

DIMA Project report: MBox

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1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide more technical and detailed information about the mobile application developed. The Design Document is a guide for the programmer that will manage the future development of the codebase for the application in all its functions. The document will explain and motivate all the architectural choices by providing a description of the components and their interaction. We will also enforce the quality of the product through a set of design characteristics. Finally we describe the implementation, integration and test planning. The topics touched by this document are:

- high level architecture
- main components, screens and widgets
- runtime behavior
- design patterns
- more details on user interface
- requirements and their mapping on the architecture
- implementation and test planning

1.2 Scope

MBox is an application for mobile devices that allows users to access all the music present on their devices without having to worry about manually managing the metadata. The target user has basic knowledge of the functions of the mobile device (e.g. is able to interact with the filesystem). Since the application is focused on users who want to listen to music, which is usually done with a portable device, we will focus smartphones mainly (the application also works on tablets). For the development of this applications we have decided to use flutter since it's a framework thought for multiplatform deployment.

1.3 Glossary

Queue: a queue is a data structure containing a list of tracks which are to be played according to a FIFO policy.

Metadata: metadata are information of a track regarding the track itself (e.g. track title, artist, album cover ...)

2 Description and requirements

2.1 Product description

MBox has all the functionalities of a music player:

- Detect music present in the Music folder
- Allow management of playlists
- Organize music by artist, album and playlist
- Allow to arrange tracks in a playback queue
- Play tracks (in random order if desired)
- Visualize metadata related to tracks

In addition to this, MBox allows a more advanced and automated metadata management, and the access to other music information:

- Automatically set missing metadata (Title, Artist, Album, Cover, Lyrics, Track number, Artist image, ...)
- Manually edit metadata
- Visualize information about artists like a brief description, albums and other songs
- Search on the internet for other songs and listen to them

2.2 Assumptions

- When downloading metadata or looking for other music, internet connection is available
- The user is able to move their music to the Music folder
- The tracks are present on Spotify to download metadata
- When the user looks for a track not present on their device, it must be present on YouTube
- The tracks are in mp3 format (otherwise metadata management is harder)
- The access to the filesystem is granted
- The device on which the application is used has some means to play music

2.3 Functional requirements

1. The application can access the filesystem and fetch songs from the music folder
2. The application can play the selected tracks
3. The application allows the user to add or remove tracks from the playback queue
4. The application allows the user to pause and resume playback
5. The application allows the user to skip tracks in the queue
6. The application should save the queue state to resume playback if the application is closed
7. The application allows the user to add or remove playlists
8. The application allows the user to add or remove tracks from playlists
9. The application organizes the tracks by artist and album
10. The application allows the user to view lyrics of currently playing track
11. The application allows the user to edit metadata of the tracks
12. The application automatically adds missing metadata using an external service (in our case Spotify); already present metadata is kept
13. The application can show information about the artists of the tracks present on the device (such as all their albums and tracks)
14. The application allows the user to search for tracks not present on their device, and play them through an external service (in our case YouTube)
15. It should be possible to use the application without an internet connection, obviously with limited functionalities (no external song search, metadata editing ...)

2.4 Non functional requirements

1. The application should feel snappy and responsive
2. The application layout should be intuitive to use
3. The application should be reliable

3 Architectural Design

3.1 Architectural Style

The application is logically subdivided in a frontend and a backend. The frontend presents the information to the user and allows them to interact with the backend. The backend contains and manages all the data and interfaces with the external services.

3.1.1 Frontend

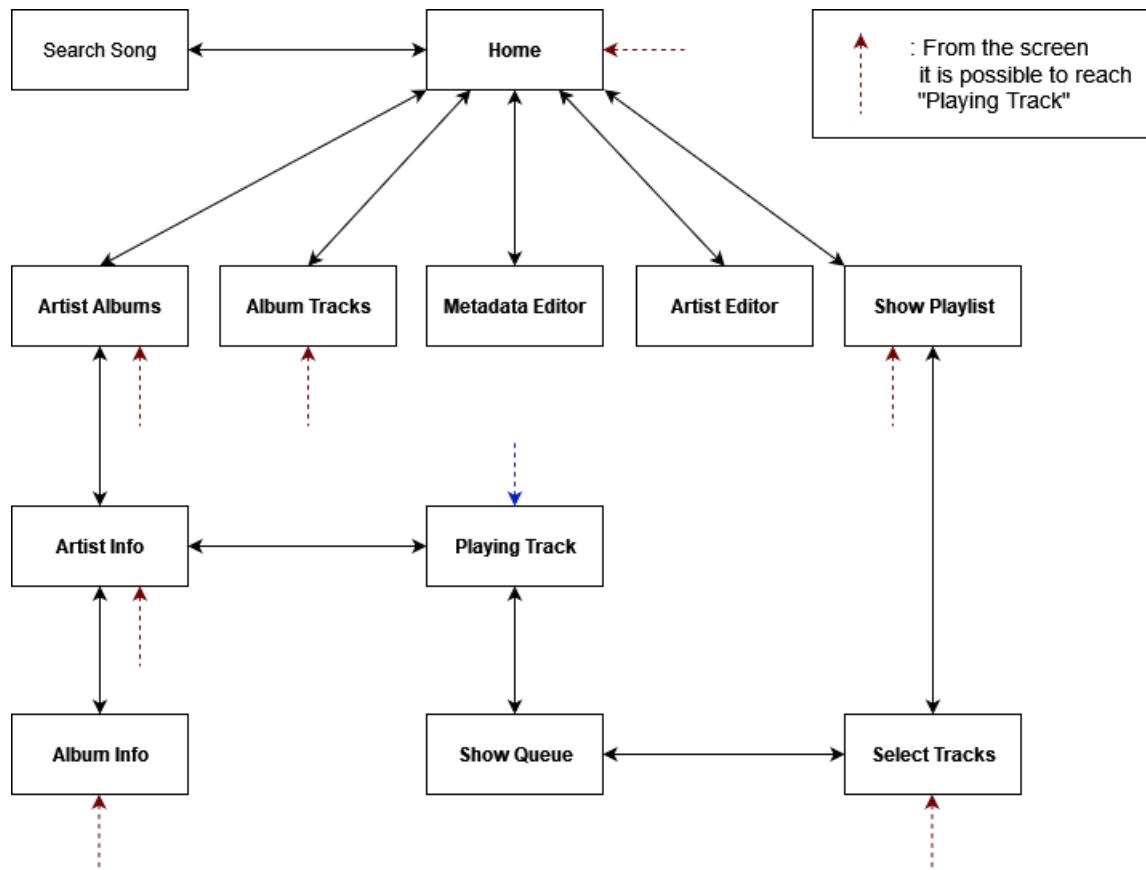


Figure 1: Frontend system architecture

The frontend is composed by the screens of the application. Once opened MBox shows the **Home** screen. The Home screen is composed by 4 tabs:

- **Tracks**: a list of the tracks in alphabetical order; by selecting one we switch to the **PlayingTrack** screen, and start playing that track.

- *Albums*: a list of the albums in alphabetical order; by selecting one we switch to the **AlbumTracks** screen, where we can select a track to play.
- *Artists*: a list of the artists in alphabetical order; by selecting one we switch to the **AlbumArtists** screen, where we can select an album to show.
- *Playlists*: a list of the playlists in alphabetical order; by selecting one we switch to the **ShowPlaylist** screen, from which we can start the playback; in the Playlists tab it is also possible to add a new playlist or remove an existing one.

By keeping a track pressed it is possible to open a drop down menu with a few entries:

- *Edit metadata*: switch to the **MetadataEditor** screen to modify the metadata of the track
- *Add to queue*
- *Add to playlist*

By keeping an artist pressed it is possible to switch to the **ArtistEditor** screen in order to change its image.

By touching the magnifying glass in the top right corner of the application, it is possible to reach the **SearchSong** screen that allows the user to look for songs that are not present on their device, and play them through an external service (in our case YouTube).

From the **PlayingTrack** screen it is possible to:

- *pause* and *resume* playback
- *skip* forward and backward in the queue
- *change playback position* of the currently playing track
- view the *album cover* and the *lyrics* of the currently playing song
- check the *artist information* by switching to the **ArtistInfo** screen: this screen shows a brief description of the artist (from Wikipedia) and a list of their albums; by selecting one of these, the user is brought to the **AlbumInfo** screen, from which they can view all the tracks and play them using YouTube
- *show the queue* by switching to the **ShowQueue** screen.

The **ShowQueue** screen shows the current track queue; the tracks are ordered according to their position in the queue, where the currently playing track has index 0, the past tracks have negative index, and the future tracks have positive index. From here it is possible to add new tracks to the queue by means of

the **SelectTracks** screen. Almost every screen has a **PlayBar** that allows to pause and resume playback, and shows currently playing track info and artwork. By pressing it, the user is brought back to the **PlayingTrack** screen.

3.1.2 Backend

The backend is composed by various modules:

- **Database**
- **Track queue**
- **Metadata loader**
- **Player**
- **Worker**

The database is the core of the application and all the other backend components depend on it. Indeed the metadata loader is used by the database to collect data from the internet, the Worker is an isolate that allows the database to load in a parallel fashion data from internal storage, the track queue is initialized by the database, and the player uses the information contained in the database to play music.

Database The database is the main component of the application. This component is not an actual database for the following reason: in our application most of the time we want to fetch the data of a particular category (tracks, albums, artists, playlists). The use of a real database for this reason would be superfluous: it suffices for our purposes to use a hand crafted one. Moreover our database has other functionalities that are tightly coupled with the domain's data and it would thus be difficult to integrate them in a traditional one, and probably inefficient.

When the application boots, the database is initialized.

It uses the worker isolate and the metadata loader to discover which tracks are present on the device:

1. Loads the saved database file (if it exists) with all its contents: tracks, artists, albums, playlist, current track queue.
2. Checks the Music folder for songs not present in the database file.
3. For those songs the missing metadata, available on the internet, are downloaded and written in the music file (as id3 tag).
4. The new tracks are inserted in the database (along with its metadata).
5. Update the database file.

Once the database is initialized all the other components can access the music data from it.

Another functionality of the database is to allow the user to modify the metadata of the tracks. Finally this component also grants the user the ability to refresh the database itself: all the data will be reloaded from scratch.

Track queue The track queue is the list of all the songs to be played. It is initialized and saved by the database to grant persistency across application restart. An index is assigned to each track: the track of index 0 is the one currently playing, one with negative index has already been played, and one with positive index will be played.

