

Transition

*Reimagining How DJs Learn to Perform for a live audience with
Confidence and Joy*

 Ableton



UMEÅ INSTITUTE OF DESIGN
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A Performance Gap

The DJ who feels confident at home may still struggle in front of a crowd

Technical skill alone isn't enough, emotional awareness and crowd connection are just as crucial



Trends

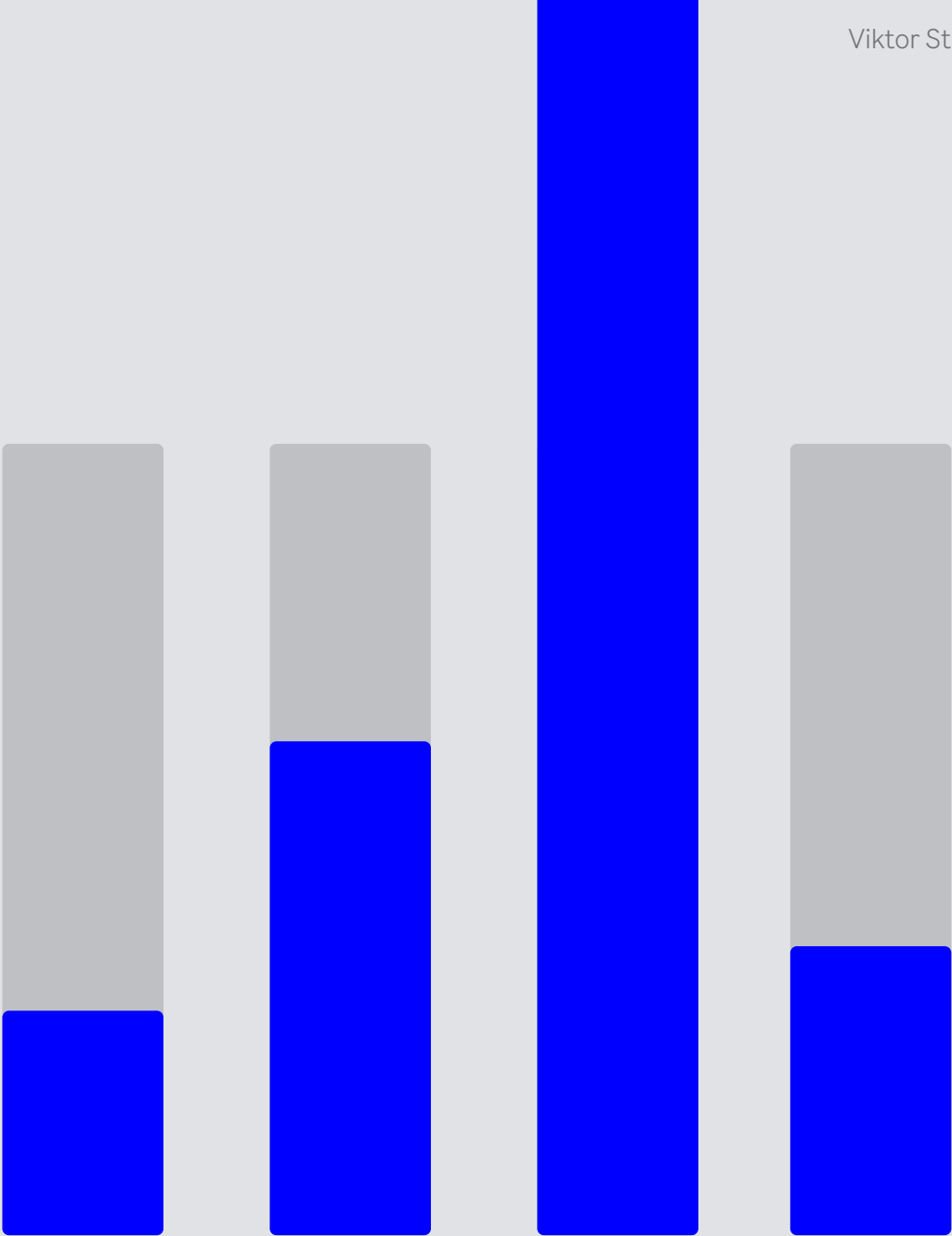
DJ gear sales rose **23%** during the pandemic
(Musician Wave, 2023)

Performance anxiety affects up to **60%** of musicians
(Fernholz et al., 2019)

The eLearning market grew **900%** between 2000 and 2020
(eLearning Stats, n.d.)

