk, we let him off the lead and he doesn't like children. And but he likes other dogs not bad. They're more company for you and all that - we take him out and exercise him and bring him up and it helps me, yeah, he's very good. I love him so much. I don't want to lose him or anything!

09:43

Yeah, he's Amanda's dog but we all love him. My friend loves him. We all love him he's very good.

09:49

He starts off as a dog and 10 years later, you know, he was part of the family isn't it, really,

09:57

We well we all love him with it. It's really nice having a dog, my children are teenagers now. And he's just like the little sort of ball in the middle of everybody knows like, it's like a gel for family, for families, you know, the kids really like they really like him. And they love taking turns to throw the ball for him. And he's really patient because even when you've got like little one year olds and they can't throw it very far, or like two year olds, whatever, he doesn't seem to mind he kind of he understands that they're little kids and that they're not going to be able to throw the ball as far as Daddy, you know?

10:36

Because I encourage the children to stroke her because I know she won't bark I know she won't growl and it gives them a little bit of confidence doesn't you know, some children a little bit you know, unfortunately

10:51

For my granddaughters actually I got it for. They're not allowed a dog so I got it instead and they share it they don't take home I keep it with me, but. But it's family innit? That's my new child. The way it goes. If it rains, and I'm onto the way to the park and it rains you still under the bridge and say Nae matter, I'm only human? I can read a book, but if you're around a dog that much, you get to know. Right. She's an "I'll tell you when I want fed" dog. Tap the bowl, feed me. But she's been like that since a pup. And she's a hoarder. Because I'll give her stuff, eaten it and she'll hoard it away plank plank. But I do take her To Pets At Home sometimes on the bus because she likes to get out and about. I think she might be having pups. So she's less playful now. She just wants to lie about and crash. Somebody told me human pregnancy tests work. But I've not got a clue but I'm not going to buy one just to try it out on a dog. Obviously if she is, nature's done its job man, innit? My alarm calls, she opens the win- she opens the curtains in the morn- in the afternoon if they're shut too much you want to let the sun come in cause she likes the sun but nae sun today!

12:43

I always wanted a dog just always wanted a dog. And I saw her picture on the website and I fell in love straightaway. She came on the happy bus. That's how they call it. She loves play fighting, playing. Just having the great time with other dogs. Yeah. She was the dog chained outside of the house somewhere. And then as soon as she had puppies, she was taken to the forest and left there with her puppies. So the puppies didn't survive. And she was rescued. Sometimes I think that she treats the toys as her puppies. She puts them in the basket and makes sure they okay. She's lovely. She's a great dog. I mean, I couldn't ask for anything better.

13:36

I will say they hard work was to raise a puppy like the puppy stage that taking care of every hour and the crying and not being able to leave her alone for a second because she just chewing on something and they're crying and they're not sleeping and get it on night that I was not expecting at all

13:51

It's been good, but at the same time annoying.

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And it's funny because whenever I see people with golden retriever puppies or any puppy, the first thing I do is feel sorry for them. I sort of go "Oh, terrible, isn't it? How are you? How are you managing and all that?"

14:07

I've never had a puppy. So I thought let's go for a puppy and it was hard work. And I cried.

14:15

You know, when he was a puppy, he used to steal people's food, which forced me to carry around five pounds on 10 pounds notes to pay people back.

14:24

Yeah, I love a puppy. I love meeting all the puppies.

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To be honest, I have a neighbour who had her from young and I just got I just got her from her. If that makes sense. She's the most playful energetic dog you'll find. She's very naughty, but she's very smart. When she doesn't listen. She's aware of the fact that she's not listening, if that makes sense. Hey, hey, hey, hey, hey. Well, what I don't like about having a dog is the stress that comes with it. People who have cats - I understand that it's much less stress because you can just put your food down. Basically cats look after themselves with a dog, you always have to look after the dog - for example, right now I'm taking her for a walk. It's been like 40 minutes. So that's literally 40 minutes on my day wasted because I could've been doing other things. But, of course, I do enjoy the walks, bit of fresh air. You see different things, meet other dogs- its very good. But that's just one of the cons. But let me talk about the pros. Alright, so now with having a dog... Now give me a second to think about this one. I can get a whole list.

