

Needfinding in the realm of music experiences



Elsie, Alix, Jialin, Constance

Hello from the team that loves food & music 🙌



Elsie
SymSys

↳ *Currently
listening to...*

bloody valentine
MGK



Alix
Computer Science

↳

Save Your Tears
The Weeknd



Jialin
Computer Science

↳

drivers license
Olivia Rodrigo



Constance
Computer Science

↳

Psycho
Post Malone



Art & Culture

Music **Discovery** &
Creativity

NEEDFINDING METHODOLOGY
asking the right questions



What do
people value
most about
the music
experience?

What empowers
creators?

help creators **execute** on their
creativity and enable people to
discover content which they
resonate with

How do people
discover music?

help creators execute on their
creativity and enable people to
discover content which they
resonate with

What do people value most about
the music experience?

We came up with 3 motivating design questions and created a repo of discussion prompts from them.

1 What do people value most about the music experience?

2 How do people discover music?

3 What empowers creators?

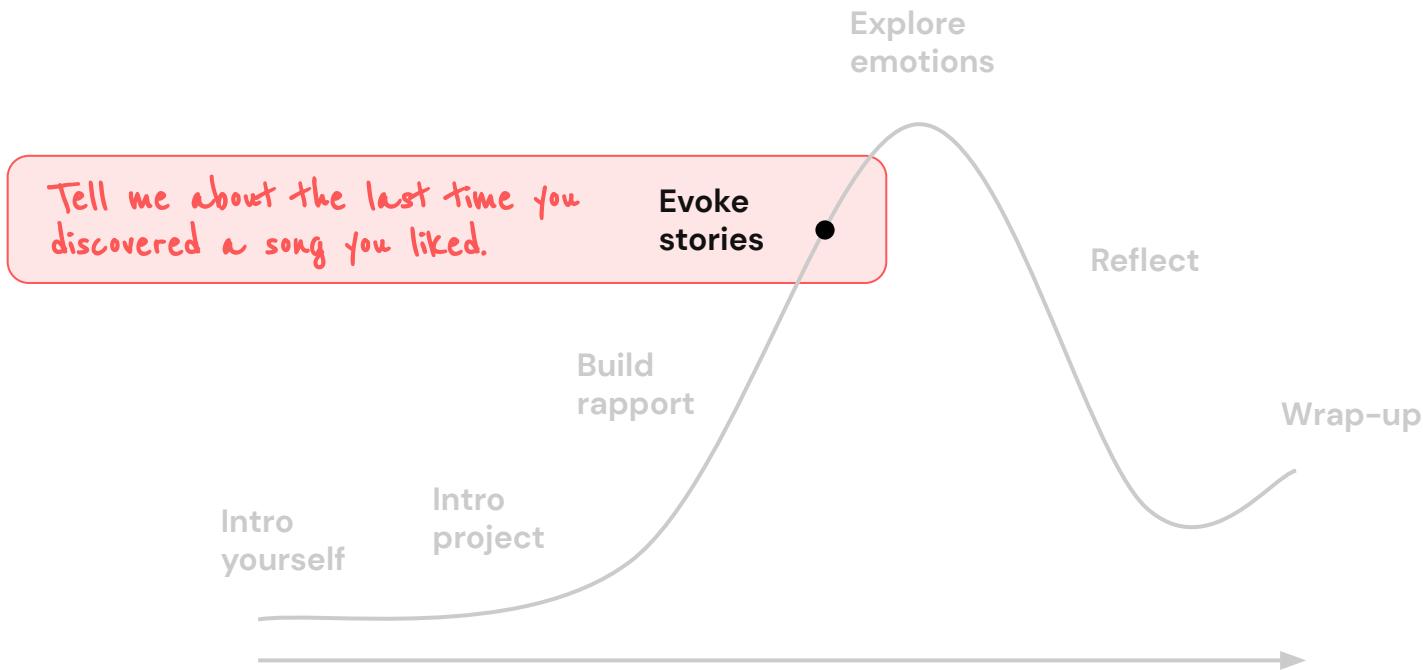
Ask questions

q that evokes stories → explore emotions (see below) → reflect (see below)

