DESIGNING A NEW MICROINTERACTION

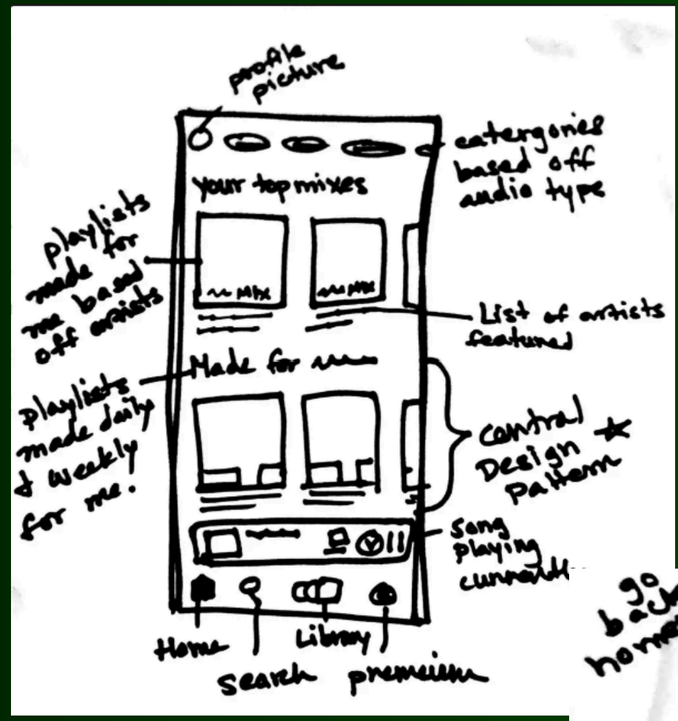
DESIGN STUDIO II

BY: ANSHU PATEL

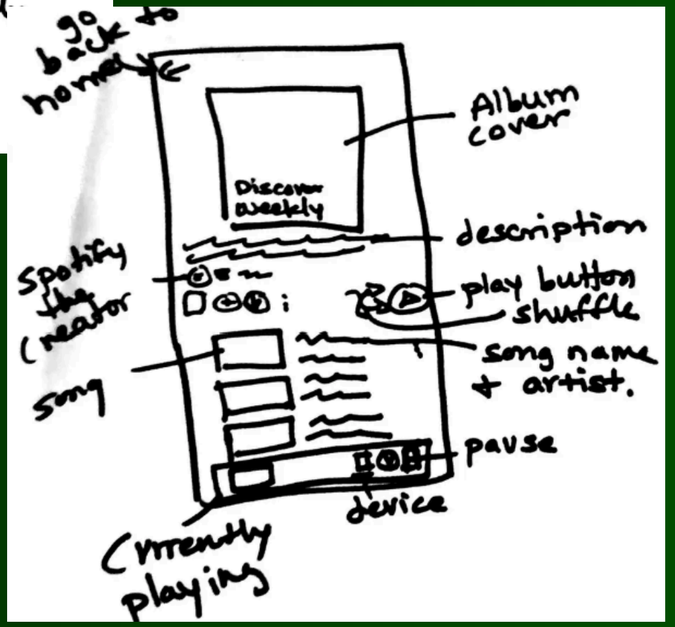
UNDERSTAND:

Performed a persona, problem statement, and interface reflection:

- **Persona:** University Student Omicron seeks to foster kinship, mind-opening experiences, and meaningful connections. Wants to become well-attuned and connected to their surroundings and other people.
- **Problem Statement:** Helping open space for meaningful attention in music discovery.
- **Design Focus:**
  - Interactive & Playful Discovery – Engaging ways to find new music.
  - Environment-Based Suggestions – Location and demographic-based recommendations.
  - Collaborative Tools – Enhanced shared playlists, real-time music pairing for social connection.
- **Goal:** Align Spotify's task flow for finding new music with Omicron's need for deeper, meaningful music interactions.



Low-fidelity wireframes of patterns of categorization in use. I focused on the "Made For XXX" category in Spotify.



RESEARCH:

Did a Laban Movement Analysis and Mechanisms/Conditions Framework for a Spotify taskflow of finding new music.