Through the frontend components the user can modify the track queue, by adding, removing tracks or changing the one currently playing.

Metadata loader The metadata loader is the component that handles the interaction with the internet. It is capable of:

1. Checking the internet connection.
2. Retrieving and extracting track information from the Spotify api.
3. Retrieving and extracting lyrics from the Genius api.
4. Retrieving information about artists from Wikipedia.
5. Searching for songs on YouTube.

All these functions are used by the application to perform all its tasks.

Player The player is the component that allows music playback: it allows to pause or resume a track, update the track position, go forward or backward in the track queue. It automatically switches to the next song in queue when the current one is over.

It also informs the components interested when the currently playing song changes.

Worker The worker is a component that includes an isolate and an interface to communicate with it. The isolate is tasked with the management of the access to the internal storage.

It reads and writes database information. It is used to separate the access to file from the main isolate, in order to increase performance.

3.2 Architectural Patterns

3.2.1 Facade pattern

In the system architecture we can notice that the user accesses the application services through the frontend components; the frontend is the facade through which the user accesses the internal logic of the system (the backend). In this way it hides the internal complexity of the system, providing a simple and unique interface that the user can access.

Using this pattern the user does not need to know the internal structure of the software and it can use the simple screens of the application to interact with the backend. Another major benefit of this pattern is that any change in the backend of the architecture will stay undetectable from the user, provided that the facade stays the same.

For instance, if we decided to substitute the existing database with a SQL based one, the user wouldn't notice a thing.

3.2.2 Master-Worker pattern

When the application boots an isolate is created. This isolate is a worker and accepts orders from the main thread (the Master). The Worker component in fact keeps waiting for a message from the Master, and when it receives one, it is processed, and if a reply is needed, it is sent to the Master. The Worker then resumes waiting for work.

3.2.3 Singleton pattern

Some of the components are to be intended as singletons: only one instance of that particular component must exist at a time, and different calls to that component must reach that unique instance. This is achieved through the singleton pattern. In our application all the components of the backend (database, track queue, metadata loader, worker, player) are singletons, since it would be unreasonable to have more than one instance of each.

3.3 Component view

Here we display the main architecture of our application, and describe in detail all of its subcomponents.

3.3.1 Home

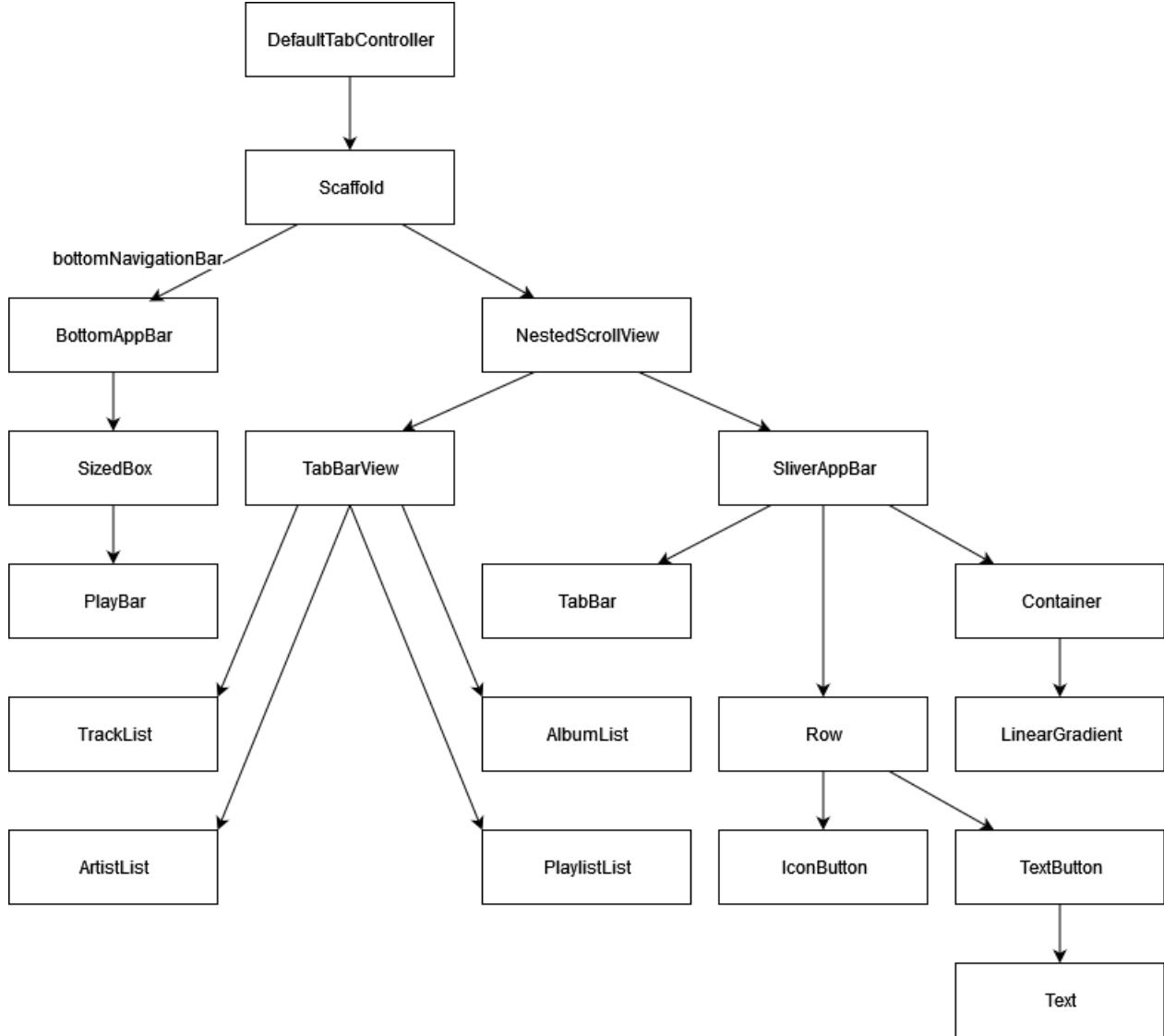


Figure 2: Home

The home component is the component shown when the application is first opened. It is composed of the `PlayBar`, that allows to control playback and open the track queue to modify it, and the `NestedScrollView`, that contains the `TabBarView` and the `SliverAppBar`.

The `TabBarView` is the widget that shows the available sections of the music

library (TrackList, ArtistList, AlbumList and PlaylistList).

The SliverAppBar contains the TabBar that actually allows to switch between the available sections. It also hides itself when the TabBarView is scrolled down for a sufficient amount.

3.3.2 AlbumList

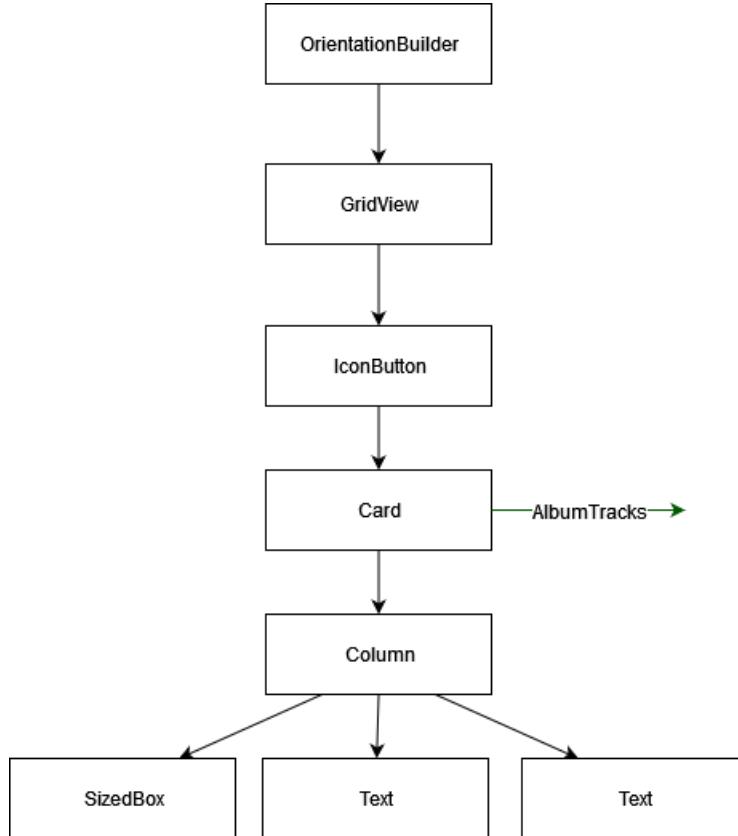


Figure 3: AlbumList

This component displays in a grid (GridView) the list of albums (Card) present on the device. The card contains the cover of the Album, its name and artist.

If a card is tapped (IconButton) the application navigates to the tracklist of the selected album.

The OrientationBuilder allows to choose an appropriate layout for the device orientation.

3.3.3 ArtistList

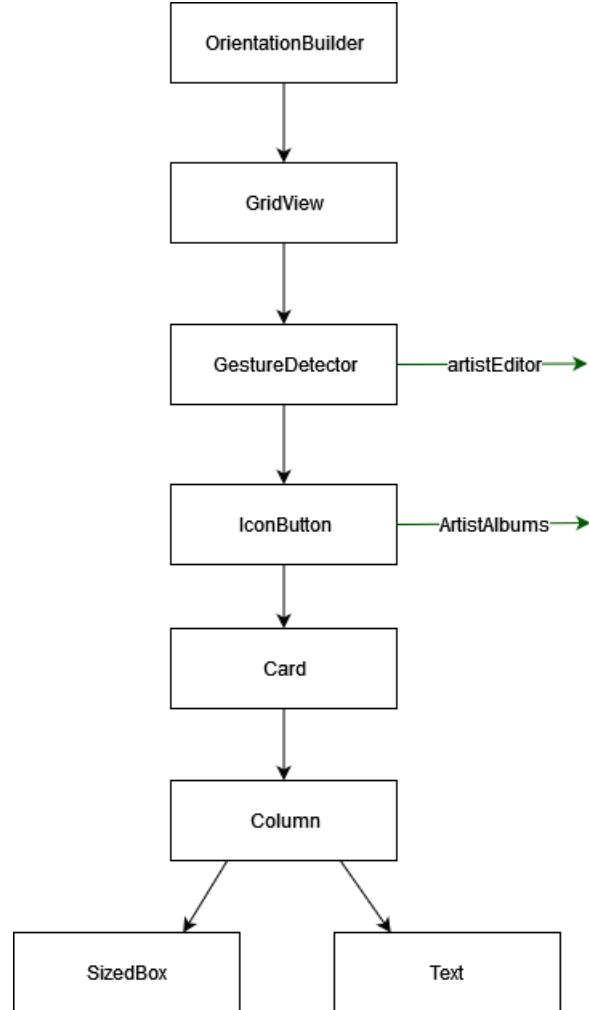


Figure 4: ArtistList

This component displays a GridView of the Artist Cards, that contain the artist name and image. The GestureDetector allows to edit the artist image through ArtistEditor, while the IconButton allows to access the ArtistAlbum screen.

