Song Sketch

Interface and Branding Guidelines

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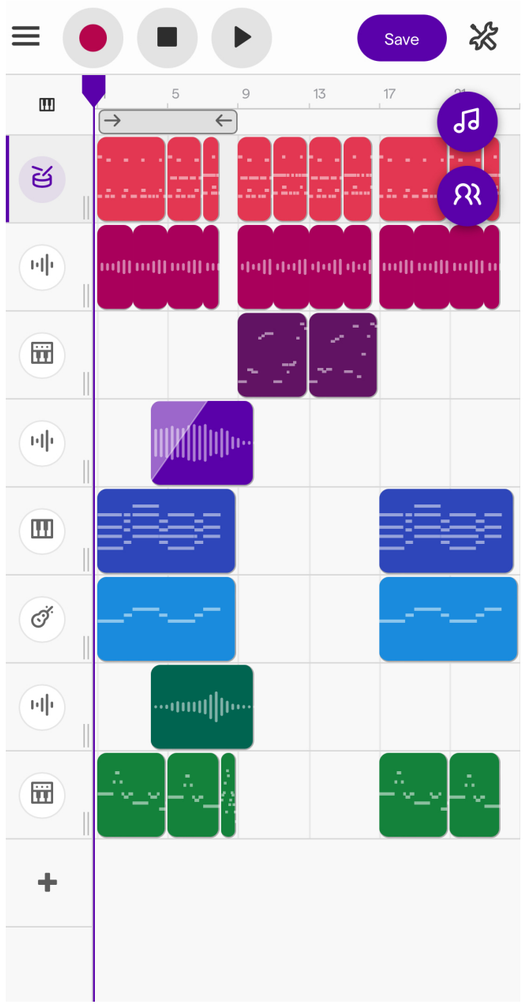
Overview
Song Sketch is a multi-track recording application designed for musicians who want to “sketch” complex musical ideas. While other mobile studio apps are typically overly-complex and apps like Voice Memos overly-simplistic, Song Sketch occupies a middle ground, enabling robust recording and editing on the go without the complexities better suited to a desktop digital audio workstation (DAW).

Speed
Song Sketch is designed for speed. From the first screen, musicians are immediatly able to record ideas by selecting the prominent record button at the bottom of the screen. This was the most requested feature by the musicians consulted for this project, so this design cue from the familiar voice memos application is implemented in Song Sketch.

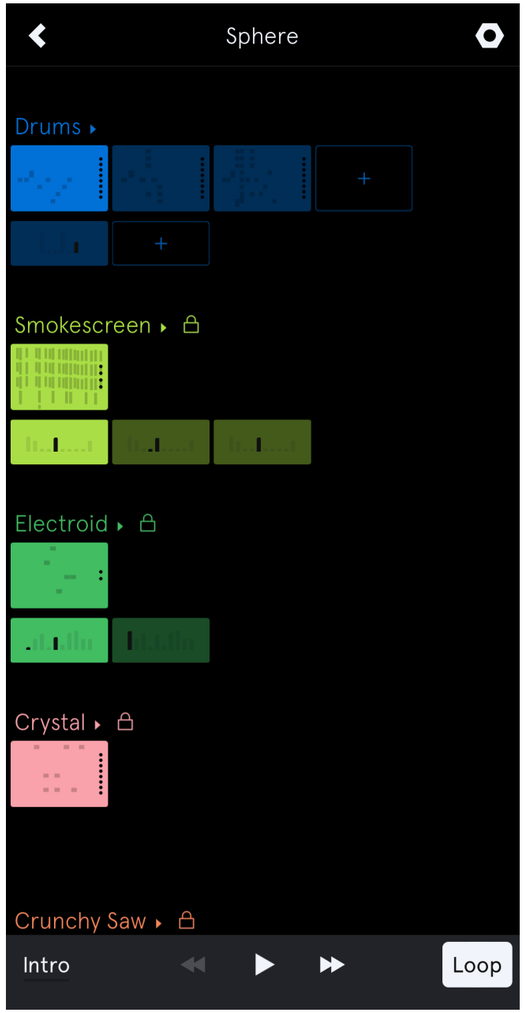
Simple Recording
Musicians can record as many tracks as they’d like using two input options: the device’s internal microphone or direct input (DI), if a compatible accessory such as an iRig, is plugged into the device. Musicians who want to further manipulate tracks are given familiar editing options, such as trimming, looping, cutting and creating markers.

Intuitive Organization
Song Sketch is built around a fully-featured and customizable file manager. Musicians often face the problem of losing song idea in a sea of unlabeled files. Several musicians consulted for this project noted that a robust file manager is essential to them. Song Sketch features advanced search and sorting capabilities, color-coding and a folder system for project management.

Advanced Sharing
Several of the musicians consulted commeted that they find the certain indescribable “ethereal” quality to phone recording – caused by how a phone clips and compresses audio – an incredibly pleasing artistic effect. As such, Song Sketch allows musicians to export projects both as a “mix-down” of the audio and as “track stems” which can be imported to a desktop DAW for further editing.