Performed an Interface, Laban Movement, Mechanisms/Conditions, and Usability Heuristics Analysis:

- Spotify makes music discovery feel effortless and personalized, shifting our perception of music platforms from vast databases to curated experiences.
- The interface fosters convenience and reliance on technology, shaping a world where music finds the listener rather than requiring active discovery.
- It encourages passive music discovery, prioritizing ease and personalization while potentially limiting active exploration.
- User interactions with Spotify are lightweight, sustained, and free-flowing, allowing for an effortless, rhythmic scrolling experience.
- Spotify encourages passive exploration through suggested playlists while discouraging manual searching and customization of homepage categories.
- The interface is visually clear, consistent, and user-friendly but limits customization and social discovery opportunities

LABAN MOVEMENT ANALYSIS:

Motion factor	Dimensions	Examples
Space: attention to surroundings	Direct: straight, undeviating, channeled, single focus.	Users are focused solely on the app and scrolling downwards. There are either scrolling vertically or tapping, with a single focus.
Weight: attitude to the movement impact	Light: buoyant, weightless, easily overcoming gravity, decreasing pressure	Users are lightweight with their motions. It requires little to know physical effort to navigate the app, especially when just scrolling downward and tapping.
Time: lack or sense of urgency	Sustained: Leisurely, lingering, indulging in time	Actions like scrolling and tapping are done in a sustained flow, where users take their time scrolling and finding what they need to. There is a rhythm to it, and the user sets the level of urgency.
Flow: amount of control and bodily tension	Free: uncontrolled, abandoned, unable to stop during the movement.	There are no strict limitations or navigation paths in Spotify. Rather the user is able to freely control how they choose to scroll and discover on the app.

MECHANISMS AND CONDITIONS FRAMEWORK:

DImension	
What does it request?	The app requests that you scroll and tap to see curated playlists.
What does it demand?	Requires users to interact with the song titles or playlists visible on the home screen if they want to hear music suggested. If listening to a curated playlist, theres a limited amount of songs in each one, so it demands users to listen to the songs within that collection.
What does it encourage?	It encourages users to scroll and tap and explore with the suggest playlists. It fosters a more passive way of discovery.
What does it discourage?	It discourages manually searching and exploring outside the reccomandations. The search tab is very small at the bottom, while all the suggests content is displayed brightly at a much larger size on the home screen.
What does it refuse?	It refuses personal organization of the layout of the home page catergories, or advanced sorting and customization within the flow and playlists.
What does it allow?	It allows free choice to select, skip, scroll past, and explore other sections of your home page without enforcing you to a strict pathway.

RESEARCH:

Developed a design question and opportunities based on research:

- **Design Question:** How might we create meaningful and mind-opening music discovery experiences/interactions for university students so that they are able to connect more to their surroundings and others?

- **Design Opportunities:**

  - Geographical Music Suggestions: Enables users to discover and listen to music recommended by people in their area, fostering a sense of community and shared experiences.

  - Social Discovery Features: Allows users to share and explore each other's Discover Weekly playlists, enhancing social connections and meaningful music discovery.

  - Event-Based Music Recommendations: Provides music suggestions based on-campus events and student spaces, making music discovery more immersive and relevant to university life.

Feedback: I got feedback from classmates Maya and Melinda, who really liked my first idea, which is the one I ended up developing further on.

SKETCH:

Created an Ideation Map with 10 ideas of different physical metaphors, and further developed the best three on the side. Then created a concept sketch that demonstrates the key microinteraction:

- I got feedback from my classmate Maya Ramani. Maya looked at my top 3 ideas and said they looked like good ideas to move forward with and she liked my first one a lot! I decided to move forward with that one.

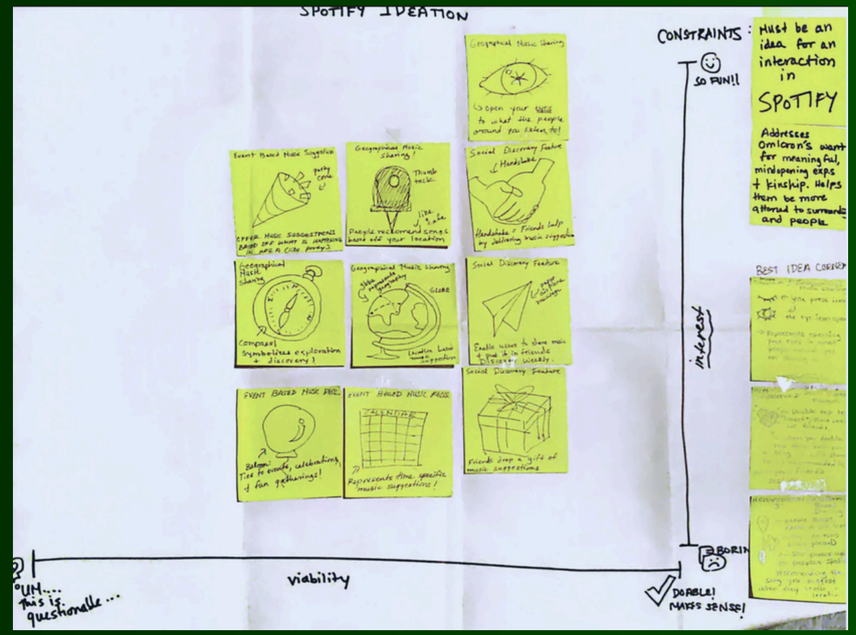
Concept Sketch:

- Introduces a “local music sharing” eye icon that blinks open when pressed. Users can either recommend their current song to others in their area or explore a playlist of local recommendations. Encourages organic, community-driven music discovery and a shared listening experience.