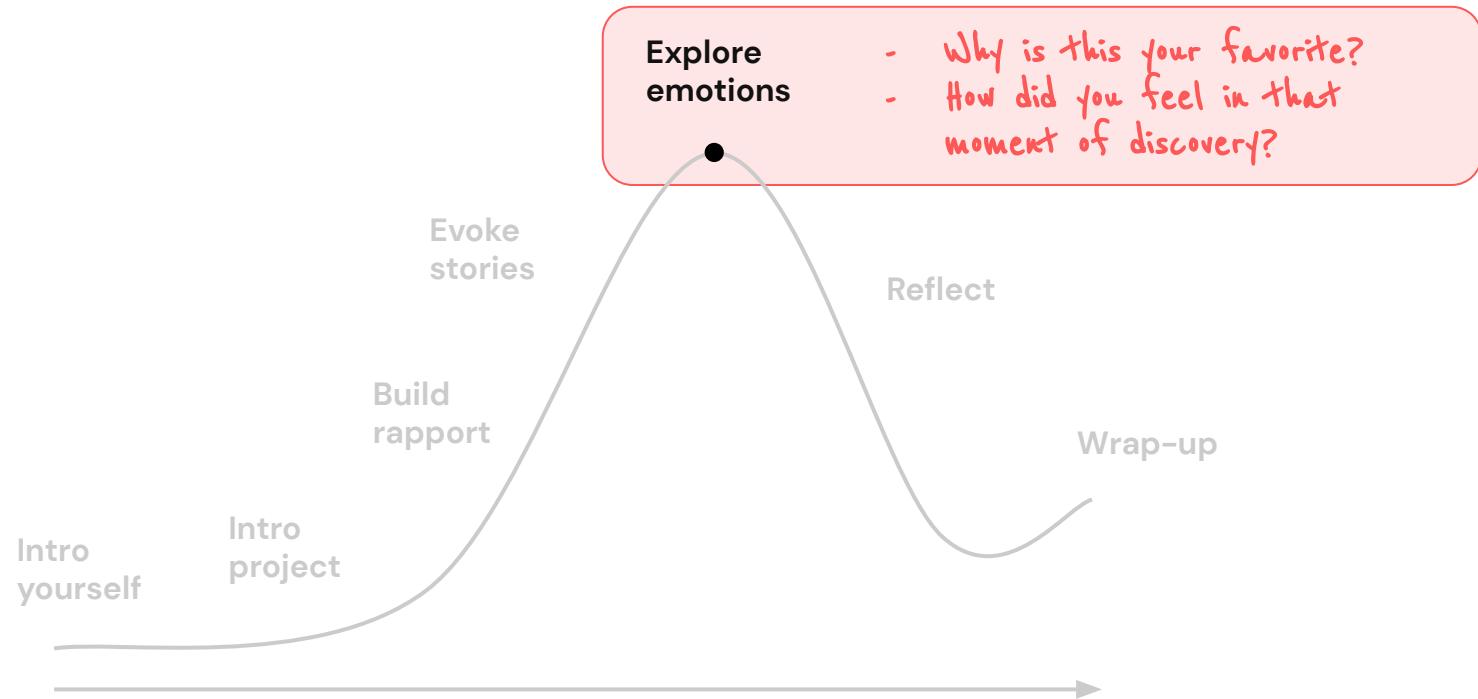
- Can you show me your one of your favorite songs? Explore emotions → Reflect
- Can you tell me about the last time you discovered an artist/song you really enjoyed?
 - Are moments like this a frequent experience for you?
- When do you recall last being very excited to share music with others?
- Has music ever had an impact on one of your relationships? I'd love to hear about it.
- What bothers you the most about the music landscape today?
- Can you walk me through your thought process in creating [XXX] Playlist? where were you when you made them? why did you make them?