The OrientationBuilder allows to choose an appropriate layout for the device orientation.

3.3.4 PlaylistList

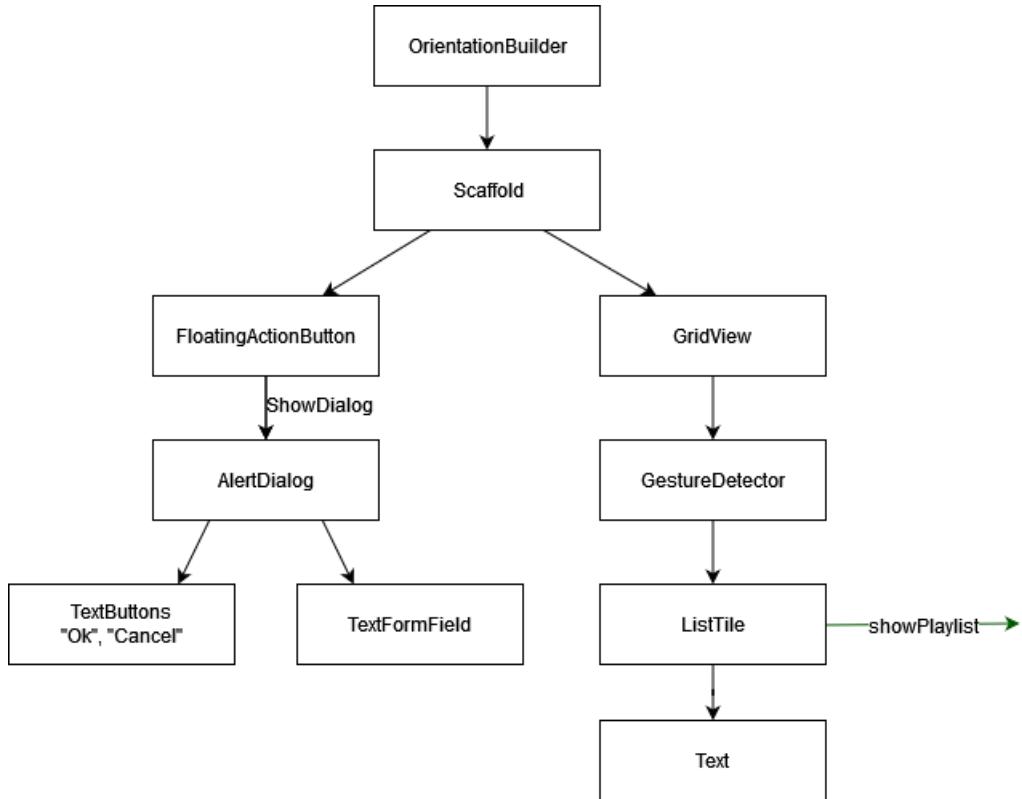


Figure 5: PlaylistList

This component displays a **GridView** of **ListTiles**. When tapped, the **ListTile** navigates to the **ShowPlaylist** screen. The **GestureDetector** detects long presses and shows accordingly a popup menu to delete the selected playlist if desired.

There is a **FloatingActionButton** in the bottom right corner of the screen that allows creating new playlists.

The **OrientationBuilder** allows to choose an appropriate layout for the device orientation.

3.3.5 PlayBar

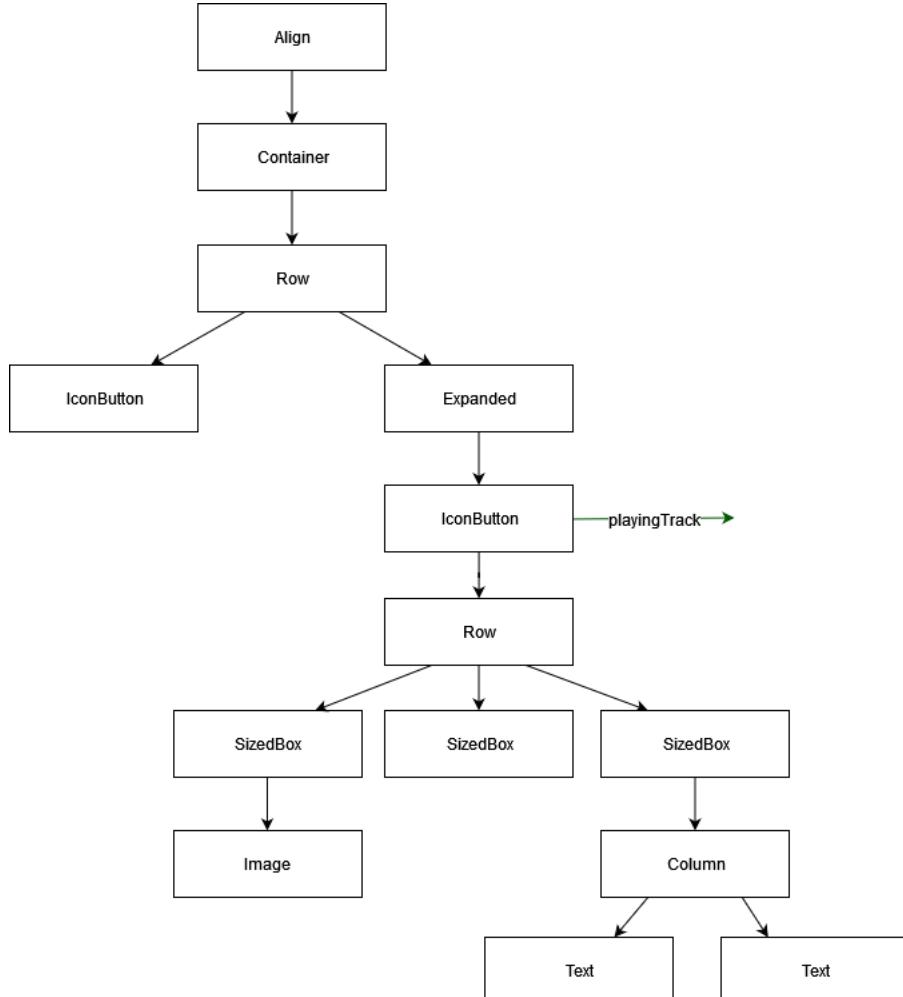


Figure 6: PlayBar

The PlayBar contains on the right a button that allow to play or pause music, depending on current track queue state. On the left there is the description of the currently playing track, with album cover, track name and artist.

When tapping the track description the application navigates to the PlayingTrack screen.

3.3.6 TrackList

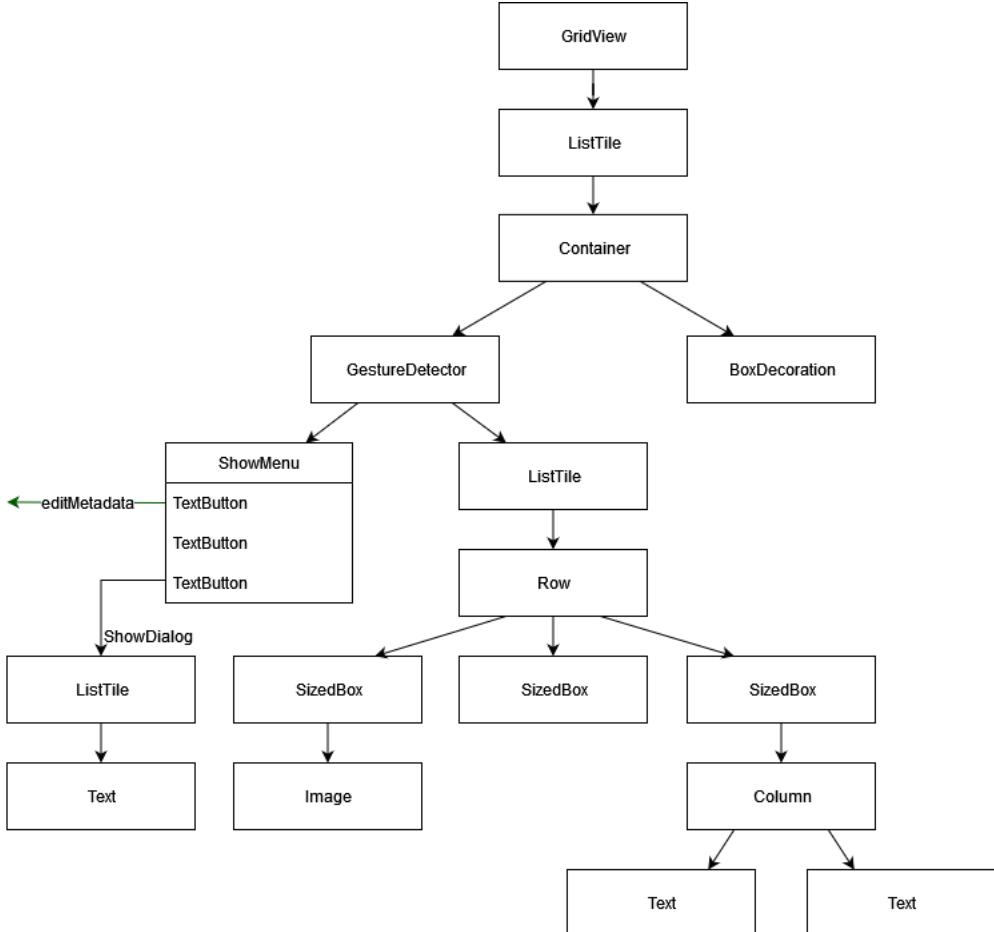


Figure 7: TrackList

The TrackList is the component that organizes tracks received as argument in a grid. The grid is composed of GestureDetectors, longtapping which the popup menu can be opened.

The menu allows to execute operations on the selected track: view its metadata, add it to queue or add it to playlist. Instead a short press on the ListTile brings the user to the PlayingTrack screen and immediately starts playing the track.

The ListTile components have on the left the album cover, and on the left the name and artist of the track.