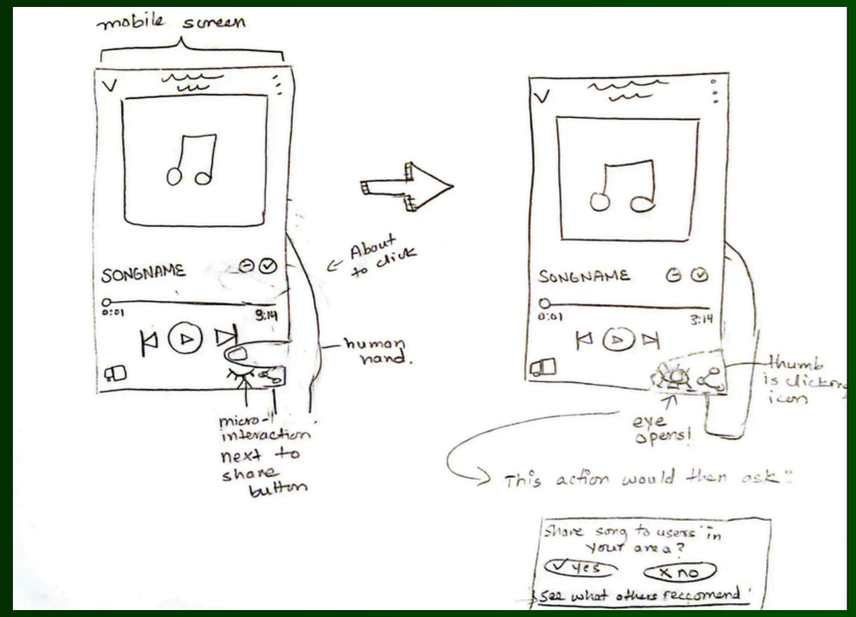
- Meets Omicron’s need for meaningful connections through music.

- Creates an effortless way to share and discover music within a set geographical area. Helps users feel more connected to their environment and the people around them.

My full ideation map. The x-axis was labeled on how realistic the idea was to implement and the y-axis was based on how fun the possible interaction could be.



My concept sketch for the eye interaction that is Local Music Sharing!



DESIGN:

Created a user flow and identified the goals, poetics of interactivity, and Max-Neef needs the interaction meets. Also hypothesized the effect the interaction would have:

- **Goal of the Microinteraction:** Meets Omicron's need for meaningful connections through music. Creates an effortless way to share and discover music within a set geographical area. Helps users feel more connected to their environment and people around them.

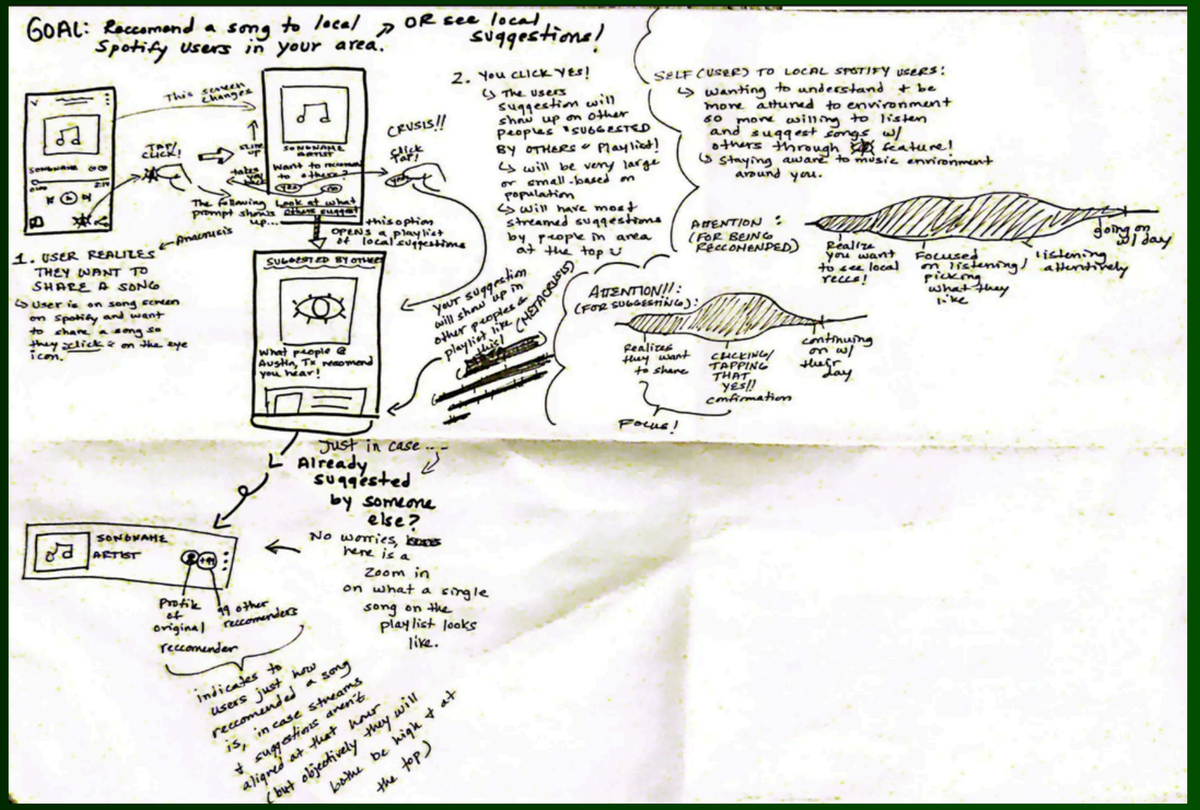
Poetics of Interactivity:

- **Contemplation**: Users reflect on recommendations and what they want to share.
- **Interest:** Encourages curiosity in others' music tastes and community-driven discovery.
- Engagement: The "eye" icon reinforces attentiveness, fostering mindful music-sharing habits.

Max-Neef Needs:

- Participation: Encourages local engagement through music.
- Affection: Fosters social bonds by sharing music preferences.
- Understanding: Helps users learn about their community's music tastes.
- Leisure: Simplifies music discovery, making it a fun and social activity.
- Identity: Allows users to express themselves through song recommendations.

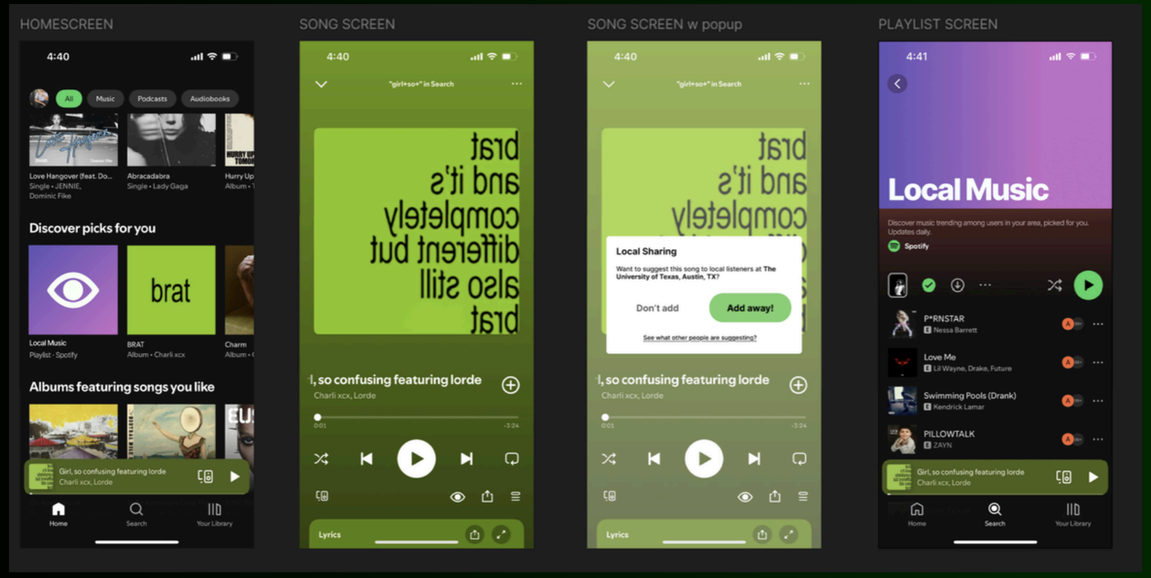
I hypothesized that by enabling university students like Omicron to easily share and discover music within their geographical area, my microinteraction will foster a deeper sense of connection to their environment, broaden their musical tastes, and strengthen their social bonds through shared listening experiences.