[Full interview guides](#) in Google folder (incl. questions for creators)

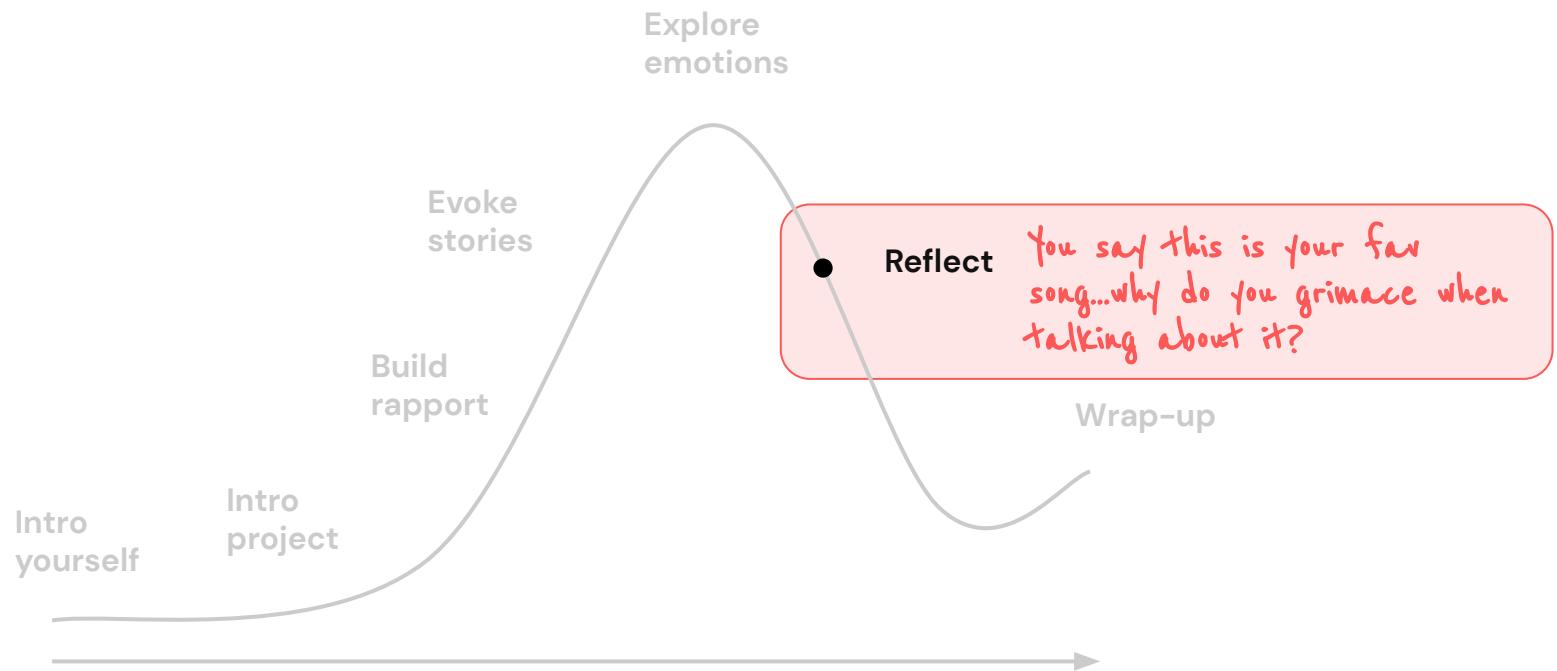
Our prompts were designed to evoke stories



If we noticed a thread come out from one of them, we'd start pulling it...



...and ask interviewees to unpack contradictions and reactions as we notice them



NEEDFINDING METHODOLOGY

talking to the right people



We posted to reddit forums **r/CasualConversation** and **r/FutureBeats** and looked to first & second-degree connections...

Hey redditors,

I'm a Stanford student, and some classmates and I are creating an application to redesign a music-related experience.

If you'd be down to meet with us for a chill, 30-minute conversation about how you discover, listen to, and share music, comment on this post or shoot me an email at elsiew@stanford.edu! We'd love to hear from you 😊

2 Comments Share Edit Post Save Hide ...

67% Upvoted

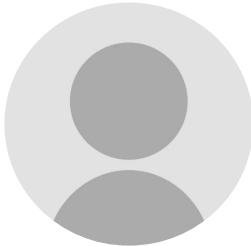
We talked to 5 people... (no compensation)



Max
Senior @ Stanford,
MS&E Major
(work colleague)



Veronica
Soph @ UNO,
Polisci Major
(high school friend)



Corey
Part-time teacher,
fresh grad
(r/FutureBeats)