The global VR headset market is expected to grow by **31%**
(Precedence Research, 2025)

**More people are DJing then ever,
but there still aren't many good ways to practice crowd
reading and performance confidence from home**

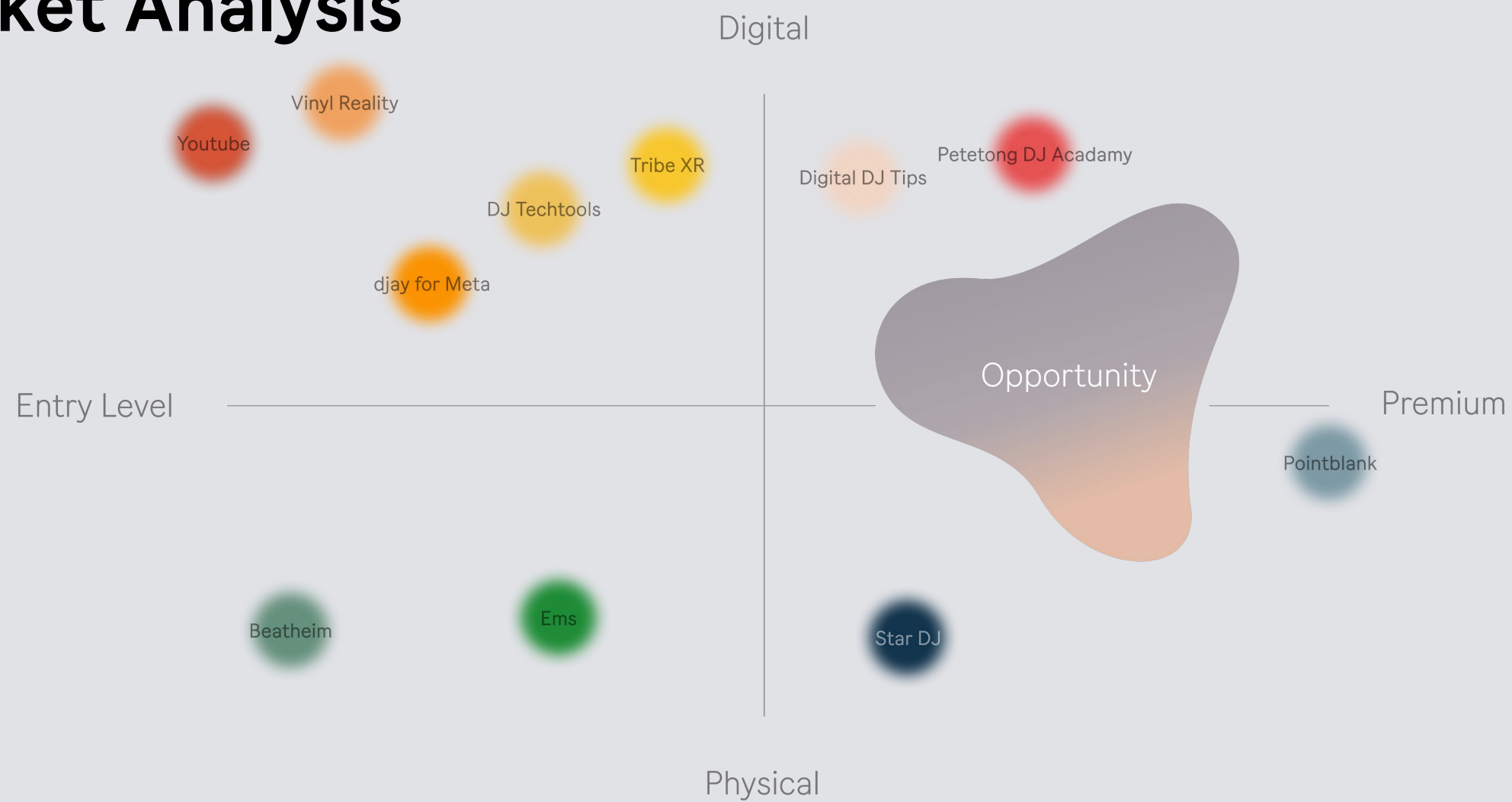


Target Group



DJs in the beginning of