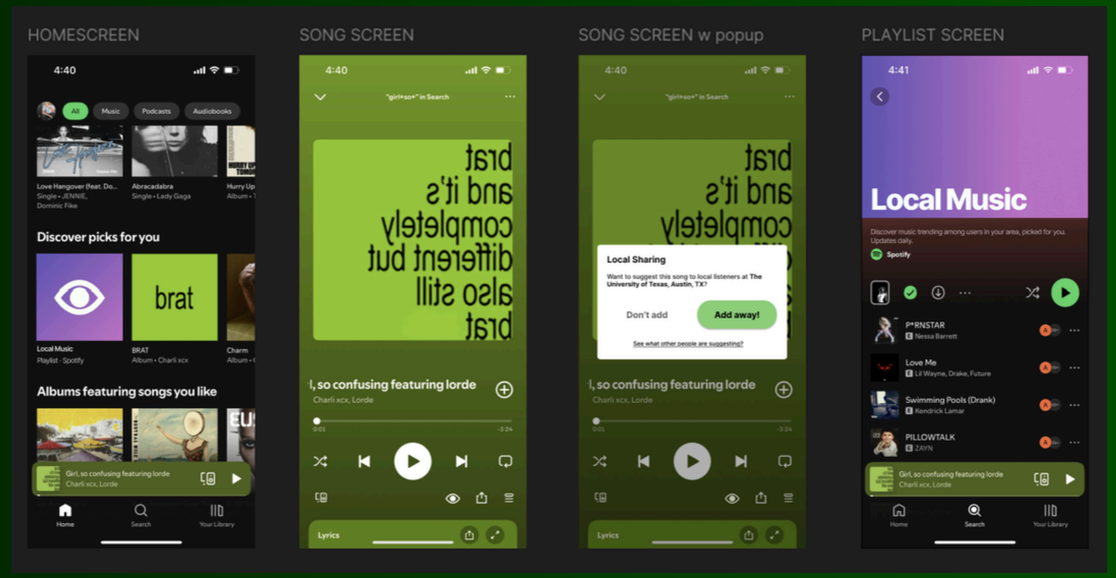
My userflow/wireframe sketches. I used this to properly flesh out my concept in a sensible way. I did get feedback asking about how the playlist would refresh and how many songs it would have. I was able to explain that it would be like a Top 100 playlist on Spotify, and be the top 100 recommendations which would rotate as people listen to more new music and recommend different things.

PROTOTYPE:

Created a wireframe, improved it, and then added prototype features:



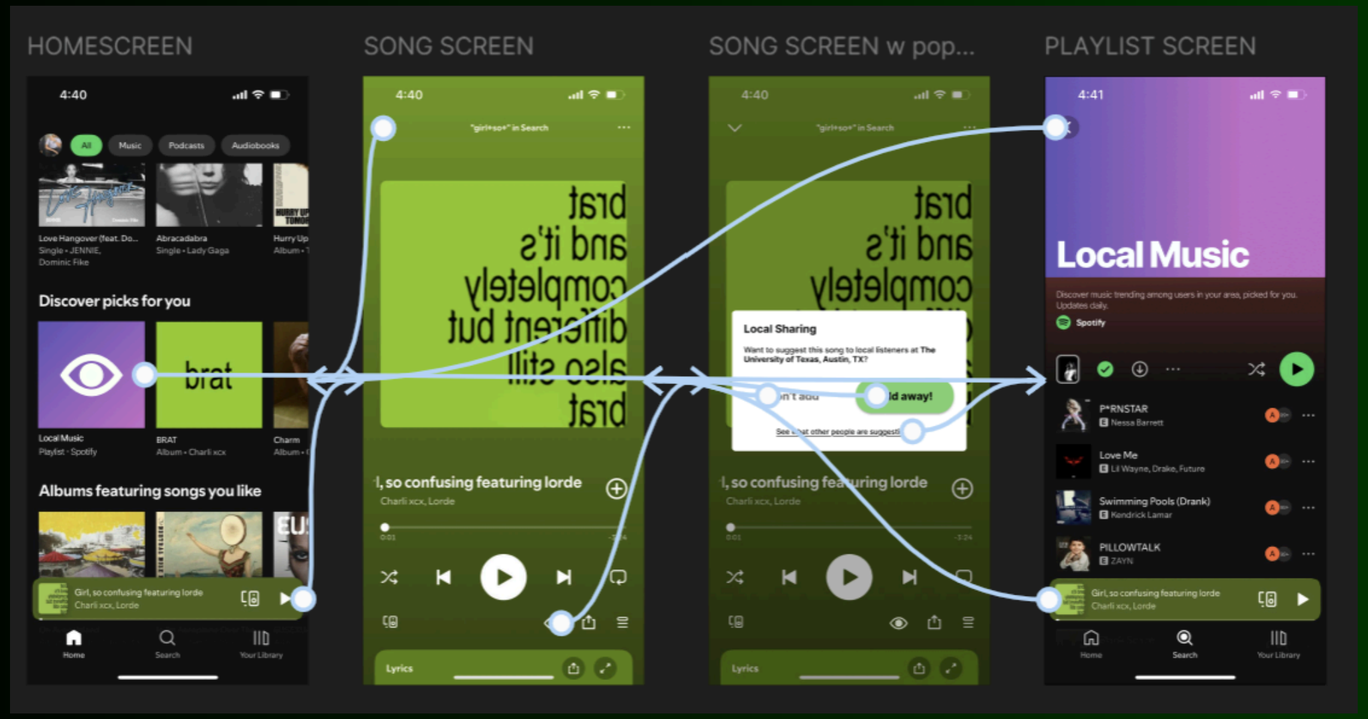
This is wireframe 1, which is based heavily on my previously seen sketches. I got feedback from Maya and she suggested making the pop-up background a different opacity and changing it from white tint to black tint. I also needed to add a drop shadow to the “Add away” button.