Soundtrap
Spotify



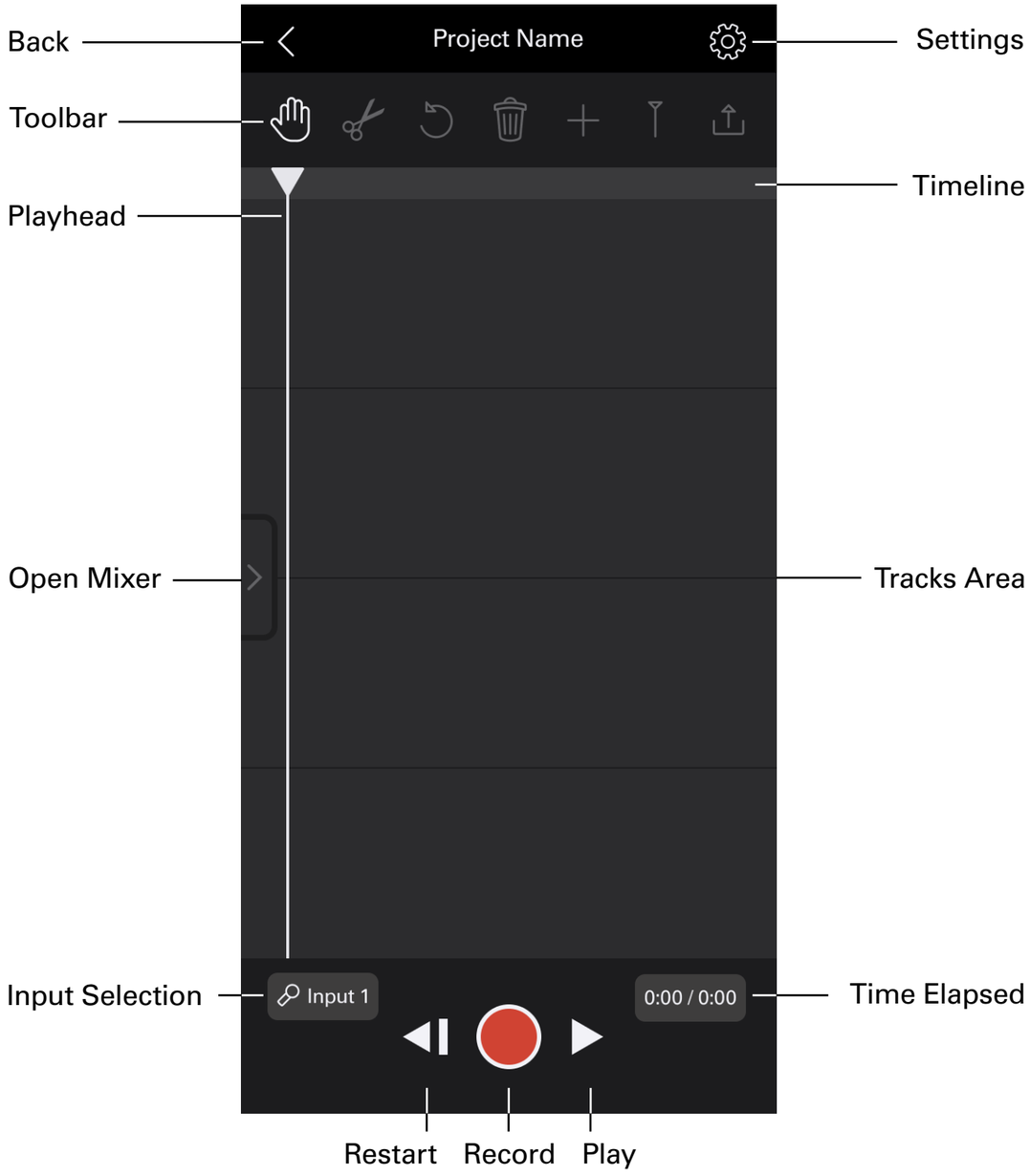
Auxy Studio
Easybrain

Competitive Analysis
Existing mobile music creation apps largely fall into three categories: single-track recording apps like Voice Memos, mobile “studio replacement” apps and “looper” apps. Song Sketch operates in the space between these first two categories – offering the versatility of multi-track recording and editing without the bloat of attempting to emulate the studio environment. Song Sketch exists as a supplement to the desktop DAW, not a replacement.

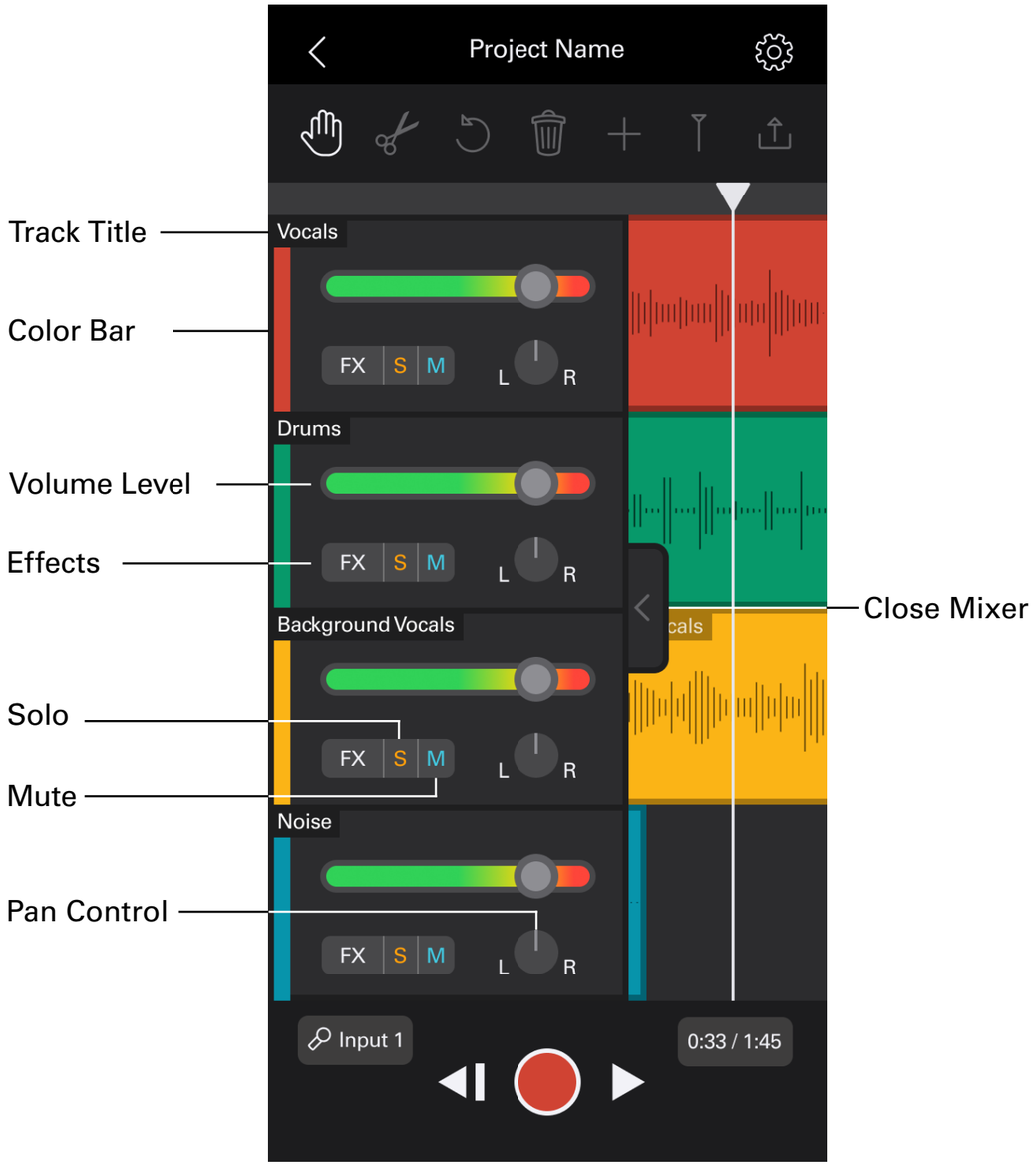
Studio Replacement Apps
The “studio replacement” app Soundtrap, created by the digital streaming service Spotify, allows musicians to utilize built-in software instruments and drum loops to arrange and sequence complex songs. This type of app is more versatile than apps like Voice Memos, but this versatility can also be overwhelming. In attempting to consolidate the full feature-set of a desktop DAW to a touch interface, Soundtrap’s primary recording workflow is difficult to intuit, while simultaneously making the editing funtionality essential to professional musicians too abstract.