their professional career

Market Analysis



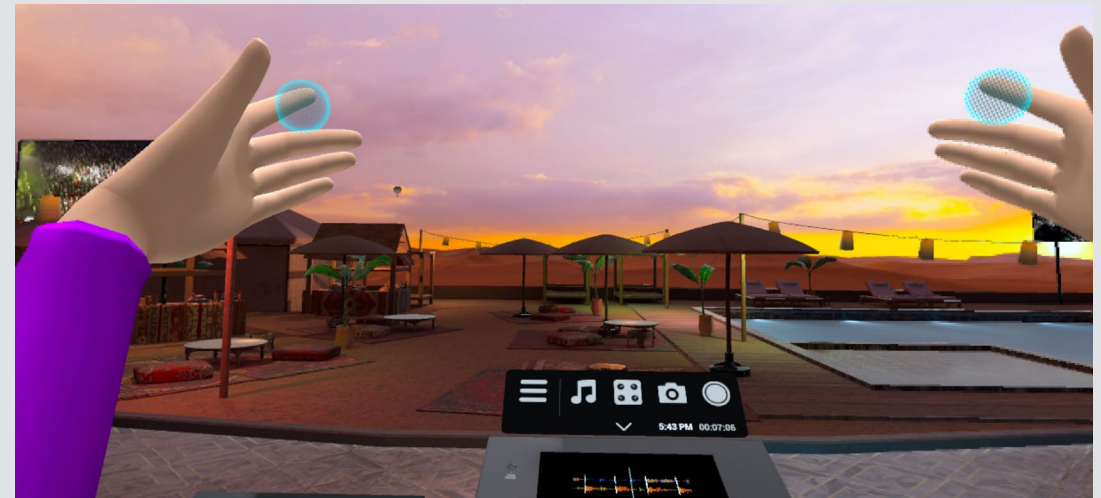
Competitor Analysis

Djay for Meta Quset



- + Hand-tracking and tactile feel with physical gear
- + Visually engaging virtual and mixed reality environment
- No built-in learning programme
- Lacks emotional realism and crowd interaction