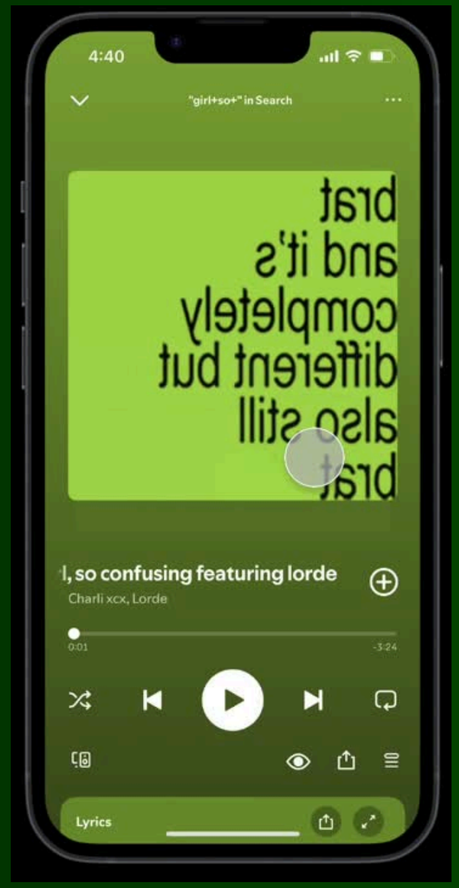
This is revised wireframe 1, named wireframe 2. I implemented the feedback from Maya. This is the wireframe I moved forward with to the actual prototyping phase.

PROTOTYPE:

Added the prototype features to wireframe 2:



This is my user for my wireframe. I prototyped it using smart animation on Figma.



A video example of the prototype in use!

TEST:

Created a testing script and had my prototype tested/analyzed by my classmates:

- **Prompt:** Share and discover new music with the “Local Music” feature on Spotify. Click to explore a playlist of songs that local users in your area suggest. Click and share songs to contribute to the “Local Music” playlist yourself!

- I requested a Mechanisms and Conditions Framework as well. I wanted to know if the interaction's purpose is communicated effectively.

Summary of Results:

- The interface follows Spotify’s familiar layout, making navigation easy, symbols recognizable, and interactions seamless, with minimal errors reported by testers.

- It helps university students explore music effortlessly, fostering a connection with their surroundings through local music recommendations.

- I need to clarify "local music," make the icon more prominent, and add more access points beyond the playing song.

Prompt:	organized and take nice notes so I can use this feedback to its full potential.	
Usability Heuristics https://www.nngroup.com/articles/ten-usability-heuristics/	**Andy Hsu**	**Rai Pham**
Visibility of System Status	Good feedback recall! Clearly able to see system status much like the Spotify interface. Next steps in interactions are predictable and intuituive.	Very clear system, good job at recreating the Spotify interface. All (both non-interactive and interactive) elements are visible.
Match Between the System and the Real World	Language follows the diction of Spotify, natural to the user	For Spotify users or any other music app, the language being used is very similar across any music platform and easy to understand/interact with
User Control and Freedom	User is able to go back and return! Fully interactive within that context	User is allowed to go back and forth. Also, there were two ways to go to "Local Music", which is a very nice touch!
Consistency and Standards	Follows music platform standards, quite consistent with the Spotify interface	Similar to what I said with "match between system and real world", the interface and the microinteraction follow the standard music platform language.
Error Prevention	Simple sleek design prevents errors to occur, little to no room for mistakes	I haven't encountered any errors, and since the microinteraction is simple, there aren't much chance for errors
Recognition Rather than Recall	Users is easily able to recognize the symbols and labels, no memorizatin required minus initially understanding what the icon does.	Consistent symbols make it recognizable. Even if the microinteraction is new, it would require no or little effort to recognize and learn how to use it.
Flexibility and Efficiency of Use	Prototype includes shortcuts for new and old users.	Have both the traditional way and the shortcut way to get to the goal of the microinteraction.
Aesthetic and Minimalist Design	The eye symbol blends well with the interface,matching the Spotify aesthetic	Design of the microinteraction matches the aesthetic of the existing Spotify interface really well.
Help Users Recognize, Diagnose, and Recover from Errors	Assuming user is mildly familiar with Spotify, user error messages are likely not needed as interaction is striaght forward with adding a song to a playlist	For how simple the interaction is, I don't think pop-up messages are needed to help the user to recover from errors.
Help and Documentation		Making the icon/ element more prominent (?). Honestly, I don't have much of an opinion for this one because the microinteraction is already minimal (sorry :<)

