

MUSIC MIXER

ECHOES OF SPIRITED AWAY

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What are we making?

We're creating an interactive web-based drag-and-drop music experience called Echoes of Spirited Away, inspired by the peaceful and dreamy atmosphere of Studio Ghibli's Spirited Away.

The goal is to let users drag and drop "bath tokens" onto a central music stage. Each token represents a spirit or character and comes with its own unique lofi-inspired music loop. When a token is dropped onto the stage, it disappears, and a matching character appears in its place, accompanied by a soft CSS animation. The character's music begins to play automatically.

Users can mix up to three tokens at once, layering the character themes and creating their own relaxing and meditative sound experience. The character visuals and token art are inspired by the original Spirited Away world, but simplified into a cohesive and soft aesthetic.

What makes this unique is that once the music ends, the process reverses:

The character disappears, and the original token returns to its spot — as if the spirit has finished its visit and returned to rest.

The entire experience blends visual storytelling and sound design, while using simple layouts, soft animations. It's not meant to be complicate, it's a relaxing creative space where users can explore music through interaction.

How will it work?

Key Features

- **Drag & Drop Bath Tokens**

Users can choose from several unique bath tokens, designed with symbols inspired by the bathhouse scenes from the movie.

Tokens are shown hanging by strings at the top of the screen, and also accessible from a right-side panel.

When dragged onto the stage:

- The token fades away
- A matching character appears in its place with a soft animation
- A lofi loop begins playing

Users can mix up to three tokens at the same time. Each character has a different audio track that will harmonize well with others when layered.

- **Lofi Ambient Sounds**

Each token is assigned a calm, looped lofi sound. The sounds are edited in a way that they will mix when played together. This makes it easy to layer sounds and keep the audio soothing no matter which tokens are chosen.

- **Play, Pause, and Reset Buttons**

To help users control the experience:

- Play Button – Resumes all current sound loops
- Pause Button – Stops all music (characters stay on screen)
- Reset Button – Removes all characters and resets the sound

These buttons are styled like traditional media icons and appear centered at the bottom of the music stage for easy access.

- **Reversible Token & Character**

A unique part of our interaction is the reverse mechanic, when the music for a character ends (naturally or when paused),

- The character fades out just like in the movie when the bath scent is finished, the water stops.
- The original bath token returns to its hanging position

This creates the feeling of the spirit “leaving” and makes the experience more magical and dynamic. Users are encouraged to try new combinations and watch how the characters come and go as the sounds shift.

- **Visual & UI Design**

Inspired by the bathhouse, train ride, and natural scenes in *Spirited Away*

- Tokens are simple geometric icons in red, black, and gold — mimicking the film
- Characters are illustrated in a chibi-style, designed by Taylor
- Animations are soft (fade, scale) using CSS
- Fonts: *Playfair Display* for headings, *Poppins* for body and buttons
- Layout is built using CSS Grid for consistent structure

What do we need?

1. User Interface (UI)

We designed the layout to be simple and intuitive:

- Top string/hanging area: Tokens dangle like charms

- Main stage: Three circular drop zones for characters
- Right sidebar: All tokens also shown vertically for easy drag
- Bottom media controls: Play, Pause, Reset
- Visual feedback (hover glow, fade, scale) to guide interactions

2. Drag and Drop Logic

We'll use JavaScript events:

- dragstart – Starts when a token is picked up
- dragover – Enables drop zone behavior
- drop – Places the token into the zone

On drop:

- Token is hidden (faded out)
- Character image appears with animation
- Sound plays via <audio loop>

When the sound ends or is stopped:

- Character disappears
- Original token returns to its spot

3. Audio Handling

Each character is linked to a <audio> element.

- Music begins playing automatically on drop
- Loops by default, but can be stopped or paused
- When stopped or naturally ends:
 - JS listens for .ended or pause events
 - Character fades away
 - Token fades back into its place

4. Event Handling

We'll use JavaScript to handle all the interactions, including:

- Drag and drop logic
- Character appearance/hiding
- Play/Pause/Reset button controls
- Hover animations or glowing border on drop zones

5. Accessibility Features

We designed the site to be simple and usable for a wider range of users by:

- Making all main buttons easy to access with Enter, and Space keys
- Adding alt text to all important images like tokens and characters


- Using soft, non-flashing animations to make the experience calm and comfortable
- Choosing readable fonts and clear color combinations for better visibility
- Planning to test motion and interaction settings as the build progresses

Where we got it?

Audio resources

- Lofi loops edited using **GarageBand**
- Supplemented by royalty-free sound kits:
 - [FreeSound.org](https://www.freesound.org/)
 - [LANDR Lo-fi Samples](https://www.landr.fm/)

Visual Inspiration

- Character and bath token visuals inspired by *Spirited Away*
- Animation help from: [CSS-Tricks: Transitions & Animations](#)
- Our Pinterest Board for Visual :  Music Mixer

Fonts

- [Playfair Display – Google Fonts](#)
- [Poppins – Google Fonts](#)

Tools to be used

- Figma – Wireframe and layout
- Adobe Illustrator + Photoshop – Token and character design
- Visual Studio Code – Development
- GitHub – Version control and team collaboration

Task Delegation

Sprint 1 – Setup & Planning (Week 1–3).

<u>Task</u>	<u>Assigned To</u>
<u>Set up GitHub repo and folders</u>	Taylor
<u>Create UI wireframe / layout sketch</u>	Justine
<u>Collect character references & sounds</u>	Both

Sprint 2 – Core Features (Week 4–6).

<u>Task</u>	<u>Assigned To</u>
<u>Start drag-and-drop test with dummy elements</u>	Justine
<u>Implement working drag-and-drop</u>	Justine
<u>Link characters to audio</u>	Justine
<u>Design final characters / assets</u>	Taylor
<u>Add Pause and Reset functionality</u>	Justine

Sprint 3 – Visual Polish & Debugging (Week 7–8)

<u>Task</u>	<u>Assigned To</u>
<u>Add soft animations</u>	Justine
<u>Bug fix: overlapping audio / layout</u>	Both
<u>Final design cleanup and testing</u>	Both
<u>Prepare for submission & presentation</u>	Both