So with having a dog, Callie, I consider her a little emotional support dog. You know what I mean with her. She's a very happy and playful dog. Always licking everyone up. That's how she shows her love with me. I'll just lie down on my sofa, I get in position and she jumps up, I just find a position on the sofa and just get get all snuggled up. You know, I mean, I think kind of, I think that trait of her you can literally see it in her when you first say hello. Isn't that right? She's jumping up on you, tryna, tryna, rub, rub her back on on your legs, all that stuff? What else is the with the dog the social aspect to the way that, for example, because of my dog? I've met other dogs. And through meeting other dogs, I meet other dog owners. And it's just a little chain. Oh, look at her run off to one now. That should be fine. Yeah, that should be fine. But right now, if I wasn't to be having this conversation with you, I'll probably be having a conversation with them. And that's just an example in itself. You know, I mean, Kelly, come here, come here! Yeah, the thing is, if I'm being honest with her, because of her size, some people will misunderstand her. Yeah, she's so gentle. But she's so energetic. So she will run up to you, to say, hi, some people have big fears of dogs, you must know that. So when she comes up to people say hi, and they're scared, that's when it gets a bit awkward. Hey, hey!

17:06

we're lucky to have so many green spaces, which is what I love.

17:12

All that lovely land, and that wildlife and the plants and the trees and fresh air.

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We're lucky with our parks around here

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It is lovely to have such a green space in the middle of the city. Yeah, he really enjoys the park and just loves to go and have a wander around by himself. Just the way he just walks along. Looks like he's not got care in the world. And just a loving life as it is. Goes there straight, takes himself to the ice cream van and gets gets himself an ice cream.

17:51

And she kind of chooses sometimes she'll want to go into the woods and sometimes she'll want to go on the golf course.

17:58

Here, just here. He likes it don't like change when he's old. So just along here is enough for him.

18:06

It brings you into nature a little bit more you observe other things and birds and because you're out walking all the time. And yeah, you see the world around you otherwise before I had dogs who my mum, dad used to walk them I was just I wasn't going out for walks and you start to see things you didn't see before but it's so good for your mind. So good for your mind, the outside. Well, it's very social. It can be social. If you don't want to be sociable. You don't have to be sociable. We can just take in the nature, you know, but I love both.

18:36

But the Poplars are nice trees and the Oaks and the English Yew and the Beech and all these conifers and leylandiis that come over and the the Lebanon Pine tree - that's quite a rare tree - The Ceder of Labanon.

19:41

She'd never been outside. Never seen the grass, never been in the garden. Never seen the sky

19:45

When we first got her, she was, she was she was pretty, pretty raw. I would say, she'd never lived in a home before. She'd never been on a walk before. She'd never seen food that wasn't for her to eat before so it was or climb stairs before we had to teach her how to climb the stairs.

21:31

For a rescue dog, he's very good. Apart from this controlling jealous side and he sometimes for example, he does something that he will choose when he wants to poo and then he will cry and you I'll take him for a poo, but then he distracts himself forgets about doing a pool, then I come back home and then he starts again. And then I go, and this can happen like five times. So there !

21:53

and then once on a beach, he came across like a dressing, you know, like a dressing going rope. They use to tie a dressing gown and he just kind of swallowed it all like a piece of spaghetti. And so we had to wait for that to come out. And then you know - not to get too graphic - But picture a magician pulling a handkerchief out of his sleeve and it just keeps going....

22:14

He once ate his homework. Yeah, it actually did happen.

22:18

She's on heat the moment think she's taking me for a walk today rather than the other way around? She's getting a lot of attention. Yeah. Even these ducks are coming to say hello to her look.

22:28

Yes, you're a pest, come on woman!

22:30

Cecil! come on, boy, come on. Cecil! Come for a nice walk.

22:35

She's really stubborn this one lately, she won't get into or get out or transition. So

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he doesn't always act in a particularly loyal way. So he finds other families and he sometimes he just stands next to them. Like, you know what, this lot, they're fine. I'm gonna stay with that. And he looks like that he's gonna stay with them.

22:56

She has so much energy good lord, she's so much energy.

23:00

But she's actually a very sweet, very feminine little dog.

23:03

He's from Norfolk, and he's middle class.

23:07

He likes the water yeah, yeah. He likes his stick. If it's been thrown in the water.. he's not bothered particularly otherwise, I have a hook because he sometimes goes in there and tries, tries to get out of an awkward spot, and he can't get out. And I just hook him on that. Save me having to go down there, which is quite dangerous. Doesn't look it but it can be. If there's another dog and I want to get away from them quickly rather, rather than put the lead on- I can just hook him you know... momentarily.

