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Macklemore is talking to you at Sea-Tac. Are you listening?

Posted by [Monica Guzman](#)

We don't expect much from airports these days. As a kid I couldn't understand why adults always looked so miserable there. Now that I've had my share of delays, slowdowns at security, and seats that seem designed to make your back ache, I understand.

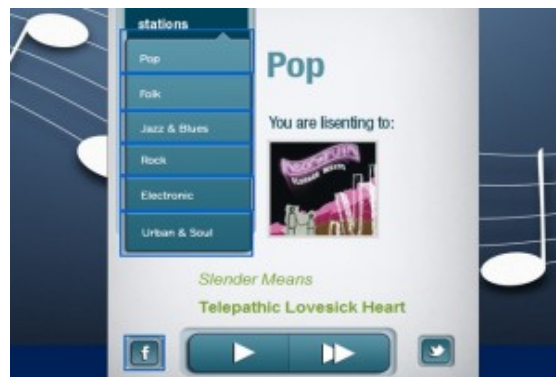
So it was refreshing to see the news from Sea-Tac in my inbox this morning — the airport is enhancing its [Sea-Tac Airport Music Initiative](#), a program that features the music and voices of Northwest musicians throughout the terminals, ticketing areas and concourses.

The program, a cooperative effort by the Port of Seattle, the Seattle Music Commission and PlayNetwork, launched January 2012 but still feels new — when I notice it. While most travelers at the gate watched CNN this morning (I'm on a plane as I write this), I tuned in to a screen featuring trivia about locally based acts Hey Marseilles and Campfire OK. Hey Marseilles bandmates played as students at the University of Washington. I didn't know that.

A program that brings local culture to an airport's media is not necessary in the way that security checks, announcements about abandoned baggage and so many other cold, dreary things we've come to accept as part of the airport experience are.

That's part of what makes it delightful.

If there's something wrong with the program, it's that it's not obvious enough that it exists. No easy feat, probably. Airports are so predictable, frequent travelers bury themselves in their phones and don't come out until it's time to turn off and stow all electronic devices. Though Northwest music does play in parts of the airport, I can't remember the last time I noticed it, the way I might notice new art hanging in Terminal C. It's audio, and it's trapped in the background.



The program is most robust in its individual Web player, which travelers can access to stream local music over the airport's free Wi-Fi. But how many travelers know they can?

Here are some program updates:

- The playlist of Northwest artists, which started with 170 songs, now includes 400.
- The program's Web player, [accessible anytime](#), got upgrades to its display and smartphone compatibility.
- 32 local artists have now volunteered their voices to airport announcements, including Quincy Jones and chart-topper Macklemore.

More on the initiative on the [Port of Seattle's website](#).

Update: Sea-Tac's Perry Cooper wrote in with a note about why the sounds of the Sound aren't more prevalent where travelers spend their time:

...You noted how it might not be so prominent; you might not realize we can only play the music in common public areas and not within the gate areas. Those gate areas are owned by the airlines and they have priority in those for their announcements for flights, so if you hear the airport music it is when you hear it 'leaking' over from the edge of the carpeted gate areas. The public space in between gates (essentially where you walk along the concourses) is where our speakers are.

Cooper also said live performances associated with the program begin later this month.

Those should be harder to miss 😊

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