3.3.7 ProgressBar

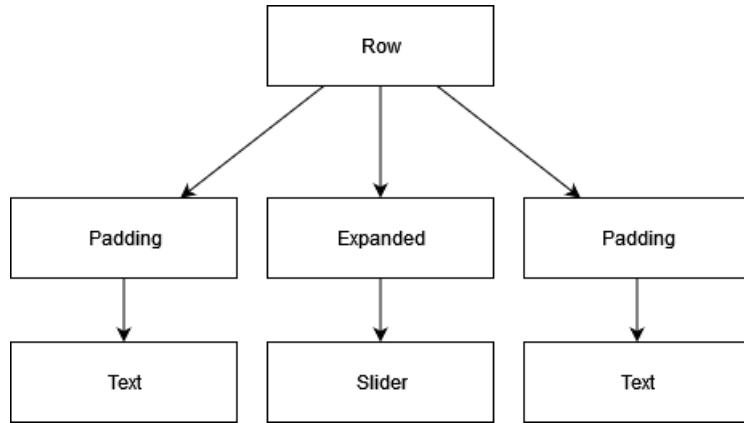


Figure 8: ProgressBar

The ProgressBar is the bar that allows monitoring the progress of the currently playing track.

It also allows to move the track position forward or backward, using the Slider. Text at the left side shows the track position, and at the right shows the track length.

3.3.8 CoverButton

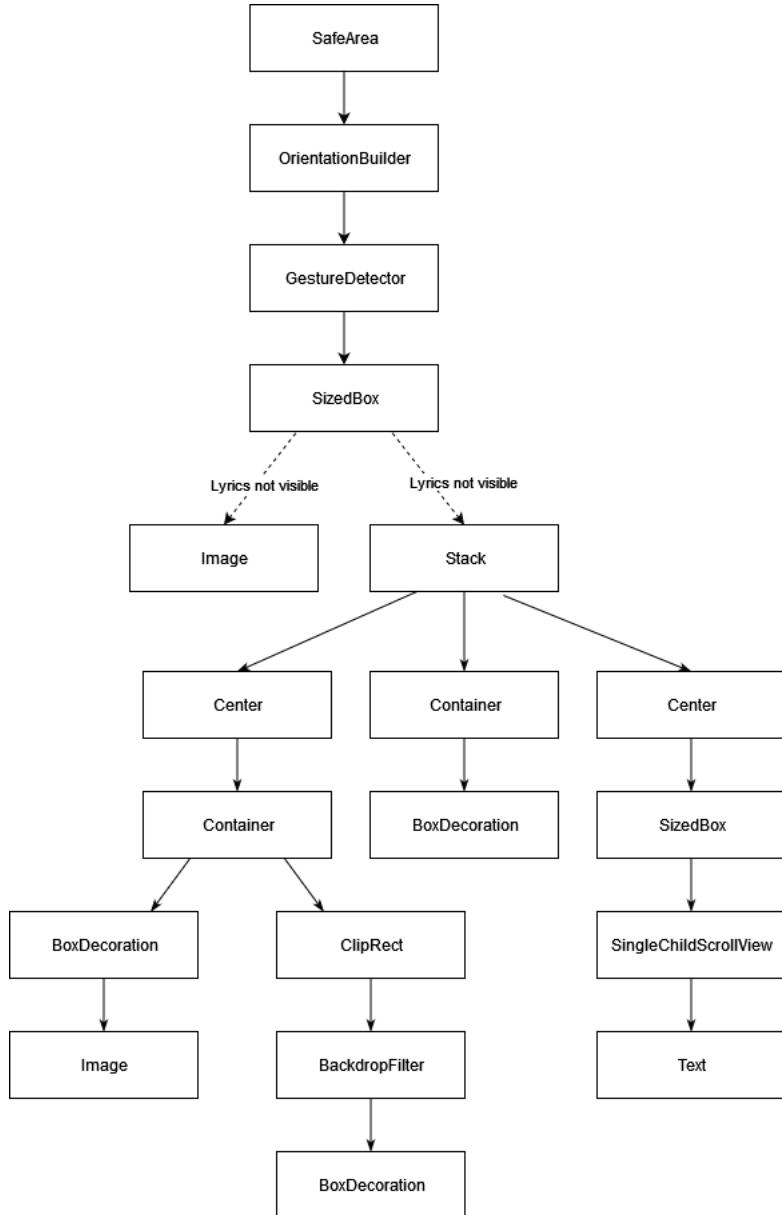


Figure 9: CoverButton

The CoverButton is the widget that displays the cover art of an album inside the PlayingTrack screen. If pressed (GestureDetector), it shows the lyrics (scrollable

Text) of the currently playing track, if available.

The background of the lyrics scroll view is transparent, so that the artwork can be glimpsed behind them.

The CoverButton is subscribed to the Player, so that whenever a change in the playing track occurs, that change is shown.

3.3.9 ArtistEditor

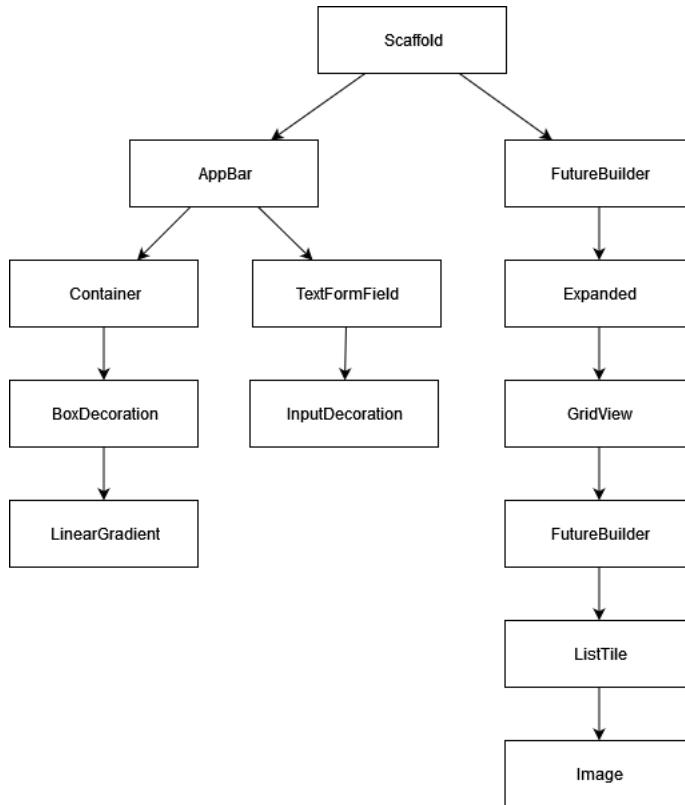


Figure 10: ArtistEditor

The ArtistEditor is a widget that allows to select a new artwork for the input artist. The artwork can be searched online by writing inside the TextFormField.

The results, if present, are listed as a grid (GridView) and returned by the FutureBuilder, as tiles (ListTile) of images and names.

The LinearGradient widget allows to apply a pleasant color to the AppBar.

3.3.10 MetadataEditor (also known as SearchSong)

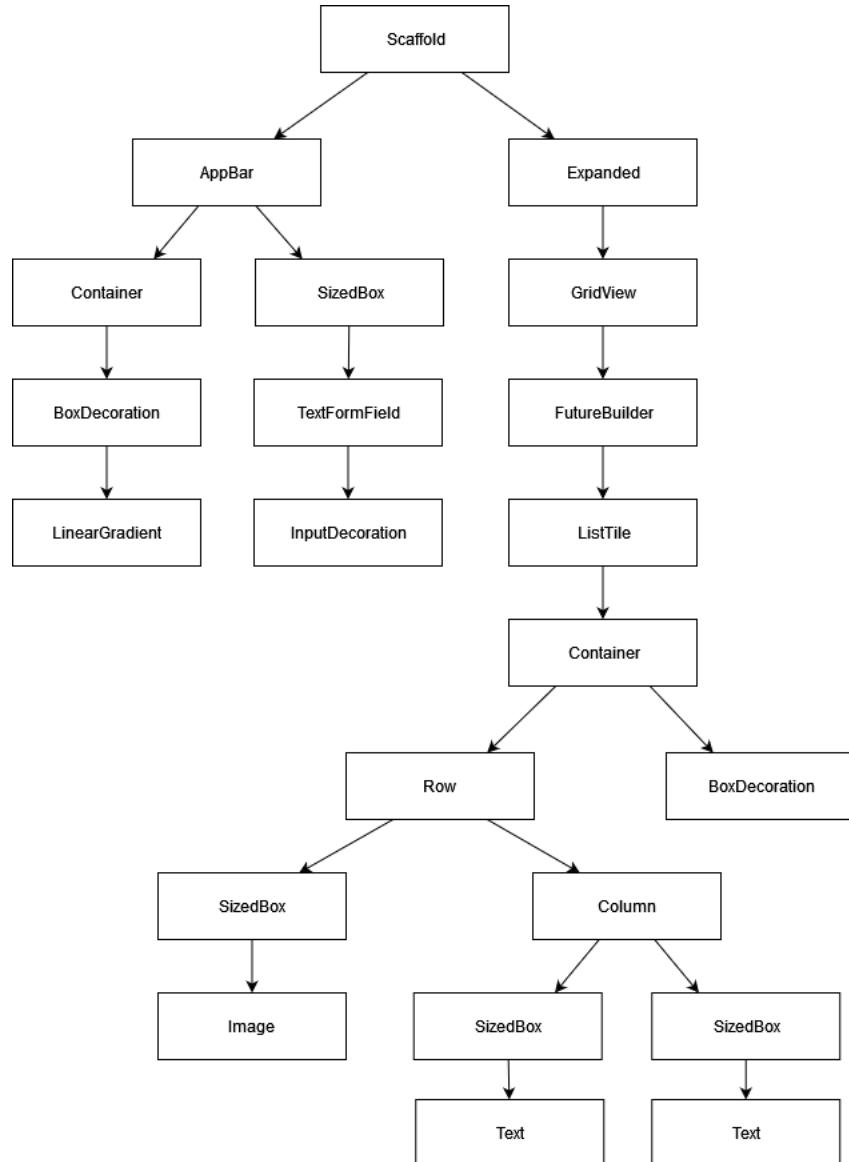


Figure 11: MetadataEditor (also known as SearchSong)

The MetadataEditor is a widget that allows to set new metadata for the selected track. The metadata can be searched online by writing inside the TextFormField.