Looper Apps
Auxy Studio is an example of a “looper” app, a new mobile first approach to music making designed around touch input. The primary workflow of Auxy is the creation of loops and patterns using included software instruments and drum kits. These loops can then be assembled in a sequencer to form the structure of a song. Looper apps are an incredibly fun and rewarding way to assemble complicated musical ideas quickly. However, they largely fail for instrumental musicians and vocalists who want to record non-looping musical ideas as demos.

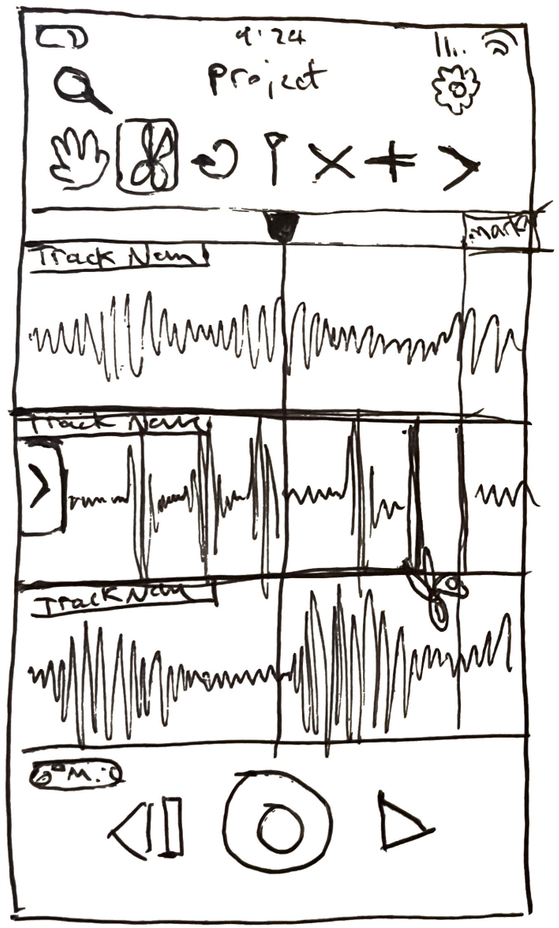
Tracks Editor



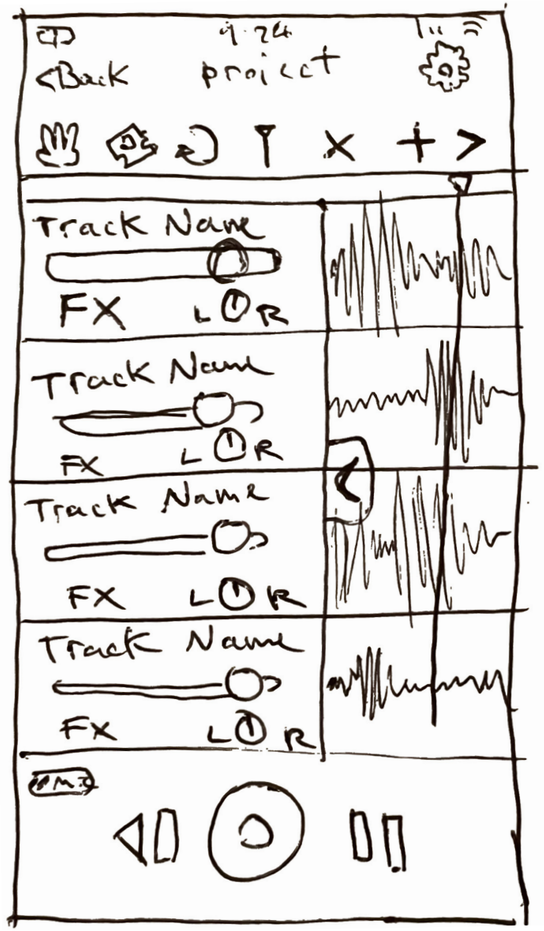
Mixer



Interface Overview
The Song Sketch interface is designed to be instantly understandable and intuitive to musicians who have used a desktop DAW before. The interface is divided into four primary sections: the toolbar, timeline, bottom bar and mixer.