Thi
Senior @ UH,
part-time NASA SWE,
amateur guitarist
(r/CasualConversation)



Gloria
Soph @ Columbia,
Music Major,
producer
(musician friend)

...including 2 extreme users



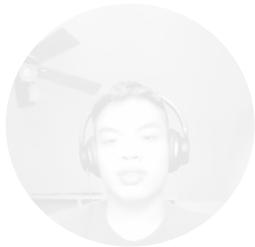
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Senior @ UH,
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amateur guitarist



Gloria
Soph @ Columbia,
Music Major,
producer

super-listener

Saved 6000+ songs on Spotify,
made 7+ playlists

Freelancer on Fiverr, makes
new music every week



music as career

Though we recognize that we need to seek more diversity in our conversations



4 / 5 participants were college students



4 / 5 participants were either on the **creator spectrum** or is a **super-listener**



In the future, we hope to talk to more pre-college and post-college people as well as typical music consumers

interview results



**"My first love was
hip-hop because it
was so
collaborative."**

Corey

Substitute teacher & music
history buff who dabbles in
creation



**“We made this
album for songs that
remind us of the
memories we had.”**



Veronica
*your typical casual
listener*

**“Creating music
gives a sense of
accomplishment.”**



Thi

*Engineer who loves playing
guitar for his girl friend*

**“Sharing music has
become a core tenet
of my friendships.”**



Max

College student and avid
music connoisseur

doggy!



“This is my favorite project because I have full creative control.”



Gloria
*Freelance producer and
music major*

ANALYSIS

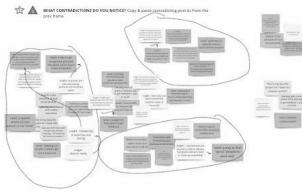
surprises, tensions, & contradictions



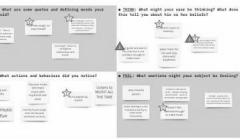
Individual empathy maps and analyses



GLORIA



VERONICA



THI



MAX



COREY



[PDF version](#) in team drive. [Link to maps.](#)

For today's presentation, we'll zoom in one one of our most insightful convos.



Gloria (90min interview)
*Freelance producer,
music major*

SAY

"Sometimes I just wanna record a cover for myself and film a silly mv with my friends"

"[...] is my favorite project because I have full control over it."

"It's better to record a song + mv than taking a pic to capture a moment into memory."

"Music is a social medium – a great way to meet new artists."

DO

Creates playlists based on colors

Freelances on fiverr where client is always right

Became super animated when speaking about improv & creative expression

Mostly listens to songs that could inspire her in the right direction (for her client)

THINK

How can I bring my music to the next level?

Collaborating with artists is complicated and tedious

Offering cheap services as a freelancer is a necessary “evil”

Sending drafts to other musicians is an important way to stay inspired and get feedback

FEEL

Trapped in a male-dominated industry

Extremely anxious during back-and-forth with clients

Frustrated when freelancing with bad clients

Unwilling to show her work to others before final draft; doesn't want to disturb others and is insecure

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INSIGHT

Listening to music is an emotional experience, so tying music to a memory makes it more vivid and magical.

NEED

It would be transformative to enable people to seamlessly extract and inject music from/into memories



SAY

"Sometimes I just wanna record a cover for myself and film a silly mv with my friends"

"[...] is my favorite project because I have full control over it."

"It's better to record a song + mv than taking a pic to capture a moment into memory."

"Music is a social medium – a great way to meet new artists."

THINK

How can I bring my music to the next level?

Collaborating with artists is **complicated** and **tedious**

Offering cheap services as a freelancer is a necessary "evil"

Sending drafts to other musicians is an important way to stay inspired and get feedback

contradiction



INSIGHT

She wants to work with other people, but doesn't want to go through the stress of reaching out and coordinating.

NEED

It would be transformative to remove barriers for reach-outs and simplify communication mechanisms between musicians.



SAY

"Sometimes I just wanna record a cover for myself and film a silly mv with my friends"

"[...] is my **favorite** project because I have full control over it."

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INSIGHT

The way client work in music freelancing is done currently restricts her from exploring creatively, a process she values a lot.

THINK

How can I bring my music to the next level?