The results, if present are returned as FutureBuilder and listed with a Grid-

View (this allows for flexible visualization in different orientations). They contain image, name and artist. If tapped, the metadata of the selected track is replaced with the metadata of the tapped track.

The LinearGradient widget allows to apply a pleasant color to the AppBar.

3.3.11 AlbumInfo

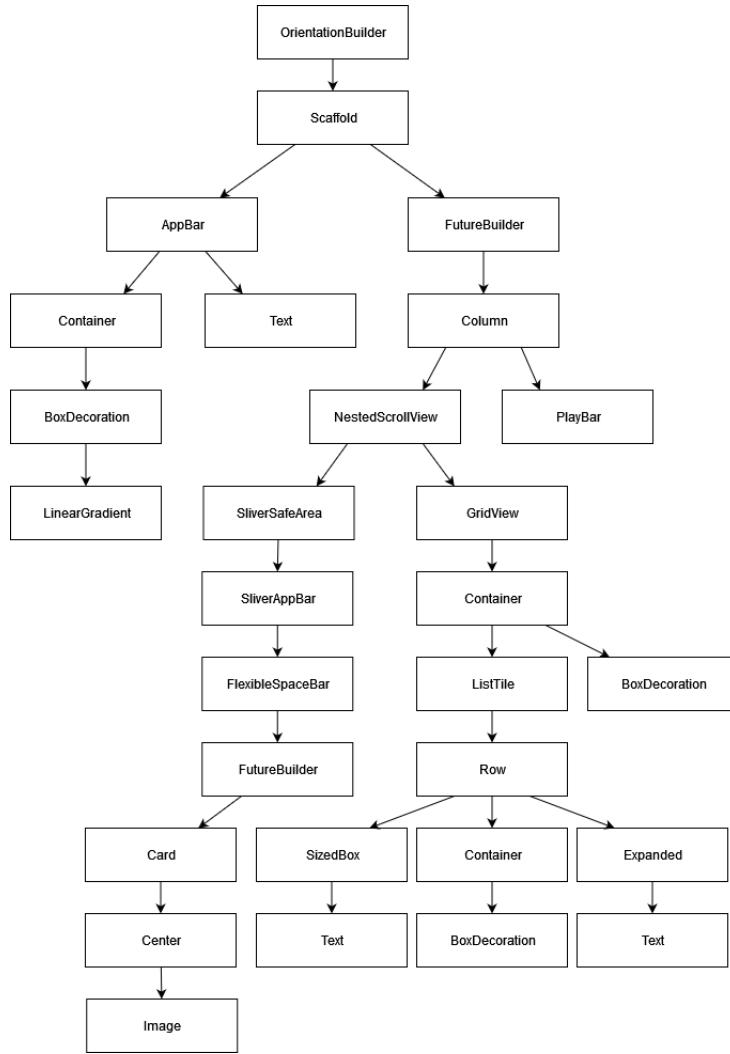


Figure 12: AlbumInfo

The AlbumInfo screen is composed by the AppBar, the PlayBar and if available (FutureBuilder), the info about the requested album.

The information about the album is contained in the NestedScrollView. At the top we have a Card, showing the album cover. The cover will be hidden if scrolling down the GridView. The grid is composed of tiles with track number and name.

3.3.12 ArtistInfo

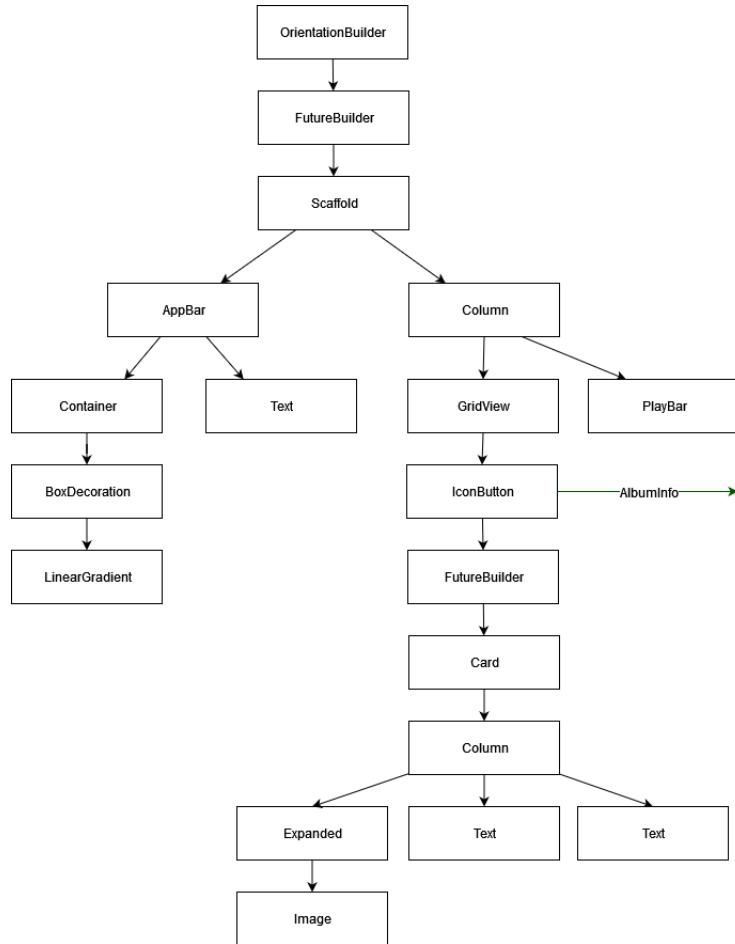


Figure 13: ArtistInfo

The ArtistInfo screen is composed by the AppBar, the PlayBar and if available (FutureBuilder), the info about the requested artist.

The information about the artist is contained in the NestedScrollView. The grid is composed of cards with album image, name and artist.

3.3.13 AlbumTracks

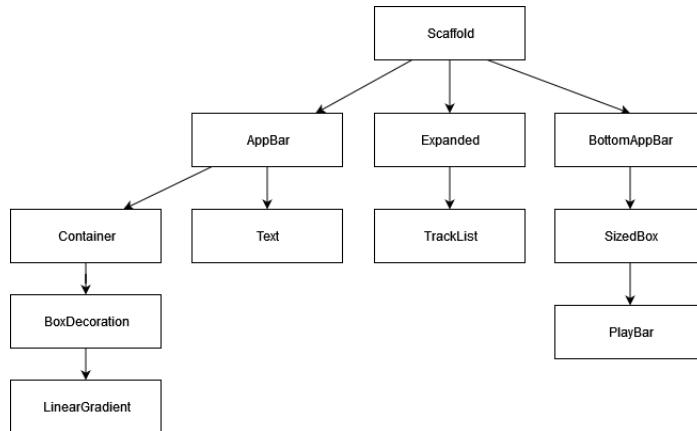


Figure 14: AlbumTracks

The AlbumTracks screen is composed by the AppBar, the PlayBar and the TrackList.

It receives as input the list of tracks of an album, and displays them in a grid by using the TrackList.

The first button of the grid instead allows to shuffle the album tracks, add them to the queue and start playback.

3.3.14 ArtistAlbums

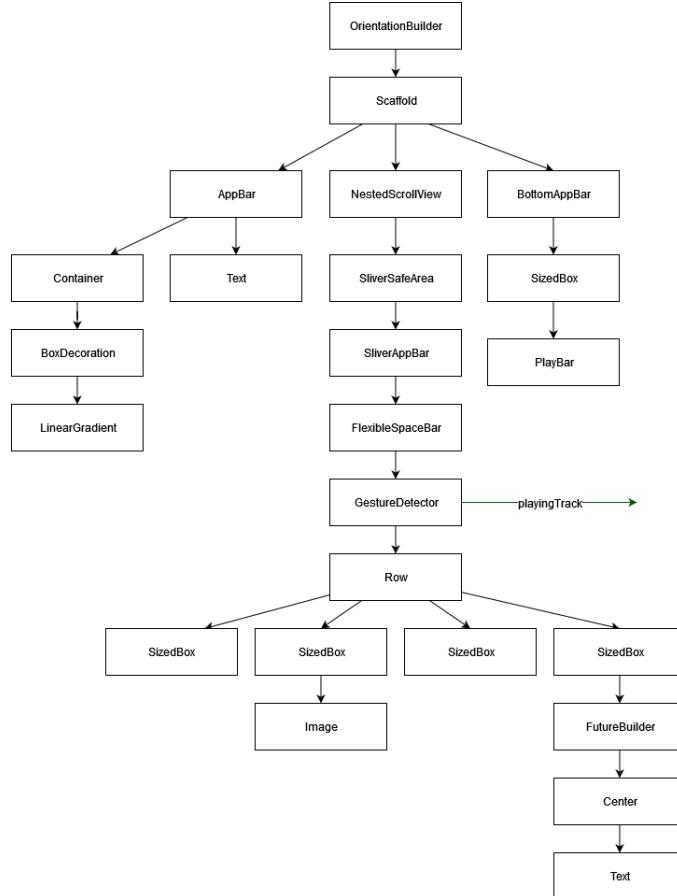


Figure 15: ArtistAlbums

The ArtistAlbums screen is composed by:

- the AppBar, that shows the name of the artist,
- the PlayBar at the bottom, that allows controlling playback and accessing the queue with a tap,
- the albums of the selected artist organized in a grid; above it there is a card containing a small description of the artist and their image.

When tapping the card, the GestureDetector opens the ArtistInfo page of the artist.