Early Tracks Editor Sketch



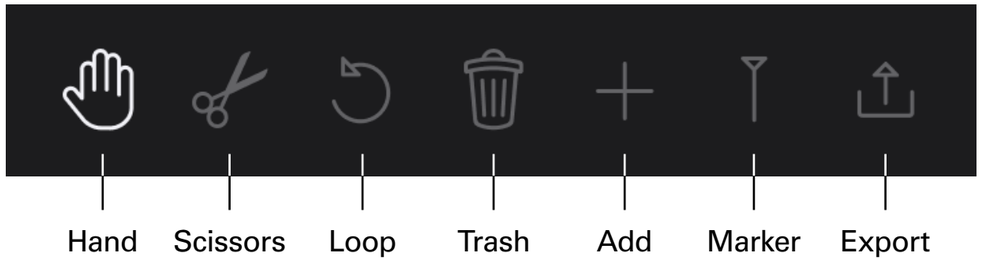
Early Mixer Sketch

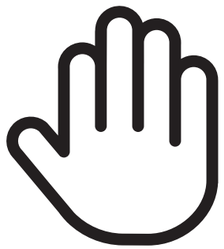
Toolbar
The toolbar contains all of the editing functions of Song Sketch. Users press on a tool to activate it and then select, if applicable, where on the timeline they'd like the tool's action to take place. From left to right the tools are: hand, scissors, undo, delete, add track, add marker and export

Timeline
The timeline is the primary editing and playback interface of Song Sketch. All tracks recorded by the user are laid out on top of one another and can be edited using the tools in the toolbar. By default, Song Sketch assigns the first four created tracks to the colors red, green, yellow and blue for organizational purposes and to reinforce consistent branding. Individual track colors can be fully customized in the mixer.

Bottom Bar
The bottom bar contains the playback and input selection controls for Song Sketch. The time elapsed and time remaining for the project are viewable on the left. Buttons for starting a new recording, playing, pausing and restarting playback are located in the center of the bar. Input selection is located on the right.

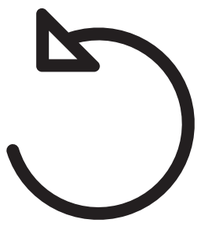
Mixer
The mixer enables precise control of track parameters such as volume, panning and effects. Tracks can be renamed and reassigned colors for organizational purposes. Additionally, the mixer allows for track volume level adjustment and left/right panning control. Tracks can also be individually soloed and muted for precise editing.





Hand Tool
Used to interact with and move tracks around on the timeline. You can drag from the beginning or end of a track to shorten or lengthen them.

Scissors Tool
Used to cut up and split tracks. Once the scissors tool is selected, press where on the track you want to make the cut.

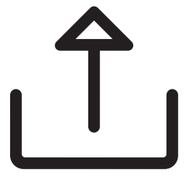


Undo Tool
Used to undo the last action you've made. To redo an action, press and hold the tool.

Trash Tool
Used to delete tracks that you've recorded. Once the trash tool is selected, tap on any track to delete it.

Add Track Tool
Used to manually create a new track. Tracks are also created automatically when the record button is pressed.

Marker Tool
Used to create annotated markers on the timeline. Press any point on the timeline to create a marker.



Export Tool
Used to export the track, either as a mix down of the project or as track stems. The audio files are able to be managed using the system share sheet.

Mixer Controls

Volume Slider
The volume level of tracks can be adjusted from -100db to +6db. Levels between -100db and -12db are marked green, between -12db and 0db marked yellow and any level above 0db is marked red to indicate audio clipping.

FX, Solo and Mute Controls
Individual effects can have audio effects applied to them by selecting the “FX” button. Users can select effects and control their parameters using the effects pop-up. Additionally, tracks can be solo’ed with only the selected track is outputting audio, or they can be muted, so that the selected track cannot output audio.

Left/Right Panning
Tracks can be individually panned for a stereo effect. There are 200 degrees of variability, meaning that tracks can have a panning value from -100 (full left) to +100 (full right).

Bottom Bar Controls

Record and Playback Controls
The bottom bar houses the recording and playback controls. When the record button is pressed, a new track is automatically created. Alternatively, if a track is selected manually, Song Sketch will record to that track instead. Typical playback controls are also included.

Input Selection
Users can toggle between two inputs for recording by tapping on the input selection button. Input 1 is the microphone input, utilizing the device’s internal microphone. Input 2 is the direct input, allowing for direct capture of an instrument’s audio if a compatible DI accessory is connected the device.

Time Elapsed/Time Remaining
Users can see where in the project the playhead is located in minutes and seconds. Additionally, the total length of the project is displayed as the second number.

Univers LT 65 Bold
Song Sketch

Univers LT 55 Roman
Song Sketch Interface

Font Selection
Univers LT Standard was chosen as the typeface for Song Sketch because of its readability and versatility. Song Sketch is meant to function as a professional tool for working musicians and Univers aids in setting this professional tone for the application. The Song Sketch wordmark is set in Univers 65 Bold, and the application's interface is set in Univers 55 Roman.

Etruscan Red
C16, M80, Y74, K6
RGB (193, 62, 47)

Dull Viridian Green
C90, M20, Y80, K0
RGB (0, 142, 100)

Orange Yellow
C0, M33, Y100, K0
RGB (240, 170, 32)

Cerulian Blue
C84, M26, Y32, K0
RGB (5, 145, 165)

White
RGB (241, 241, 245)

Light Gray
RGB (228, 228, 233)

Gray 1
RGB (142, 142, 147)

Gray 2
RGB (99, 99, 103)

Gray 3
RGB (73, 73, 75)

Gray 4
RGB (58, 58, 60)

Gray 5
RGB (45, 45, 60)

Gray 6
RGB (27, 27, 29)

Black
RGB (22, 22, 23)

Color Selection
Colors within the Song Sketch application are strictly monochromatic utilizing a set of modified gray hues from the Apple Human Interface Guidelines. The exception to this is track organization – with the four default track colors chosen to provide a vibrant, yet inoffensive base for organizing content within the app. The four default track colors are also used for branding outside of the app.