Mechanisms and Conditions	**Tester Feedback:**	
What does it request?	Requests you click on the current song playing	Requests interactions with the current playing song to trigger the microinteraaction
What does it demand?	Demands you must listen to the song to utilize the feature	N/A
what does it encourage?	Encourages you add to a local community based playlist and explore new music!	Encourages user to explore more music! To keep up with the "local" music trend
what does it discourage?	Discourages not adding to the playlist	I would assume "Local music" is based on similar music taste to the current song that users are listening to, so it would discourage users from going out of that zone. (correct me if im wrong :3)
what does it refuse?	Refuses out of local area addition to playlists	Refuses user to explore outside of "local music" (?).
what does it allow?	Allows one to be more connected with those arround you; bonding!	Allows and enhances the listening and exploring music experience!

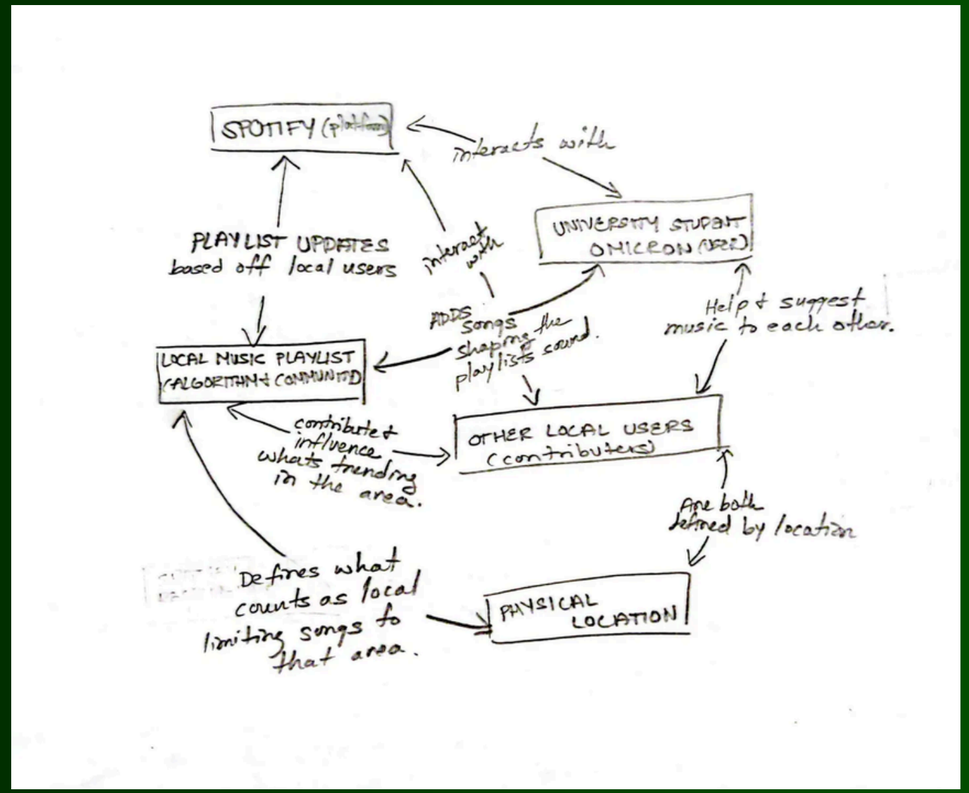
The feedback I received from classmates Andy and Rai.

REFINE:

Listed ways I would further alter and improve my microinteraction. These changes and ideas are being listed with the idea that I would have the full capabilities to implement these features just as well as Spotify (as in I wouldn't be limited by what Figma allows me to do).:

- I would a small animation when a song is added so it's more noticeable.
- I would include an "Undo" option to make it easier to exit "Local Music.
- I would add a quick tooltip to explain the eye icon on first use. This would be implemented when the feature is first discovered or introduced. It would not happen every time.
- I would have adjusted the eye icon slightly so it stands out without being distracting. I wanted to emulate the simplicity of Spotify's icons, but I think I would want something more playful moving forward.
- I would clarify how "local" is defined and maybe add an option to expand beyond the immediate area. This idea is something that needs a limit because I have to think when "local" shifts into just "global top 100".
- I would add a feature where you can physically click the profiles of those who suggested a song.
- I would add an ability to actually scroll through the songs, but that's more of a refining the prototype thing.