Tribe XR for Meta Quest



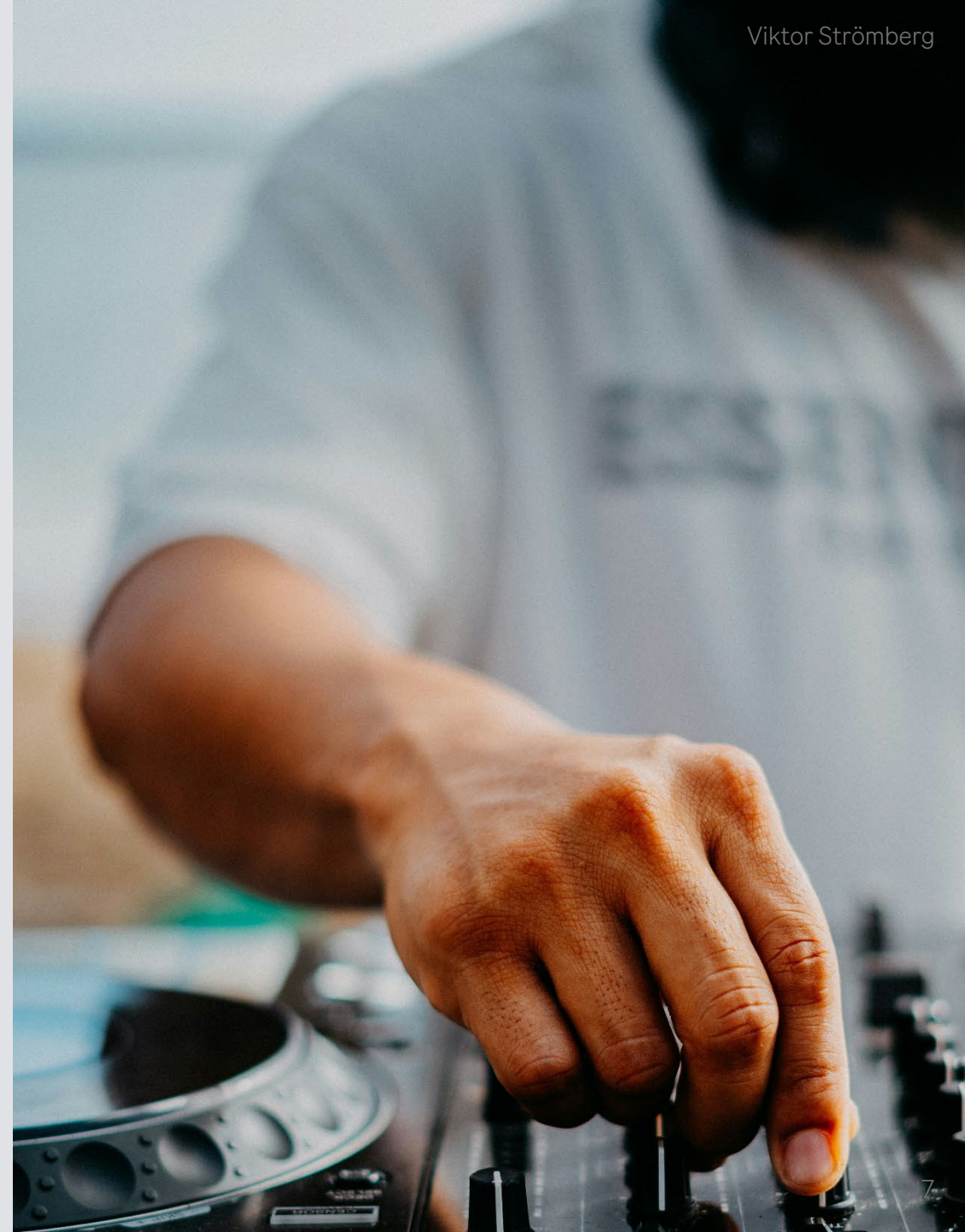
- + Structured tutorials and live workshops
- + Simulates industry-standard Pioneer gear
- Uses Meta controllers instead of hands, feels unnatural
- Low engagement and empty-feeling virtual events

MPA

Music Performance Anxiety is widespread

Affects up to **60%** of musicians
(Fernholz et al., 2019)

Leads to stress, reduced flow, and avoidance
of live performance



RCM

XR Performance Laboratory at Royal Collage of Music, London

Simulations to assist musicians in managing stage anxiety
and enhancing their stage presence

VRET can reduce performance anxiety by up to **55%**
(Seiler and Coviello, 2022)



Crowd-Reading

**Djing is beyond technical skills,
DJs shape the vibe and energy of the whole party**

Preparation, real-time adaptability and crowd-reading
are essential
(Munro et al., 2022)

Audience behaviour serves as real-time feedback that
shapes track selection and flow
(Global DJs Guide, 2023)



Interviews with 6 DJs

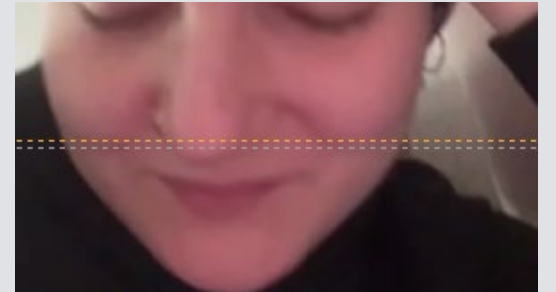
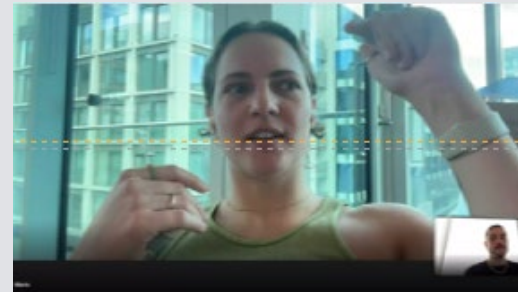
Standardised Hardware

Music Performance Anxiety

Crowd and DJ Behaviour

Learning to DJ

Growth Through Challenge



Standardised Hardware

"A club standard that isn't standard anywhere else. I spent four hours watching CDJ tutorials just before my gig, memorising every button and what it did."