23:37

because she'll go to the lady with the liver treats first. And then she'll just go, well, if you're the only one left, let's have a look. See what you've got. And if she doesn't like it, what's embarrassing is, she'll take it, spit it on the floor, and she'll wee on it. And my other dog used to do that as well. And she'd have a drink out of the last puddle in the woods. And then piddle in it. So I think.. I'll never follow you in the desert ! You never know what you're drinking ! it's mine... Nobody else can have it ! Yeah, she's she's really cute.

24:19

Fernando? Well, you are kind of greedy.

24:23

We love animals. And we feed them we feed them all, but we have to do it secretly. So Oscar doesn't realise that they're getting food as well as he does. Because he's a bit you know, bit selfish like that.

24:36

Eddie likes to walk in the park and it's good exercise for me too. He - no more treats! No Eddie no more treats. Well, if you just stand in the middle of the park and yell biscuit, all the dogs will come -Eddie! You're really spoiled, Eddie. And don't sit there looking like - all dogs have that 'nobody feeds me. Nobody wants me.. What's going to become of me... if you don't give me a treat right now' look, and Eddie's had more than his fair share.

25:10

It's looking quite nice today.



25:11

It's sunny at the moment,

25:12

Sunny, nice, warm

25:14

The weather is gorgeous.

25:16

Oh, it's nice and sunny for once

25:21

It's warm and overcast

25:23

A bit overcast. It feels like there's a few drops of rain but it's quite muggy and warm.

25:32

I'm sorry, the weather's so awful

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It's really heavy rain.

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I love the rain, though, it's great.

25:36

The pouring rain,

25:37

it's raining

25:37

The rain was pouring down

25:39

overcast and drizzly

25:40

Someone's forgotten to put the weather on.

25:45

Horrible,

25:46

grey and a bit breezy,

25:47

windy, but not raining.

25:50

Not too bad. It's a little gloomy, but

25:52

Weather's not too good.

25:53

The weather is very mediocre. His name is Winston, and he's a Greek hare hound. I knew I wanted an older dog. Hopefully I also know that older dogs don't get adopted as easily. People don't really like to adopt older dogs. So they sort of I know my heart kind of hurts about that hard emotionally to see like the effects of trauma on a being on his body and his reactions in the way that he wasn't able to engage with humans. It really made me question human race once more. Like, why do people find it so easy to take everything bad they have out on dogs? See the first time he wagged his tail was like, a month, maybe like two weeks in? So the first time he wagged his tail, we were like, Yeah !!! We gotta tail wag !!! We gotta tail Wag - ( bark) yes, good bark.

26:49

Milo. He's a smooth Collie. It's like a border collie without the fluff. So he's got problems you know, sit, Milo! That's a good lad. Underneath, he's a brawler, really underneath he's. He's just one of those people. You go in a pub and you're looking at me, you know, he's he went for another dog. That was 835 pounds in the vets. So he's a bit of a liability. Really? I feel committed to him now. But if I had to do it again, I don't think I would. He is my dog now. My children say give him up. And I said I can't give him up. That's just too unkind. I'm committed. Hello. Are you a good boy? He's loving, yes. But again, it has to be on my terms now. Because that's sometimes just dominance.. the loving. Well, maybe I'm lucky to have him you know, he kept me sane during the lockdowns because I live on my own. So I'm lucky to have him too I guess.

27:50

My dog is called Shearling. And he's a Labrador Retriever. That was always my plan when I retired: to go travelling, to my finish my travelling and then get a dog. But then of course I retired early through ill health. And then I was like disappointed because I thought, oh god, I might not be able to get a dog. Because I didn't want to get a dog and then not be able to look after them properly. I first came to notice them at a conference, that was in Manchester, for the MS Society. And they were doing a display there. And I thought this is what I want.

My boy I met him and wasn't too sure. And I met him again the following week. And I said, Yeah, he's my dog. I had to think future forward, you know, my condition is progressive. So it'll change. Will I still

be able to look after him? And that was always the thing in my mind. Will he be alright? You know, I worry about him. I do, I worry about him everyday. I worry that he's, cuz he's getting old now. So he's soon gonna come up for retirement. And I do look at him. And I think when we're out... you're really tired. You can really.. you're getting old and I worry about when the time comes when he actually does pass. And that's not... but I want him to have the best life possible. Every, most nights he's with me, aren't you? He's with me. And it's funny because I have carers come in. So if they're late, he's always hovering by the door wait for them to get on with it. So he can get in and get get to bed.