3.3.15 PlayingTrack

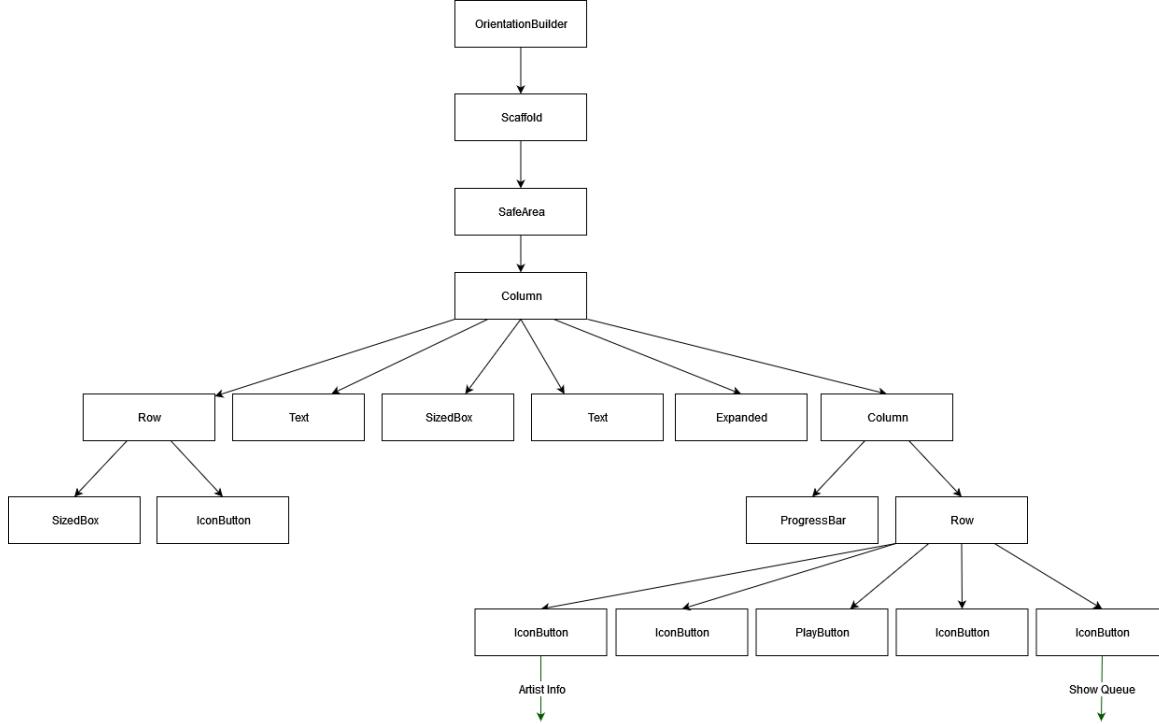


Figure 16: PlayingTrack

The PlayingTrack screen has a column composed of:

- The track name and its artist
- The CoverButton that shows the album art of the current track, and If tapped the lyrics.
- The ProgressBar that shows the current position in the song.
- The Play/Pause, skip forward and backward, on the left the info button that shows the ArtistInfo screen, on the right the button to access the ShowQueue screen.

3.3.16 SelectTracks

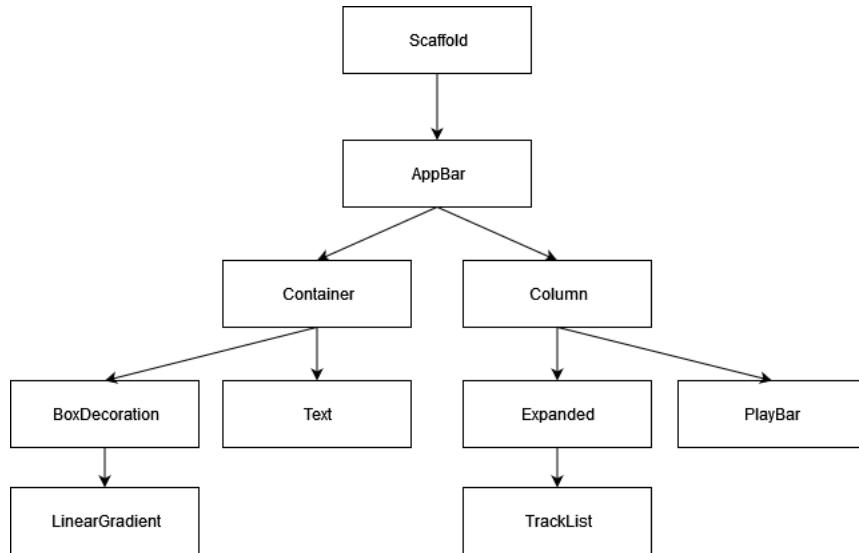


Figure 17: SelectTracks

The SelectTracks screen is composed by a **TrackList**, and returns the tapped track to the calling widget.

3.3.17 ShowPlaylist

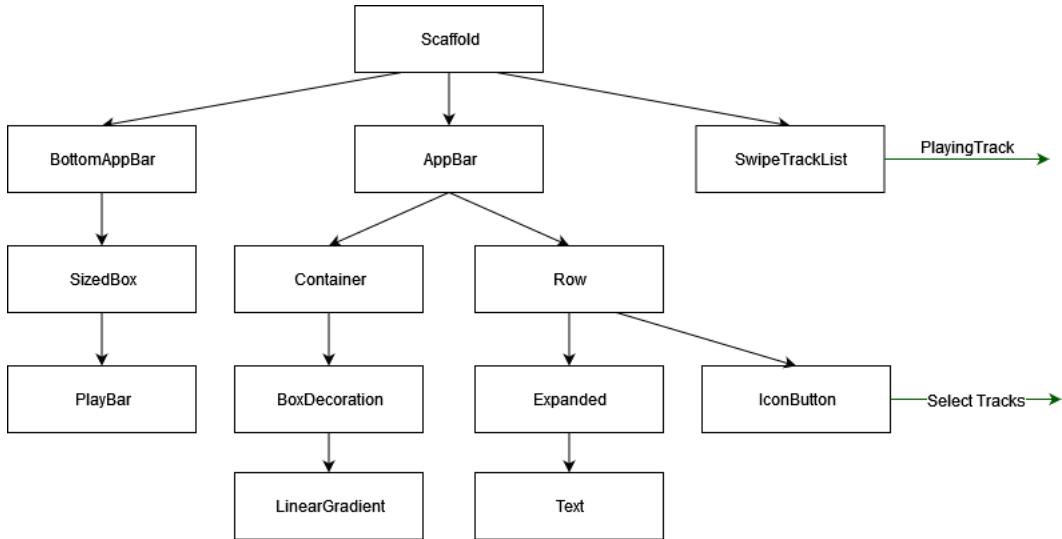


Figure 18: ShowPlaylist

The ShowPlaylist screen is composed by:

- the AppBar that contains the title of the selected playlist and the add button on the right, to add a track to the playlist through the SelectTracks screen.
- a SwipeTrackList that allows with a swipe to delete the swiped track, and is otherwise a normal TrackList.
- the PlayBar that allows to control music playback.

3.3.18 ShowQueue

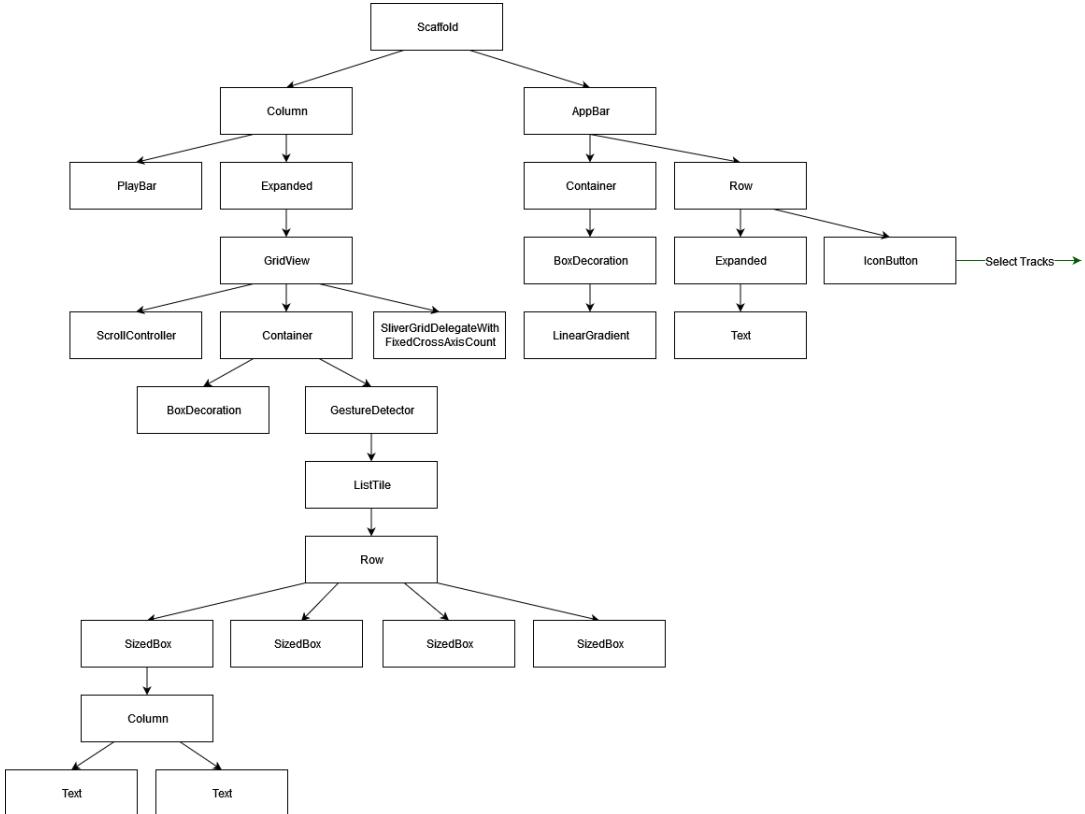


Figure 19: ShowQueue

The ShowQueue screen is composed by:

- the AppBar titled "Queue", and the add button on the right, to add a track to the queue through the SelectTracks screen.
- a Grid that lists the songs in the queue, composed by a number on the left that represent their position in the queue (0 if currently playing, greater than 0 if to be played, lesser than 0 if already played), the album art and track title and artist.

By swiping one of the tracks it can be removed from the queue.

- the PlayBar that allows to control music playback.

3.4 Deployment View

The deployment of our software is completely bound to the smart device of the user, with no additional hardware required (i.e. no need of servers/additional internet infrastructures to manage the service).

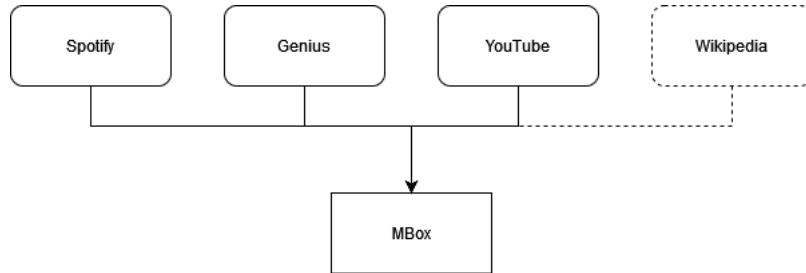


Figure 20: ShowQueue

Nevertheless for the correct usage of the application some external services are actually required:

- Spotify is used to fetch the tracks' missing metadata
- Genius is used to find the lyrics of the songs, since this information is not provided by Spotify
- Youtube is used as a source of musical videos for the tracks not present on the storage of the device
- Wikipedia is used to get information about the artists

For what concerns the actual distribution of the software, as for most of the mobile applications, we will use the usual app stores (e.g Google play store).