- Hanna Sandvik

Music Performance Anxiety (MPA)

*"My first gig was horrible really. The crowd thought it was good, but for me, I cried afterwards. It was too much stress, and I think it was too early in my career. **I should have practised more before."***

- DJ Bouncy Cat

Crowd and DJ Behaviour

*"DJing is like having a rubber band connecting you to the audience. You can pull and guide them, but if you pull too hard, it snaps. **If you're enjoying yourself, the audience usually does too.**"*

- Max Westergård

Growth Through Challenge

"All the scary things have been what helped me grow the most."

- Irma Svenningsson

Survey

62 responses

60% had less than five years of experience

76% were self-thought

21% struggled with crowd reading

23% struggles with confidence

88% experience Music Performance Anxiety (MPA)

100% see crowd reading as harder than technical mixing

Nila – 21

Early stage DJ

Obsessive preparations

Fear of making mistakes

Worrying about inexperience



Nicole – 29

Established DJ

Pre-gig nerves are still present

Sensitive to crowd disconnection

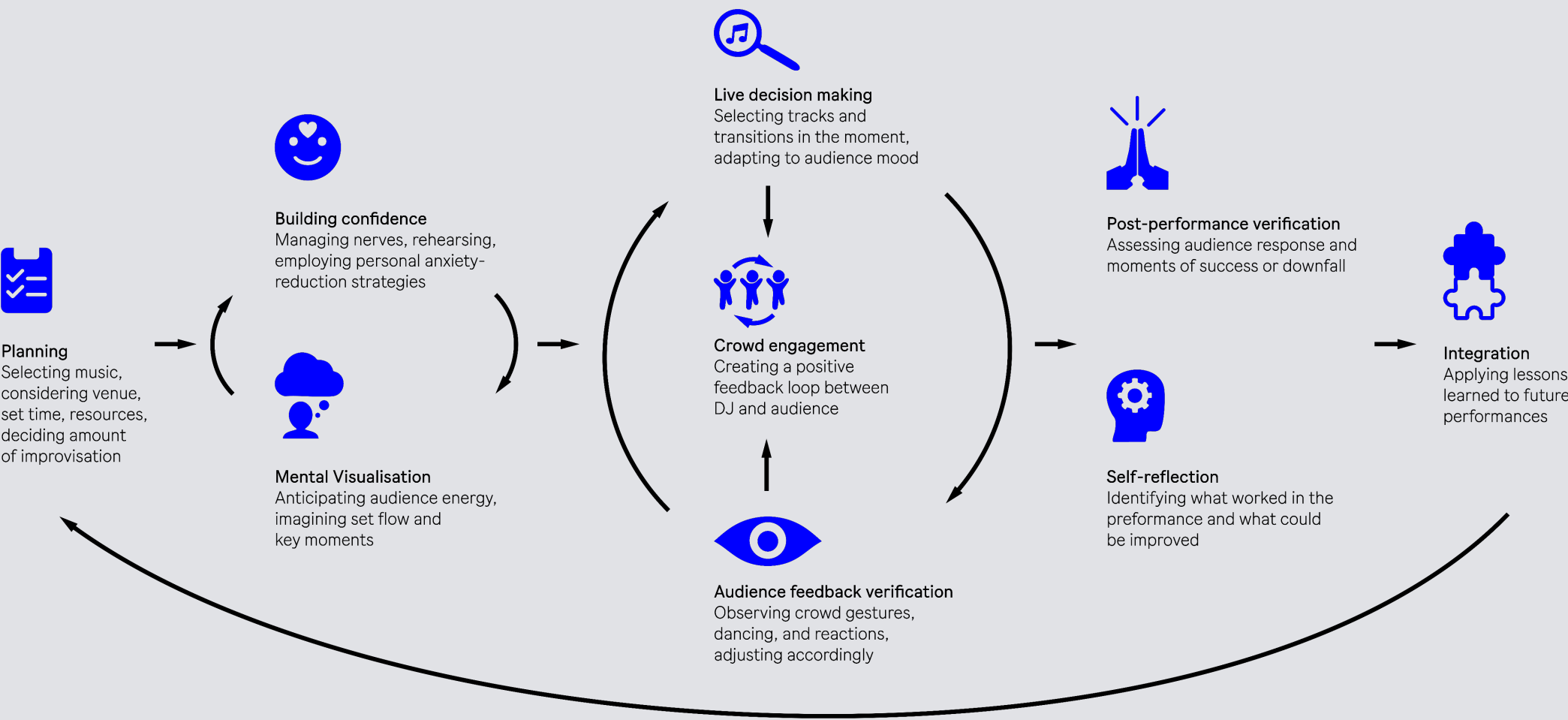
Unfamiliar DJ gear disrupt her rhythm



Pre-Performace

Preformace

Post-Performace



Key WS Insights

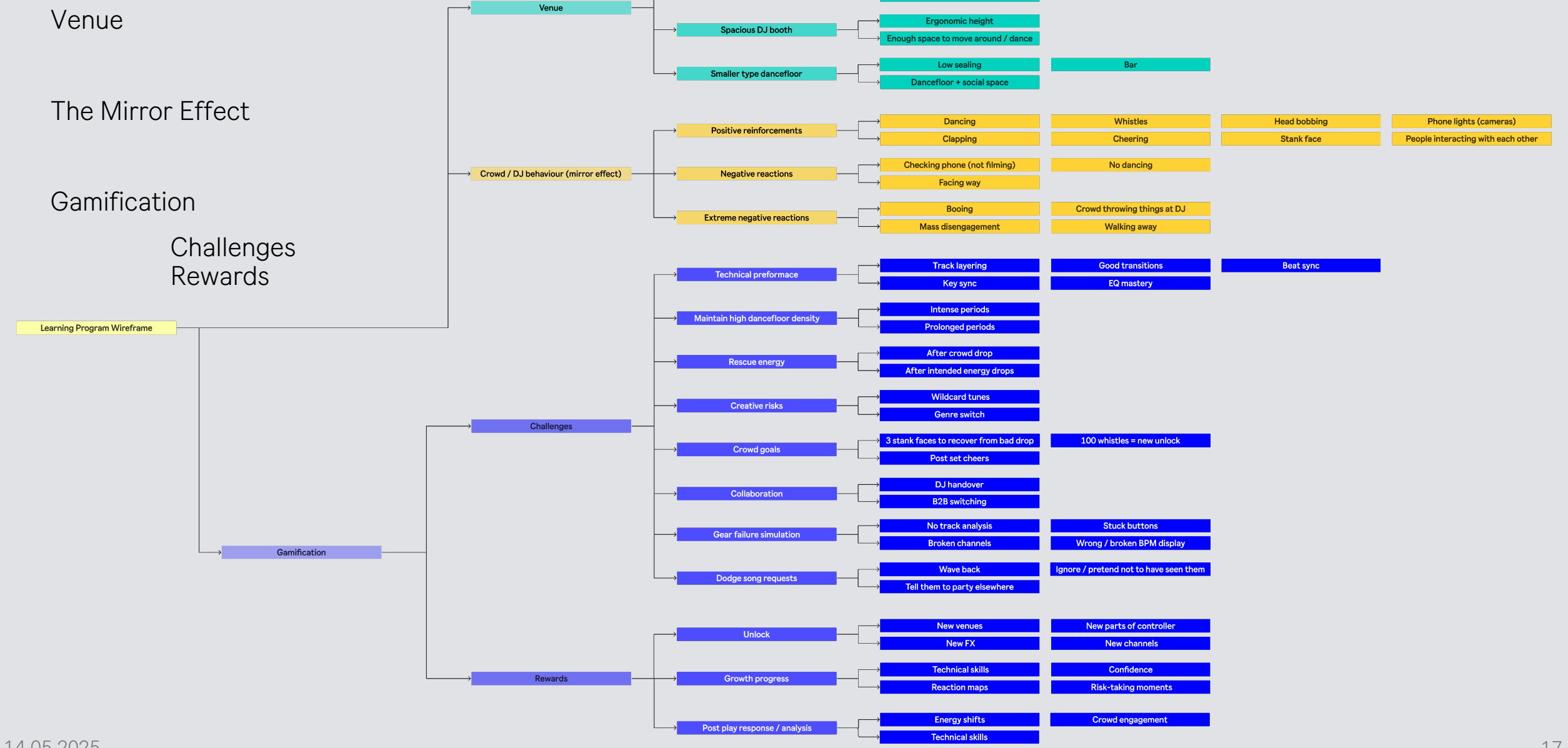
Simulated audience behaviour caused genuine stress and emotional responses