Song Sketch

Song Sketch Wordmark

Song Sketch

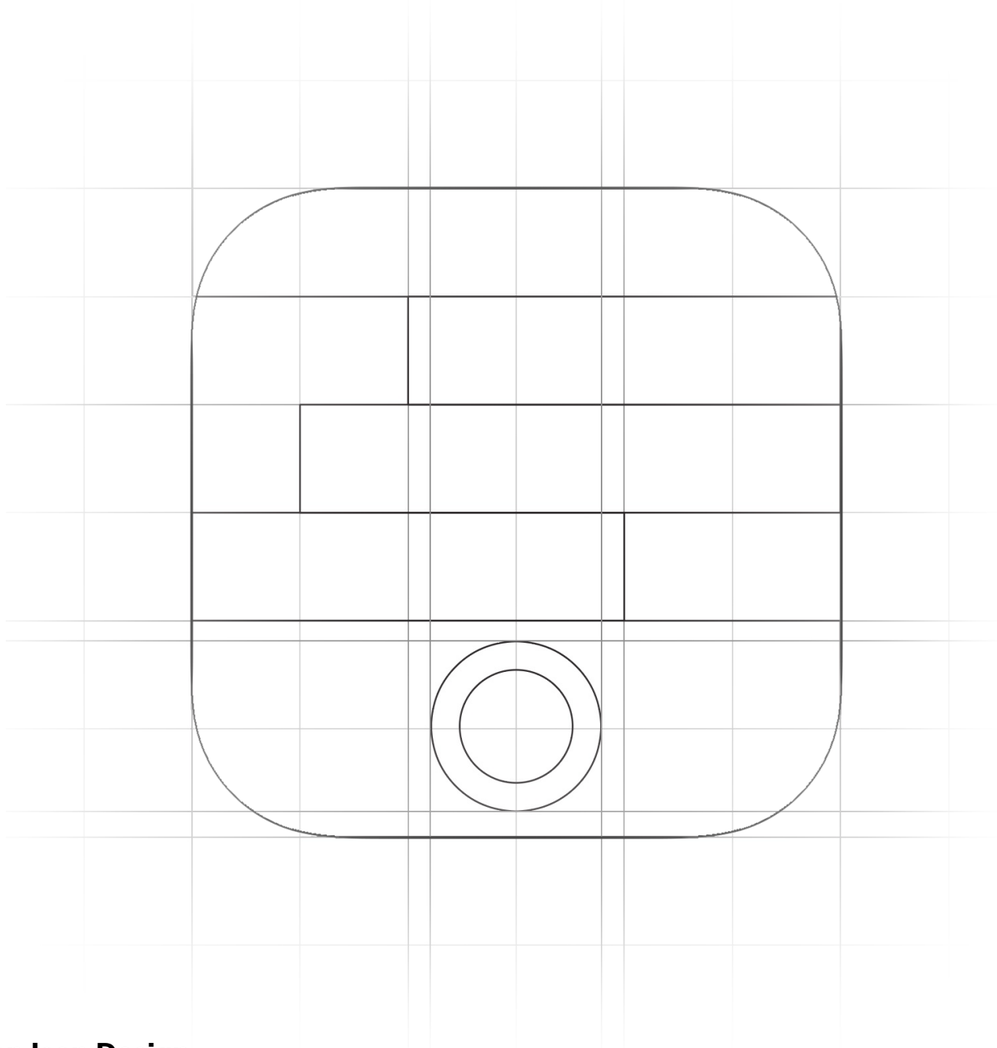
Unmodified Univers LT

Detail Comparison “n” and “g”

Wordmark on Color

Wordmark Design
The Song Sketch Wordmark is set in Univers LT 65 Bold with condensed letter spacing. The wordmark is bold and eye catching, yet unobtrusive and consistent with the app’s understated and professional appearance. The letters “n” and “g” have been slightly modified to remove the slant at the letter’s terminal.