4 User interface design

The UI is composed by different screens that provide the user with a way to interact with the system. In this section we present some screenshots that show how the screens look like along with a brief description of how the user can navigate between the screens.

The interface is intuitive, simple to use, and it does not require the user to read a manual.

4.1 Screens description

When the application is opened, the first screen shown is the Home page, that contains a list of tabs.

The first tab (*image a*) shows all the tracks present on the device in a list. By tapping on one of the tracks the playback starts and the app navigates to the PlayingTrack screen (*image f*). By tapping on the magnifying glass on the upper right corner of the screen, the user is presented with a way to search for tracks not present on the device and if desired play them through an external service (*image o*). Long tapping a track (*image b*) opens a dropdown menu with three options: the user can add the song to an existing playlist, to the queue, or change its metadata.

The second tab (*image c*) contains the albums. Tapping on an album, the app navigates to the AlbumTracks screen (*image j*), that allows to pick a track to play from the album or shuffle the tracks and play them.

The third tab (*image d*) containst the artists. By long pressing the image of an artist it is possible to change it. Tapping on an artist icon opens the ArtistAlbums (*image k*) screen, that provides some information about the artist and allows selecting one of the albums by that artist.

The fourth and last tab (*image e*) shows the playlists. A new playlist can be created by tapping the plus button in the lower right corner of the screen. By tapping one of the existing playlists the user can view the contents of it in the ShowPlaylist screen (*image l*). Long pressing a playlist it is possible to delete it.

In all these tabs, at the very bottom of the screen, if there is at least a song in the queue, a bar is shown. This bar shows the current song artwork, title and artist, and allows to pause or resume playback. By tapping the bar itself, the PlayingTrack (*image f*) screen is shown.

In the PlayingTrack screen (*image f*), the user is shown the track name, artist and cover. They can see the current playback progress and change it by dragging the slider. On the very bottom of the screen there are, in order from left to

right: the ArtistInfo button, the previous track button, the play/pause button, the next track button, the ShowQueue button. By tapping on the cover the lyrics of the current song are shown (*image g*).

In the ArtistInfo screen (*image h*) the user can see all the albums from the artist (also those not present on the device). Selecting one of the albums, the AlbumInfo screen is shown (*image i*). Here the cover of that album and its tracks are provided. By tapping on one of those tracks, the user can listen to them on YouTube.

The ShowPlaylist screen (*image l*) lists the tracks present in a playlist. By selecting one, all the tracks in the playlist will be added to the queue and the selected track will be played. By pressing the shuffle button the tracks are played in random order. The plus button on the top right corner allows to add new tracks to the playlist. The user can easily remove a track from the playlist by swiping right.

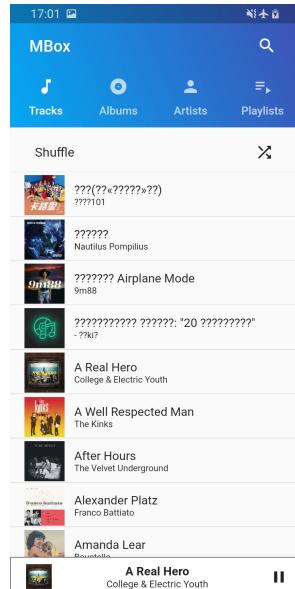
The ShowQueue screen (*image n*) lists all the tracks in the queue, sorted by playback order. The plus button on the top right corner allows to add new tracks to the queue. The user can easily remove a track from the queue by swiping right.

The SelectTracks screen (*image m*) is reached either from the ShowPlaylist or from the ShowQueue screens to add tracks. A list of the tracks is provided, and by tapping one, it is added to the playlist/queue.

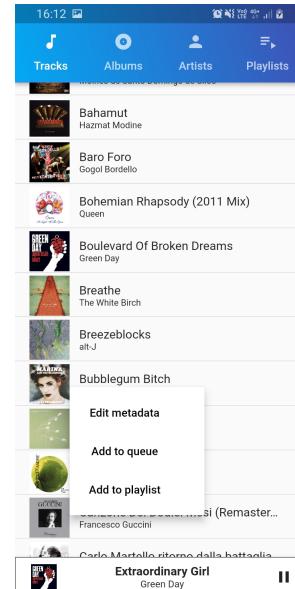
The EditMetadata and SearchTrack screens (*image o*) look very similar. They both have a search bar on which the user can type their query, and they provide a list of results, from which it is possible to select one. In the latter screen the selected track is opened on YouTube, while in the former the metadata of the song to be changed are replaced with the new ones.

When the device is in landscape mode, there are slight changes to the UI (*images q to v*): for example the lists of tracks become grids with two columns, and the grids of albums and artists have two additional columns.