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FEEL

Trapped in a male-dominated industry

 Extremely anxious during back-and-forth with clients

 Frustrated when freelancing with bad clients

Unwilling to show her work to others before final draft; doesn't want to disturb others and is insecure

major tension!

INSIGHT

Musicians who are just starting out feel they have no choice but to sacrifice their comfort and creative control to get their name on the map and maintain a steady income

INSIGHT

music freelancing restricts her from exploring creatively

INSIGHT

no choice but to freelance, sacrificing comfort and creative control

NEED

It would be revolutionary to redesign the work model; deconstruct the transactional element of freelancing and the notion that client is king



THINK

How can I bring my music to the next level?

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contradiction

INSIGHT

Her insecurities and the favor-soliciting nature of asking for critique hinder her from asking for feedback, which is critical to creating better music.

**NEED**

It was be game-changing to create an ambiguity-free, ego-free, frictionless system in which creators can receive feedback on their works-in-progress.

Zooming out, our other conversations also revealed common insights and needs...

use music to
maintain and
build relationships



INSIGHT

Music is a form of
communication that can
heal relationships

Love discovering
new music, but
unwilling to
invest additional
time + energy to
search



NEED

Make discovering new
music an adventure
instead of just a means to
an end.

Frustrated with
popular songs
drowning out
smaller artists and
diluting music
quality.



NEED

A platform where more
users != popularity rules; a
way to let niche songs cut
through mass-produced
popular music.

Summary (by proxy of our initial 3 design questions) 🌟

- 1** People value music as a means of communication and something that makes memories + emotions more vivid.

- 2** People desire the feeling of finding something novel, unknown
but struggle to dig past popular songs to realize this desire.

- 3** Creators value the connections, growth, and expressiveness music confers
yet can not easily experience these aspects.

appendix

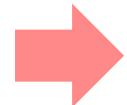


Appendix Info

Some slides before the appendix were not presented for time's sake
(4, 5, 6, 11, 15, 16, 22)

- Consent Forms
- Interview Items
 - Question Repo (interview guides)
 - Notetaker doc
 - Recordings
 - Notes
- Empathy Maps WITH ANALYSIS (or flip deck to view without annotations)

Empathy maps



SAY

- "sometimes I just wanna record a cover for myself and film a silly video with my friends to go with it"
- "[...] is my favorite project because I have full control over it."
- "It's better to record a song and mv than taking a pic to capture a moment into memory."
- "Music is a social medium."

THINK

- Sending drafts to other musicians is an important way to stay inspired and get feedback
- Collaborating with artists is complicated and tedious
- How can I bring my music to the next level?
- Offering cheap services as a freelancer is a necessary evil



DO

- Freelances on fiverr where client is always right
- Creates playlists based on emotion
- Became super animated when speaking about improv and creative expression
- Mostly listens to songs that could inspire her in the right direction (for her client)

FEEL

- Frustrated when freelancing with bad clients
- Extremely anxious during back-and-forth with clients
- "I feel like my value is dependent on other people."
- Trapped in a male-dominated industry
- Insecure about her abilities and work

SAY

- "Novelty heightens the enjoyment of music."
- "This is my favorite song cos it's so versatile. I can listen to it when studying, working out, or anything."
- "Sharing songs became a core tenet of our friendship"
- "There is a high emotional payoff to investing time in finding good music."
- "A good study playlist drowns out the world around me and helps me stay in the zone for as long as i need to."
- "I used to treat the process of finding good music as a means to an end."

THINK

- Music has ability to enhance any experience, "soundtrack to your life"
- Finding new music is a journey to be appreciated
- How can I discover hidden gems?



DO

- Prefers constantly finding new music over having a select few favorites
- Looks for niche genres that aren't very mainstream
- Relies on Spotify's release radar to find new music
- Shares songs that correspond to inside jokes with friends
- Is playfully competitive with his friends about discovering new music
- Creates playlists for tasks (functional listener)

FEEL

- Frustrated that when there's a new genre/sound that's becoming popular, fast followers and imitators who replicate that song dilutes the quality of the music
- Excited when finding a niche song
- Happy when saying "My friends and I alike enjoy the feeling of replying to a song saying we've already heard it."

