

## METRO

**(Intro)** For D.C. commuters, the metro is an essential, but small part of daily life. Residents look to the metro to be convenient, efficient and get them from place to place on time and comfortably. But soon, the transit authority might combine efficiency with entertainment, changing metro culture. Arwa Gunja has the story.

### **(Ambience – Station noise)**

Walking through the Gallery Place metro station in D.C.'s Chinatown, you hear the opening and closing of train doors and the clattering of shoes as commuters scurry to work... but not much else. Unlike other transit ports in major cities like New York or Paris, D.C.'s metro stations are relatively quiet. But soon, that might be changing. If approved by the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, musicians and other performers may become a part of the daily commute in just a few months, moving their venues from the outside of stations to a permanent place inside metro walls.

Dennis Jaffe is the chairman of the Metro's Riders' Advisory Council. He supports the proposal to allow performers in the stations and says many others at the Transit Authority do so as well. But, amongst the public, opinions are split.

**(Jaffe)** Some people feel that wow it would be vibrant it would be wonderful entertainment. It wouldn't be so drab. Other people refer to the cacophony of noise.

If it does pass, Jaffe believes the atmosphere in the stations will greatly change. The stations will no longer just serve as a transportation center, but as a cultural institute where people will gather to watch performers.

**(Jaffe)** it would provide the opportunity for a little bit more of a sense of a gathering place where you might see someone you know. Metro is more part of your life on a day to day basis possibly instead of a way to get to parts of your life.

### **(Ambience – Guitar)**

Performers are also speaking up about the changes. For one performer, Mark Francis Nickens who is a regular guitarist outside of the Dupont Circle station, musicians should be allowed in stations – he says it would be an exciting development for Metro. He thinks the metro life is dull and says his fans who visit him daily would agree that the presence of musicians in stations would spice up the monotony of the daily commute.

**(Nickens)** These subways stations are very kind ya know, really kind of sterile you know, kind of cold. A lot of people have told me that and a lot of people tell me how I make their day when they come off the escalator.

**(Ambience – noise outside stations)**

Some riders agree. Carlyn Clarke is an avid supporter of both metro and street performers, and she would love to see the two come together. She has been riding twice a day for over 40 years now and says performers brighten her day.

**(Clarke)** I just got off from work, I'm tired and they just make you feel good. They add a certain humanity.

Though Clarke supports the musicians, others are a little skeptical. Jaffe says some riders are concerned about noise levels and others are worried that it will cause traffic disruptions in stations. Cameron Widman is just one rider who is worried that musicians will interrupt traffic flow, especially during peak hours.

**(Widman)** Rush hour gets really crammed and crowded, so. They would have to find a good place to put them I think.

**(Ambience – Guitar)**

Decisions on this proposal are still forthcoming, and Jaffe says even if the proposal passes, the Transit Authority is still unsure how they will monitor the program. Nothing is yet certain, but one thing is for sure: Though public opinion may be divided, if musicians are allowed in stations, all agree that metro culture will drastically change.

For Intern Edition, I'm Arwa Gunja in Washington D.C.