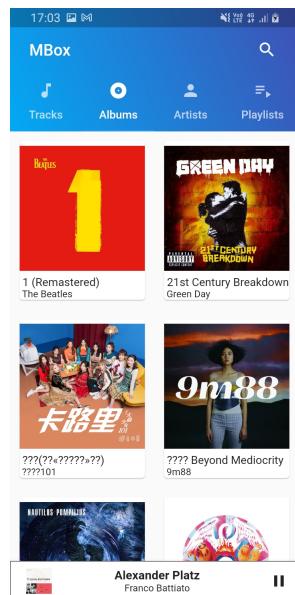
4.2 Screenshots



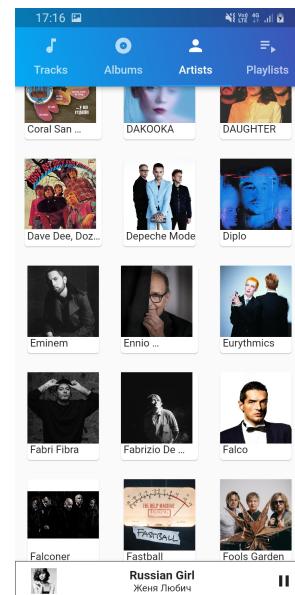
(a) Tracks scrolled



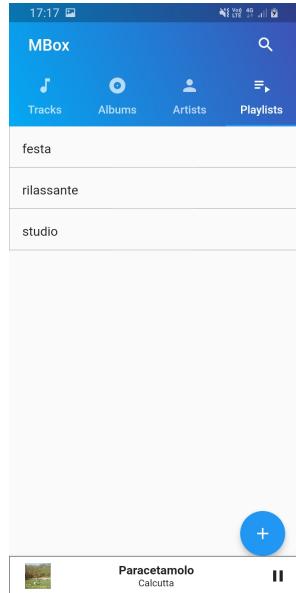
(b) Tracks



(c) Albums



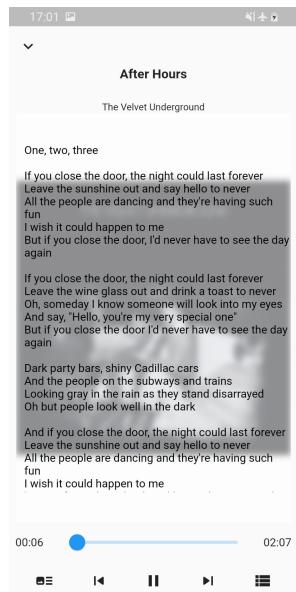
(d) Artists



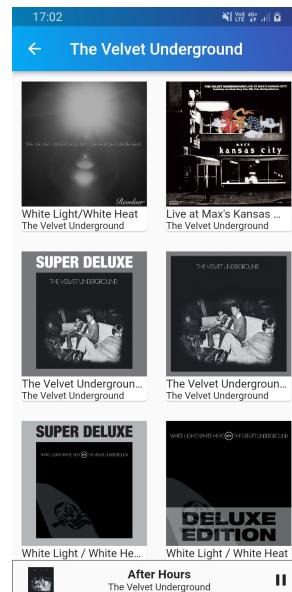
(e) Playlists



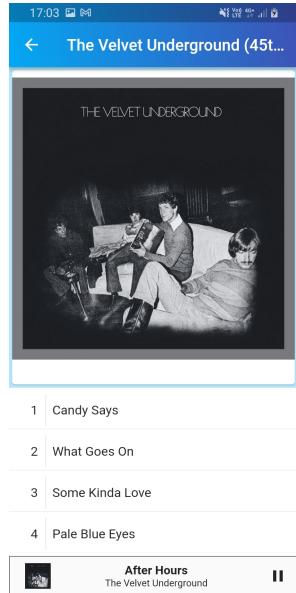
(f) PlayingTrack



(g) PlayingTrack with lyrics



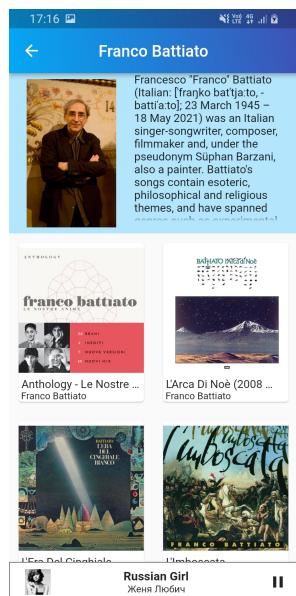
(h) ArtistInfo



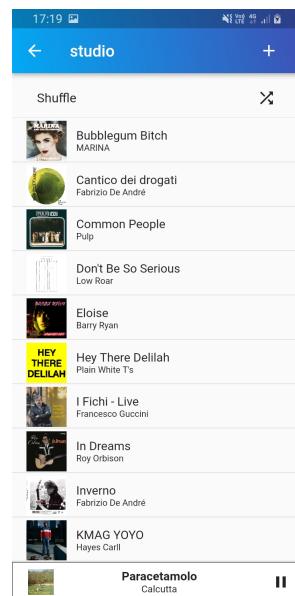
(i) AlbumInfo



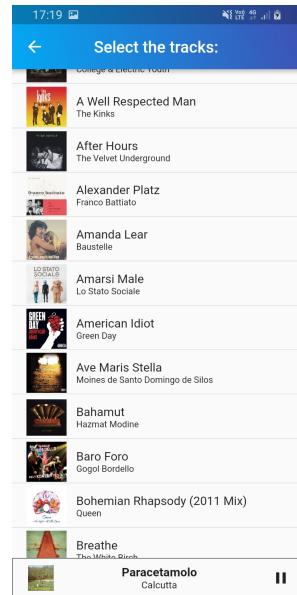
(j) AlbumTracks



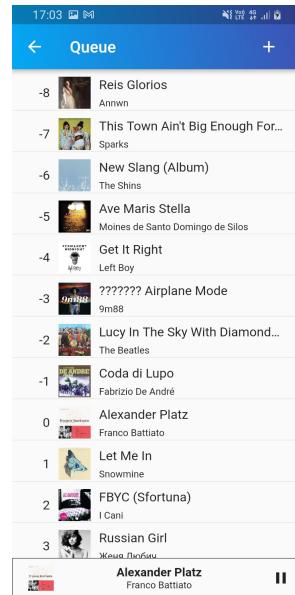
(k) ArtistAlbums



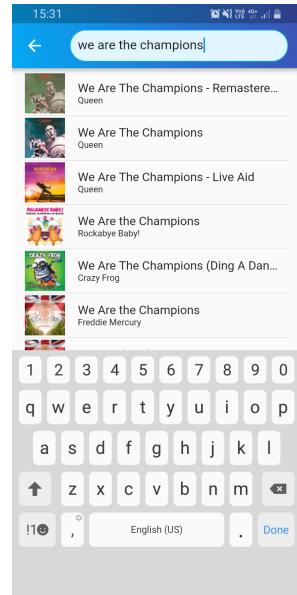
(l) ShowPlaylist



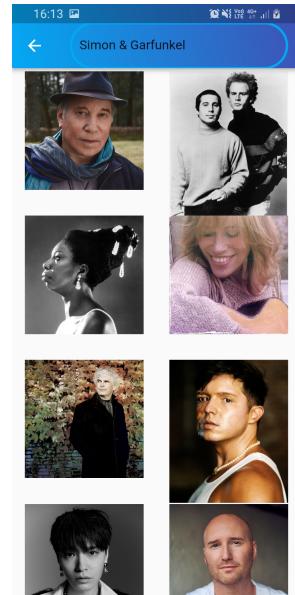
(m) SelectTracks



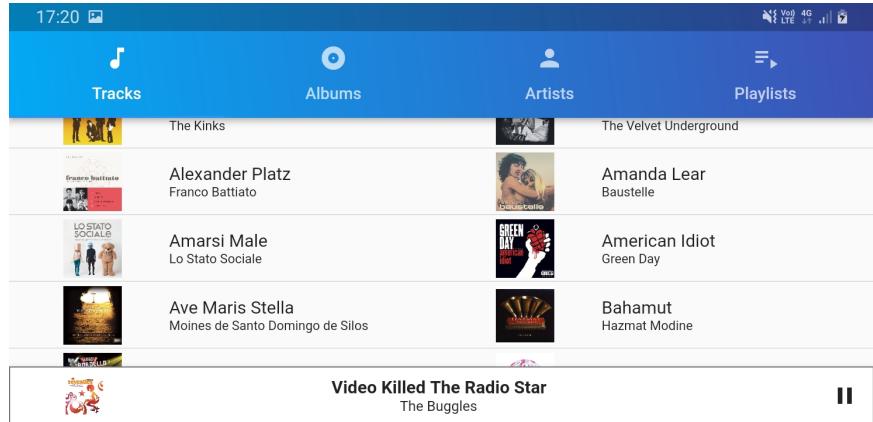
(n) ShowQueue



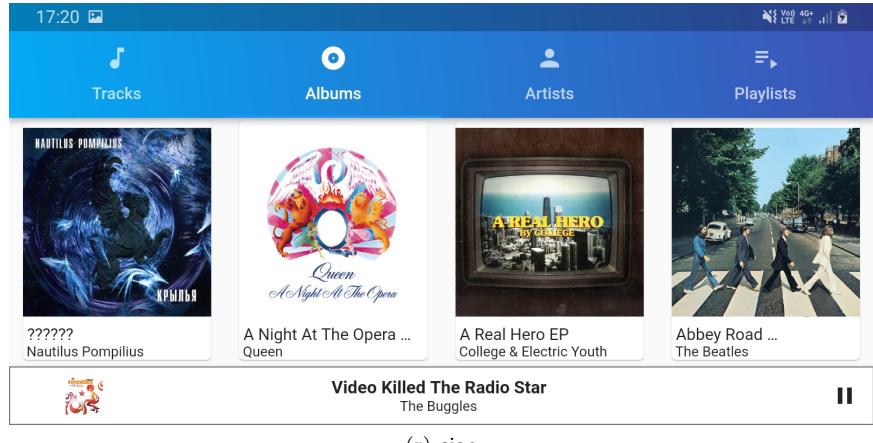
(o) SearchTracks / EditMetadata



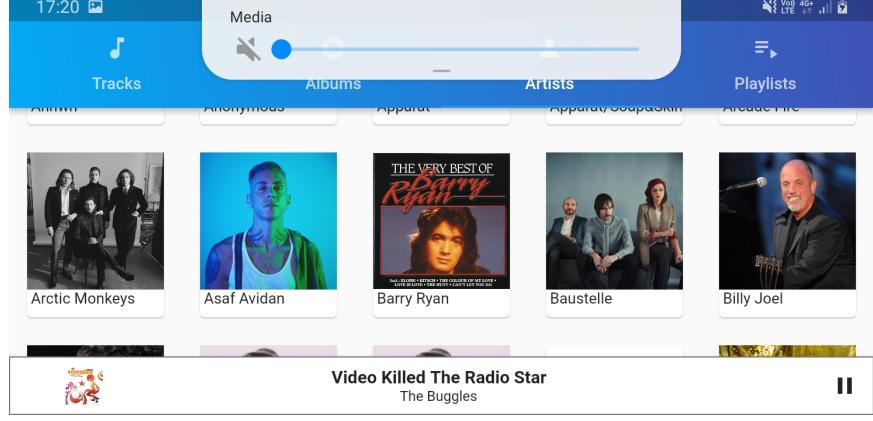
(p) ArtistEditor



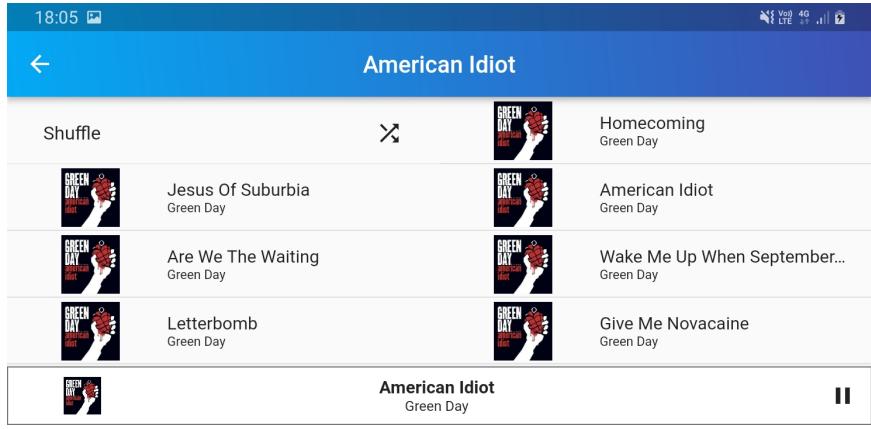
(q) ciao



(r) ciao



(s) ciao



(t) ciao

17:31

Live in San Francisco 1970

	1 Mr. Wonderful - Live: Fillmore West 30 ...		2 Till The End Of The Day - Live: Fillmore ...
	3 Last Of The Steam Powered Trains - Live...		4 Big Sky - Live: Fillmore West 30 Nov 197...
		A Well Respected Man The Kinks	

(u) ciao

17:31

The Kinks

	Live in San Francisco ... The Kinks		Solid Gold Kinks The Kinks		On Air: 1964-1968 (Live) The Kinks		Arthur or the Decline an... The Kinks
		A Well Respected Man The Kinks					

(v) ciao

5 Implementation and Testing

5.1 Overview

In this last section we provide all the necessary specifications about the implementation and the testing of the system.

This phase is, of course, critical for the development of a reliable software system. It is important to observe that, while testing can show the presence of bugs in the code, passing the tests does not imply the absence of errors in the final application. Still, with our tests, we will try to find the majority of the bugs before the product hits the market (and also after, maintenance is important).

5.2 Implementation

For all the implementation processes we have chosen a **bottom-up** approach, which consists in implementing first the base components, and then, in a iterative way, those that require them. We topologically sort the dependencies between the components such that every time we implement one of them we have already realized all the others on which it depends.

The unit testing has been carried out in parallel with the implementation. Using the bottom-up approach we have used some drivers, during all testing process, to mimic the behavior of the elements that use the component under test. On the other hand, the selected approach does not require the creation of stubs, elements that simulate the behavior of not yet implemented modules, required by the component under test.

With this incremental approach we have in each moment fully functional components, being sure that the work already done is complete and functional. Moreover, beginning from the bottom, the core components have been implemented first, and so the ones that have been tested, improving the robustness of the overall system.

The first element that we have implemented is the **Database** component, which manages the model, i.e. the data, of our application, and so it is required by most of the components of the system.

At this point we can implement the **Loader** component; this component is essential for the rest of the application, since it provides all the information obtained from the internet, so we implement it right after the Database.

The **Player** provides core functionalities to the rest of the application and must be implemented as soon as the Database and the Loader are completed, because it depends heavily on them.

With these components the core of the application is ready even if there is no graphical interface to access it yet. Before we move to the frontend components, we can implement the **Worker** to improve the performance of the Database.

For the components of the user interface we implement first the **Home** screen, and shortly after the tabs it holds: **Tracks**, **Albums**, **Artists**, **Playlists**. After these, we implement the **PlayingTrack** screen. Indeed this is the center of the application and the other peripheral screens can now be implemented.

We can now implement all the remaining screen following a bottom up order:

1. **ArtistInfo** and **ShowQueue**
2. **AlbumInfo** and **SelectTracks**
3. **SearchSong** and **MetadataEditor**

5.3 Testing

As we develop the system we have to check that all functional and non functional requirements have are met. In particular for the backend components some tests have been devised so to check that the core offered features work as expected. The Database, Worker, Loader are unit tested with automatic testing. Integration tests for the backend have been developed to check that the components work together correctly.

For what concerns the frontend part automatic testing is very hard to implement, since it would consists in checking regressions in GUI. So for checking that the screens are correct we save the GUI appearance in a particular state and then we visually check that changes to the code do not introduce regression errors.