Reflection : My microinteraction makes music discovery a shared, local experience, reconnecting university students like Omicron to their environment and community. It shifts music from a personal, algorithm-driven activity to a communal and intentional practice, redefining "local" as a cultural identity.



Actor-network for the Local Music Interface I created.

VISUAL SUMMARY:

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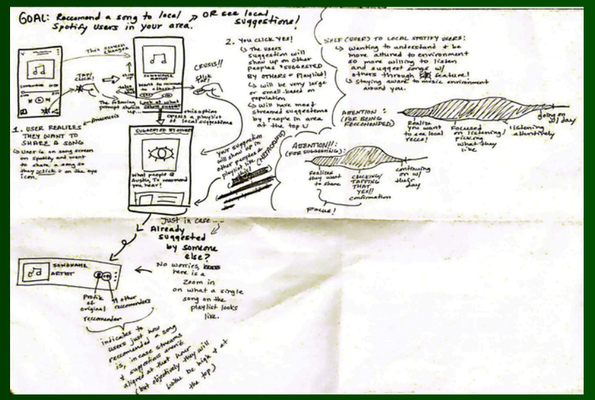

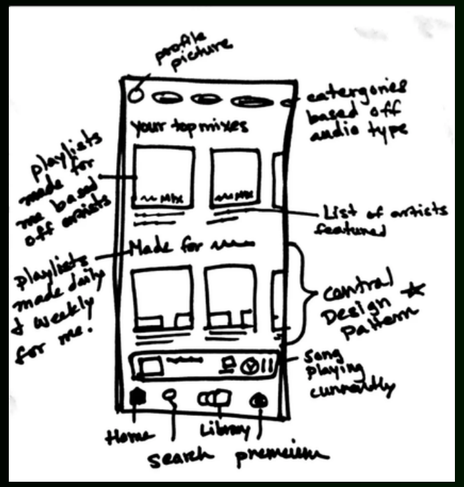

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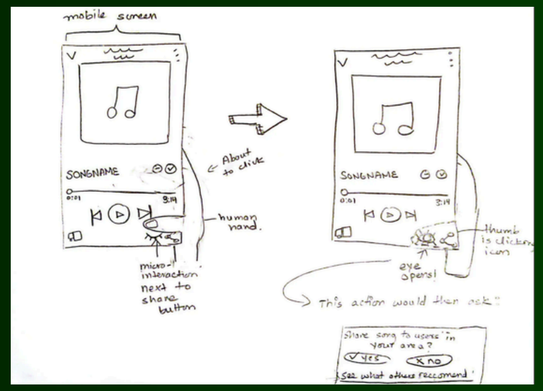

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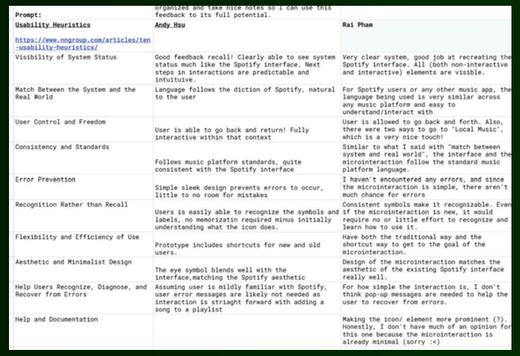

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	Rai Pham
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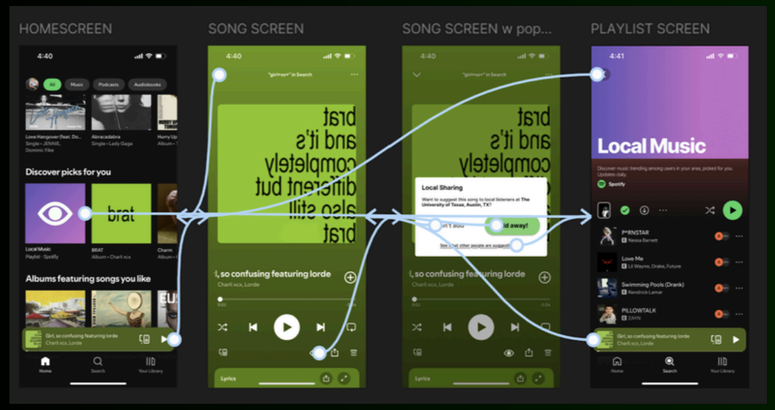

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