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He's an old boy. He just wants to come down, do his thing. Go up, have his breakfast. And he'll be there until dinnertime. So yeah, he don't want to do nothing anymore. grumpy. He's grumpy. It used to be really friendly. And yeah, but now he's, he's grumpy.

29:50

He still has an hour's walk every day. And in what used to be one and a half to two hours, but now it's an hour but he just doesn't go very far, but he's just really slow and he's sniffs everything. But it's still an hour, sometimes a bit longer.

30:03

Yeah, she is actually gorgeous. When I go home, I'll have a cup of tea and sit down on the armchair to sit on my lap and go asleep. But always the phone rings. And when you come back she sitting on me chair where I was sitting I have to sit somewhere else don't like to move him, do you know what I mean?

30:21

She doesn't like going out in the rain. She doesn't like getting wet. She doesn't like him. It's too hot. It's too cold. Yeah, she's a fair weather dog.

30:32

I'm 82 now. So I haven't got long to go now so get a bit of sunshine while I can sorta thing you know.

30:42

This is this is Penny, our beloved golden retriever. She's had two new chemical elbows - Penny, stop scratching! I've had dogs all my life, grew with them never been without one. I think I've been without one for two years when I was training and that was two years too long. So a friend of ours whose partner died 10 years ago, said I really would like to have a dog for companionship but I don't know what dog to get. So I said get a golden retriever. There's such wonderful dogs. They're calm. They're easily trainable. Lovely. So we went with her to choose this puppy. She was the puppy from Hades. And Pam couldn't cope with her. So I said, well, we'll look after her for a few months and train her during which time she broke my ankle. And Pam said you know what? You have the dog. Since then she's given me concussion and broken my nose. But we love her and she loves us. So that's how we got Penny. She's just a positive bundle of joy and energy. You're not 100% well these days so she's a great friend to you.

31:47

She's a great friend to me, yes.

31:49

Well, the house is always filthy. I'm always having to clean it, always having to brush her, but when she went into hospital for the day, the house was clean and quiet and I thought, I can't stand this.

31:57

She's the most wonderful job. Just a wonderful dog. The best wonderful God.

32:10

Yeah, he's been a good boy.

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He loves he loves. Yeah, he loves life actually he's he's a really good dog. Yeah.

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I've met very good friends, thanks to just us all having dogs and getting to know each other.

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Our constant friendship and companionship to the extreme 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

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And I don't know what we would talk about if we didn't have a dog because he takes up about 90% of our conversation throughout the day.

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Well everyone says dogs are good for the soul, aren't they? And I do believe that. She's amazing.

32:41

She is absolutely lovely. Fantastic, she is.

32:46

He teaches me a lot of patience and kindness. Probably. You know, because tahts the way you have to be with them. I'm not sure what I teach him, really. Yeah, I certainly learned from the experience of having a dog.

33:00

These have brought me and my son much closer now because it's a reason that we have to be happy. I think like, he saved my life.

33:08

When I was ill a few years ago, he was the one that was there beside me, sitting beside me watching, he was there for me all the time. And they're they're, always happy, always wagging tails.

33:20

Unconditional love. I absolutely adore them.

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If I didn't have a dog, I wouldn't get out of bed in the morning.

They only ever enhance your life. Yeah. He's really helped me honestly.

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He sort of saved me to be honest.

33:34

Oh, they're just great company. They're very loyal. They're your best friends. Really. I know you've got friends, but they are like really loyal. You know, they never let you down.

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And it's real relationship with her.

33:47

I think dogs is one of the best friends and that's the one that can love me unconditionally. We love her shes an amazing dog.

33:56

If you've ever had a dog, you wouldn't want to be without out a dog because of the intense friendship.

34:01

I can't really describe it, it really changed my life completely. ... I will go too emotional.

34:09

Both myself and my husband never had pets before. So just that love that you have for an animal has sort of been quite overwhelming. We've never, we've never experienced that before. So I think for all of us its just.. you know.. That, that companionship and the love and the fun that he's brought into the family ..has just been Yeah, and like I say.. just that love, it's just something different isn't it..and not what we were expecting at all - but wonderful.

34:38

And he's been an absolute joy. We're both completely in love with him.

34:45

He's just a lovely dog to be around.