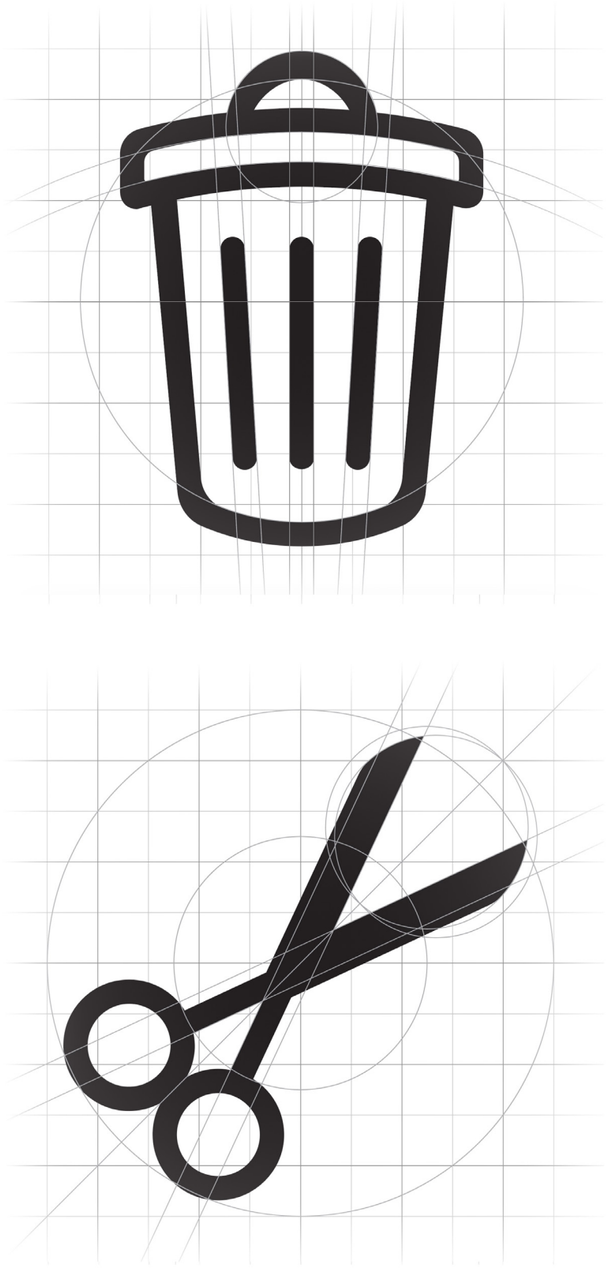
Song Sketch App Icon

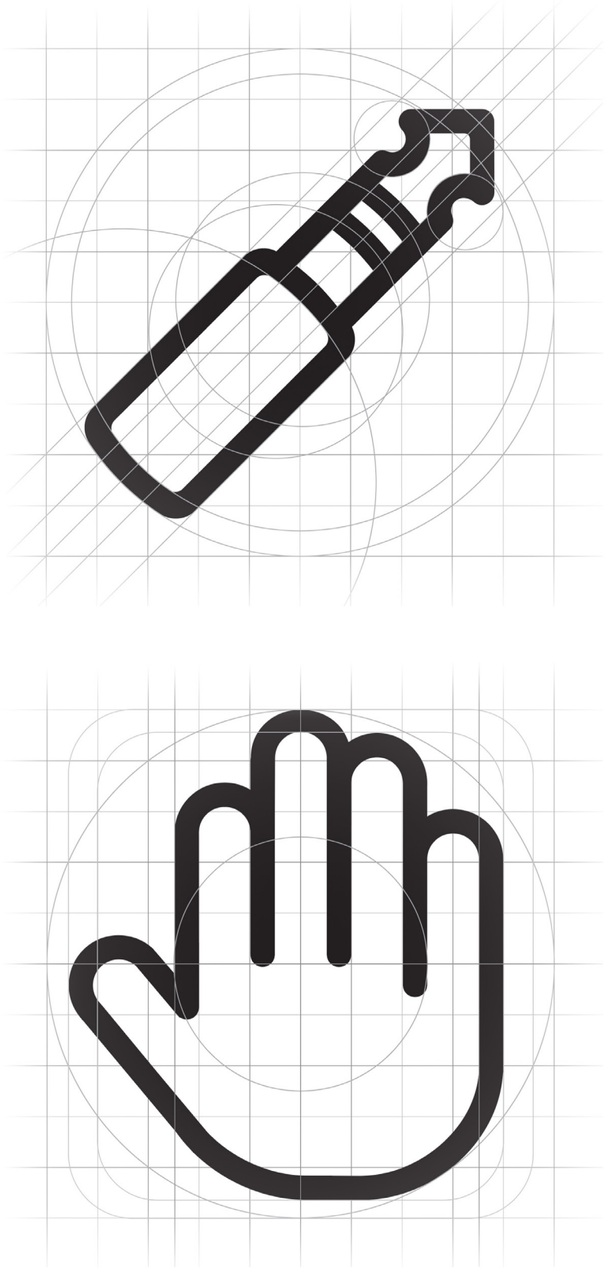


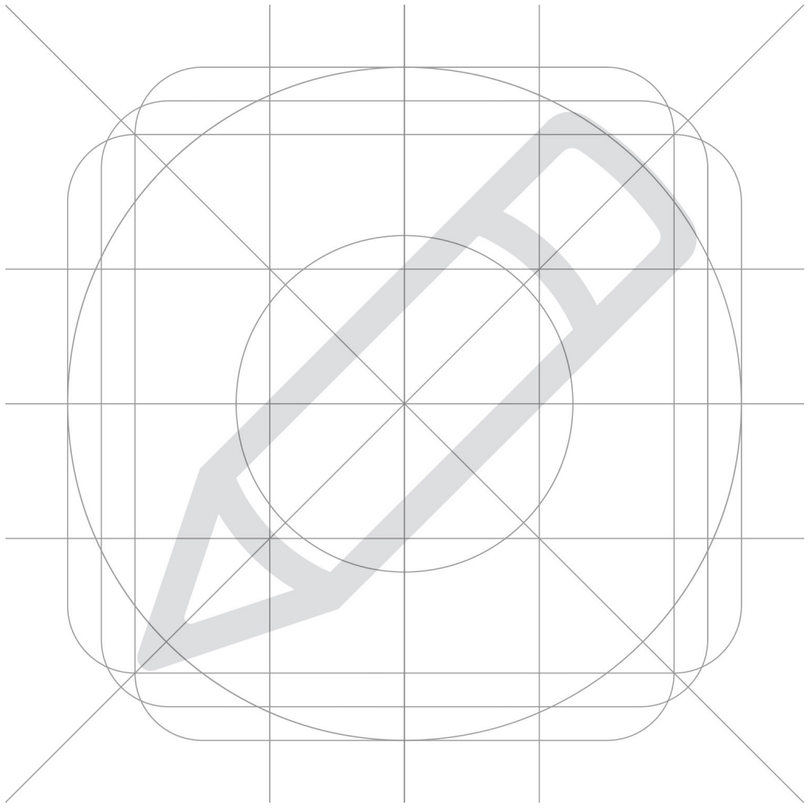
Application Icon Design

The Song Sketch app icon is a simplified representation of the Song Sketch user interface. A direct pictoral representation of the app's function proved to be the most effective in user testing and consistent with the app's minimal and understated appearance. The icon was constructed on an 48 x 48px grid with 8px subdivisions.

