

Frequently Asked Questions — for Musicians

WHY DOES JEN HAVE A SERVICE DOG?

Jen lives with Trigeminal Neuralgia, a chronic and unpredictable facial pain condition. Her service dog, Kita, smells impending pain attacks and alerts Jen to take medication to manage any symptoms. Jen and Kita have been a working team since 2020. **Kita is a task-trained medical alert service dog — not a pet.**

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN KITA ALERTS?

To alert, Kita touches Jen's leg with her nose — that's Jen's cue to take medication.

WHAT IS KITA'S PERFORMANCE EXPERIENCE?

Kita's resume is extensive and includes appearances with opera and symphony orchestras (including The Metropolitan Opera Orchestra), Broadway shows, chamber ensembles, jazz ensembles, wedding/event bands, recording sessions, televised performances, choral concerts, tours, industry conferences, religious services, and more.

WHAT TRAINING HAS KITA RECEIVED?

In addition to extensive training dedicated to general tasks, obedience, scent detection, and public access manners, Kita has received hundreds of hours of targeted and specialized training to develop the skills necessary for her to work safely in performance environments as a non-disruptive presence. Her performance training covers all aspects of the music business, including performance spaces, audience and personnel, equipment and instruments, music, noise, self-awareness, and performance etiquette.

HOW DOES KITA PREPARE TO WORK IN MUSIC ENVIRONMENTS?

Kita wears full-body concert black (made from the same fabric as HEPA filters) to reduce any allergens, a service vest, leash, harness, footwear (if necessary), and military-grade canine hearing protection. She is groomed regularly and always has a bathroom break before work.

DO JEN AND KITA NEED SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS?

No — they do not require any special accommodations. Kita is trained to integrate safely into human environments.

WILL KITA BE DISRUPTIVE?

No. Kita is trained to remain still while on duty and will not react to sound, music, noise, or movement. She will not make noise or large movements (stretch, yawn, roll, whine, jump, etc.) or interact with people without permission. Most people (including fellow musicians) don't even realize she's there. **There has never been an issue with her behavior.**

WHERE DOES KITA GO DURING A PERFORMANCE?

Depending on the setup, Kita will lie under or next to Jen's chair. If standing, Kita will lie between Jen's feet.

WHAT ABOUT INSTRUMENTS?

Kita is trained to ignore everything and everyone except Jen while on duty. She will not interact with instruments, and has a command in her repertoire ("careful tail") that reminds her not to wag her tail near them.

CAN'T JEN JUST TAKE MEDICATION AND LEAVE KITA AT HOME FOR ONE NIGHT?

No. Kita assists Jen with her medical needs, and it is imperative that they always remain in close proximity. Jen publicly shares select information about her medical history as a courtesy, not to have her treatment plan altered by individuals who are unqualified to make such suggestions.