

## Bark for solo violin



WHEN Vanessa Mae started playing the violin at the age of five, her audience almost always consisted of Psi-Tse, a little Lhaso Apso dog, who would sit under the piano stool listening. Now an elderly 15-year-old, Psi-Tse is the head of a little family of dogs - Charley, her younger toy-boy husband, and her two male puppies Chung-Pao, named after a Chinese general, and Kim-Soon, named after a Chinese warrior.

"I miss them so much when I am away," admits Vanessa Mae whose latest classical album is just out. "One day is a longer time for a dog so they have grown and changed when I am away for three months. So I get someone to send me photos of them.

"They all have different characters. Chung-Pao is blind because of a fight but he manages. He is kept on a lead so he feels protected. But he is the most playful."

Brother Kim-Soon is the glamorous one. "He is a poseur. He's immaculately groomed so we always take him along to a photo-shoot. He's not stupid. When Charley and Chung-Pao were quarrelling over a bone, it was Kim-Soon who nipped in and took it."

Blind Chung-Pao and elderly Psi-Tse are the most precious. Psi-Tse, who is named after a beautiful Chinese princess, used to sleep on her pillow when Vanessa was only four.

"She is still very much in charge of the clan. The other three have a tremendous respect for her."

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[Main Page](#)