Song Sketch Icon Set



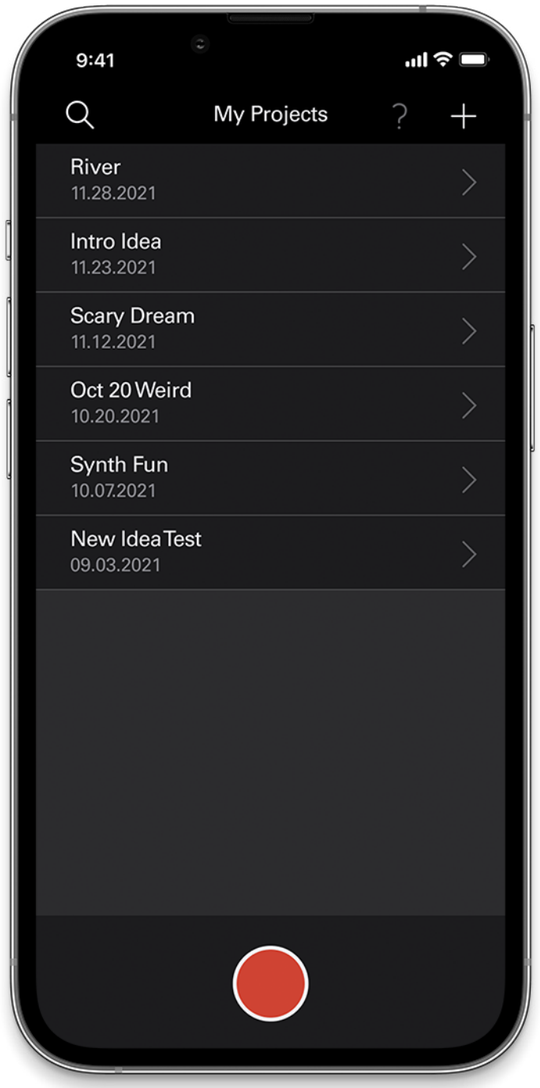




Icon Keylines

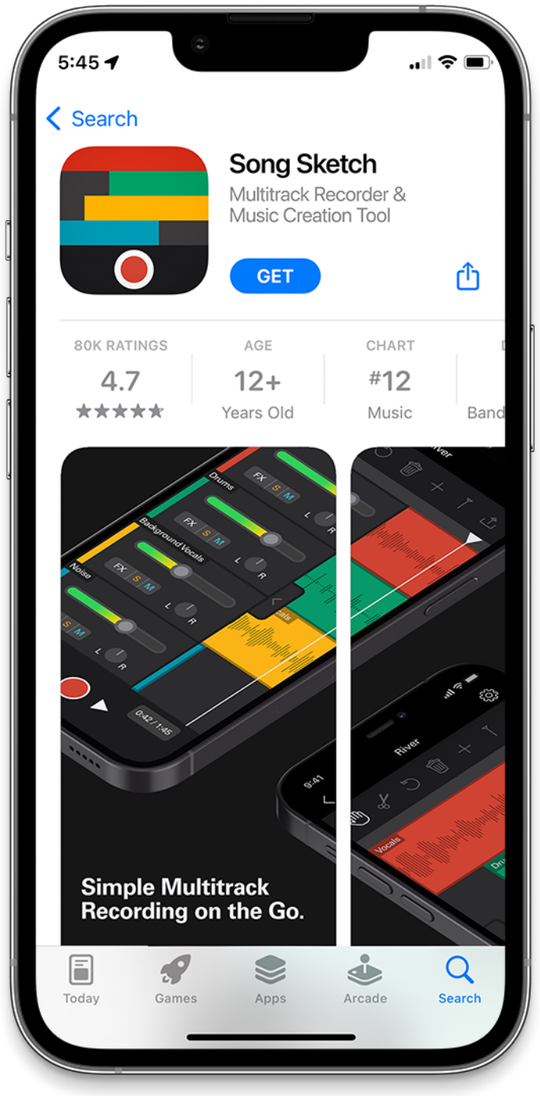
Iconography
The icons for Song Sketch were constructed on a 96 x 96px grid with 8px subdivisions. The stroke width is 2.5px. The lines of the icons follow simple geometric shapes and the following keylines: 20px circle, 36px square, 32 x 40px rectangle and a 40px circle.