SAY

- "There is a lot of white-knighting in the music industry. A lot of people hate on new artists and genres that are not their own"
- "When I learn to play or cover a song on the guitar, I always pay attention to the inflections and tones of the songs to get a better grasp."
- "Creating music by myself gives me a sense of accomplishment. I feel like I've done something I could be proud of"
- "I recorded the song for her because she's my best girl friend, and I really cherish that."

THINK

- Music is a really nice thing to show off through recordings and performances. Overall, it's a fun medium for sharing
- Learning instrumental music can be a good hobby to pick up especially during quarantine. And, self-teaching can be powerful and extremely useful.
- There are a lot of resources to learn and practice music. It's a readily accessible genre to pick up by yourself.



DO

- Self-taught himself piano and has a high desire for learning and taking action
- He uses music to hold, maintain, and build relationships with other people.
- He gets tired of listening to songs and "gets numb to it". After, he goes to Spotify radio to find new selections, but the radio selections are often limited quantity wise.
- Discovers music from family and media recommendations (Youtube, Spotify)
- Music is a outlet for connection for him. He uses it to garner more friends and relate.

FEEL

- Frustration - a lot of music people are prideful and often gatekeep the activity/genre
- A lot of musicians hate on new artists and other genres that are not their own. Makes the community less welcoming
- Annoying to learn new songs on the guitar because the process is so tedious. Have to go find tabs, sheet music, learn the inflections and tones, record, etc.

SAY

- "I'm a huge nostalgist. I love to look back and rediscover music and connect songs with memories"
- "Between my boyfriend and me, those songs are sort of 'our songs'. It's music that strengthens our relationships and bonds when we are long distance"
- "Half-jokingly, I sometimes like forcing people to hear my music. Like, I like sharing music on the car aux because people can't really refuse the music I play while I drive"



DO

- Really energetic talker and can tell she has a lot of passion and simply a ton to say about music and her experience with it
- Loves Spotify and Taylor Swift especially.
- Finds songs on Tik Tok but sometimes has trouble finding the actual song from a Tik Tok. So, she often searches up lyrics and even sounds to find the song.
- Sorts playlists by months to lend back to her nostalgic tie.
- Listens to music all the time. It's a fun experience

THINK

- She was in show choir and sang for multiple years in her life, but she still isn't 100% confident in making music with her newly picked up guitar skills"
- Enjoys playing music for fun and sharing that only with her boyfriend because she feels comfortable
- She connects a lot of music to memory
- Doesn't feel like there are enough outlets to discover new music beyond her same friends who also don't have many diverse tastes

FEEL

- Very cheerful and comfortable when talking about a topic she's really into - music
- Thinks music listening is a fun/interactive activity to build social relationship and get closer to people
- Says music is an "emotion-arising" topic and is able to carry conversations at times
- Frustrated and insecure because she doesn't feel like she's "talented enough" to make music

SAY

- "My first love was hip hop because it's just so collaborative in nature"
- "I was willing to open up to things my brain wasn't necessarily open to before "(on collaborating)
- "I would've been at the point I was with music if I had worked better and disciplined myself more"
- "Companies and corporations dictate artistic freedom too much"
- "I love live music"

DO

- Friends and him do a music secret santa with albums to discover music
- Finds inspiration through historical events and figures such as Simon Bolivar
- Says music plays a lot into his daily life and how he uses it to bond with people and interact

THINK

- Inspiration is short-lived and unreliable -- it's more reliable to trial and error until you hit a goldmine. Music requires a lot more discipline and dedication
- Social media can facilitate an overwhelming amount of music exposure – could be good or bad
- Sharing music with people is a form of communication that speaking cannot compare to
- The internet permits more freedom for independent musicians
- You need to get onto platforms early, it is increasingly more difficult for latecomers to break through

Corey

FEEL

- Frustration seeing younger new artists being more talented/more formal training
- Imposter syndrome (about music)
- Angry at the music industry where executive dictate artistic freedom/funding
- Feels more comfortable working w/ people w/ around the same age = can share ideas of what's cool/new, camaraderie, easier to play with, more comfortable
- Takes music very seriously in terms of how it plays into his daily life (socially, etc)