App Icon on iOS Home Screen

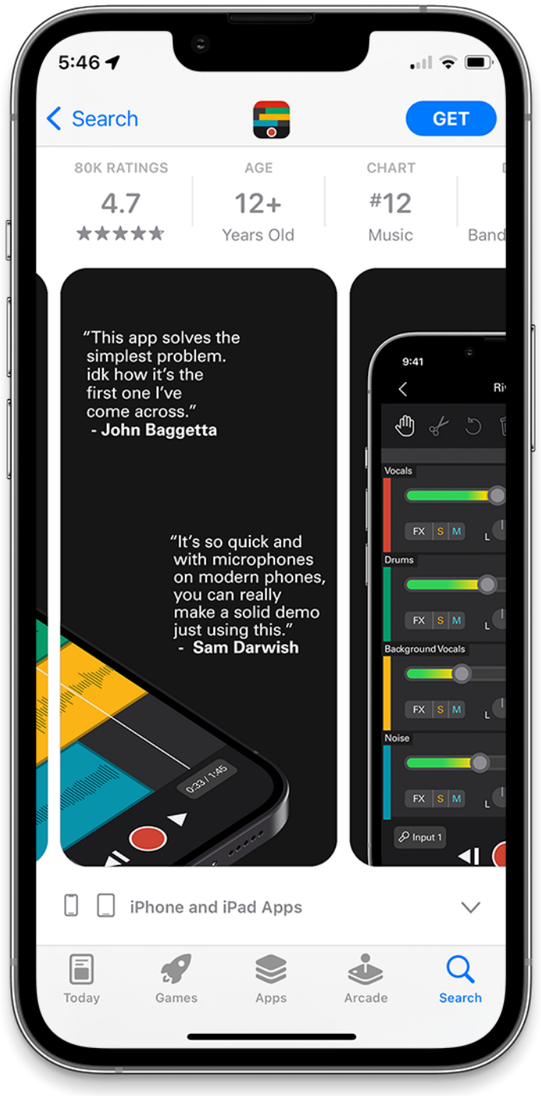


Song Sketch Projects View

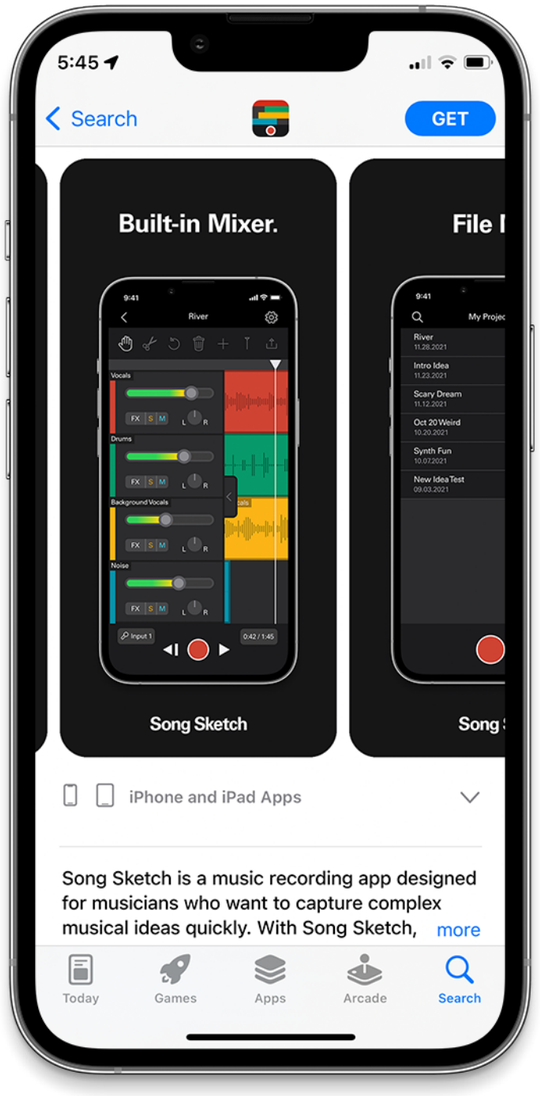
Song Sketch Editor View



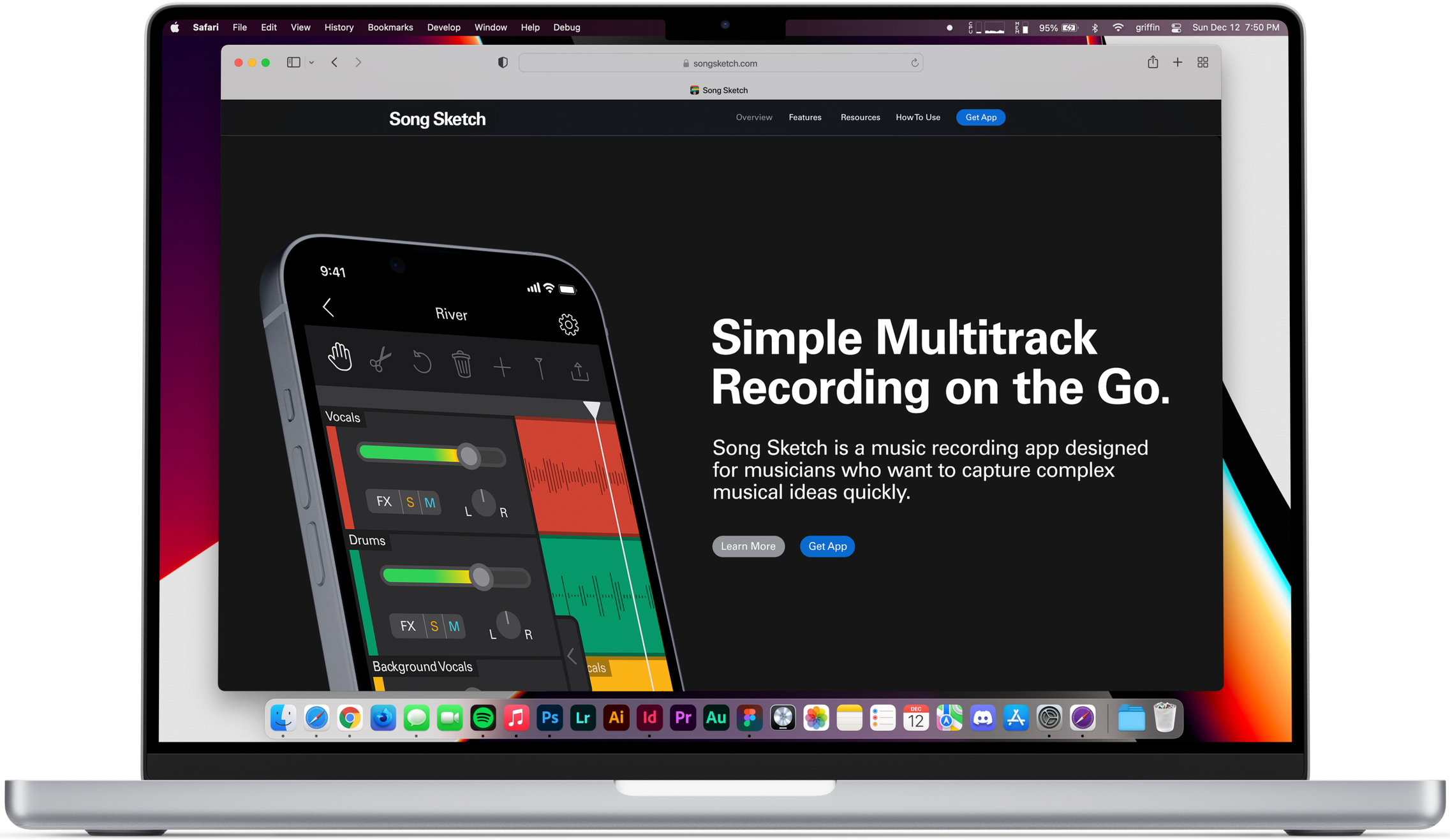
Song Sketch App Store Listing



Feature Slide Showing Reviews



Feature Slide Showing Description


Safari File Edit View History Bookmarks Develop Window Help Debug
95% griffin Sun Dec 12 7:50 PM
songsketch.com
Song Sketch
Song Sketch
Overview Features Resources How To Use Get App
9:41
River
Vocals
FX S M
L R
Drums
FX S M
L R
Background Vocals
Simple Multitrack Recording on the Go.
Song Sketch is a music recording app designed for musicians who want to capture complex musical ideas quickly.
Learn More
Get App

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