Negative crowd reactions caused distress

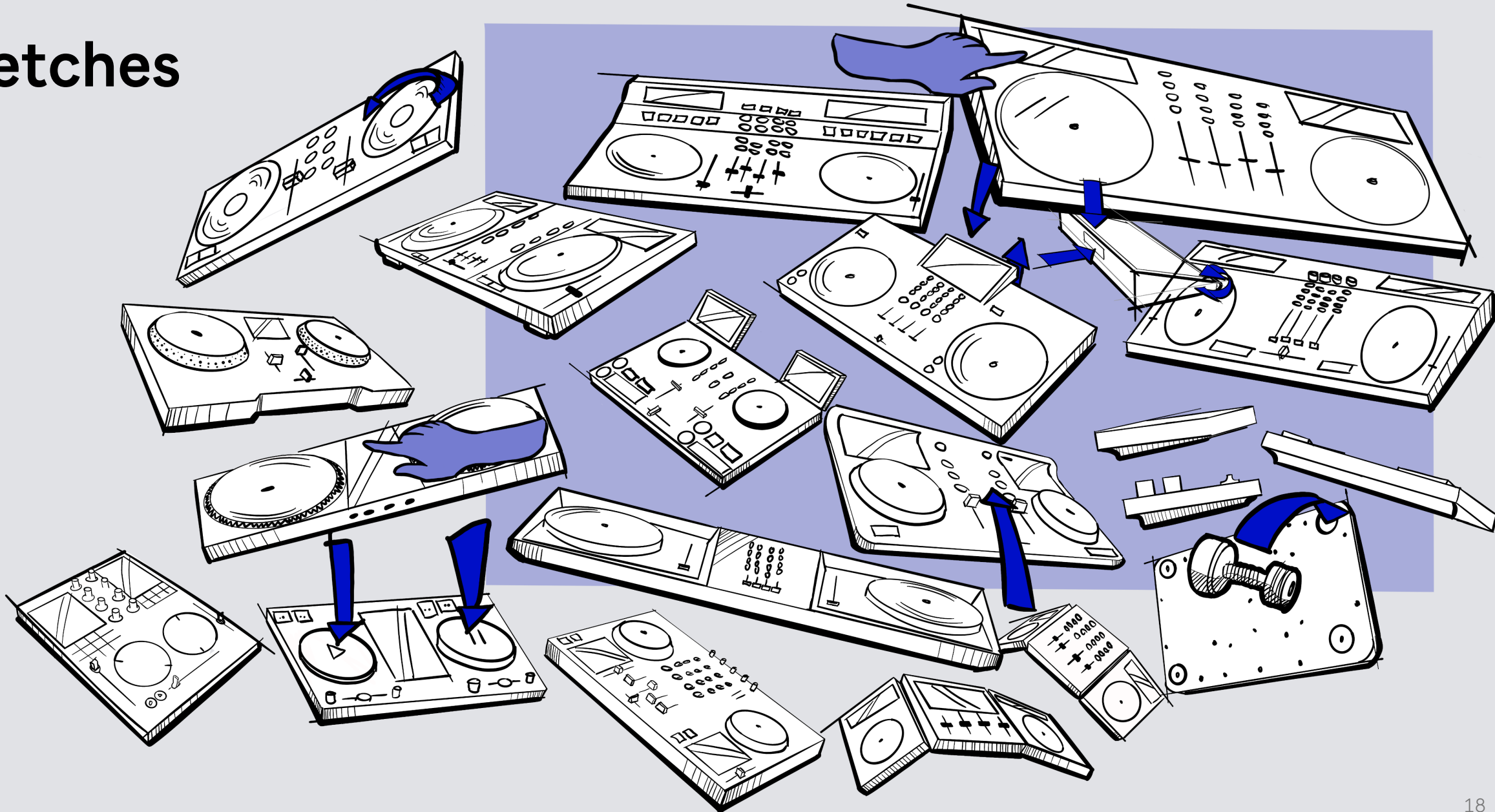
Positive crowd reactions improved confidence and risk-taking

Transitions between DJs were the most anxiety-inducing moments

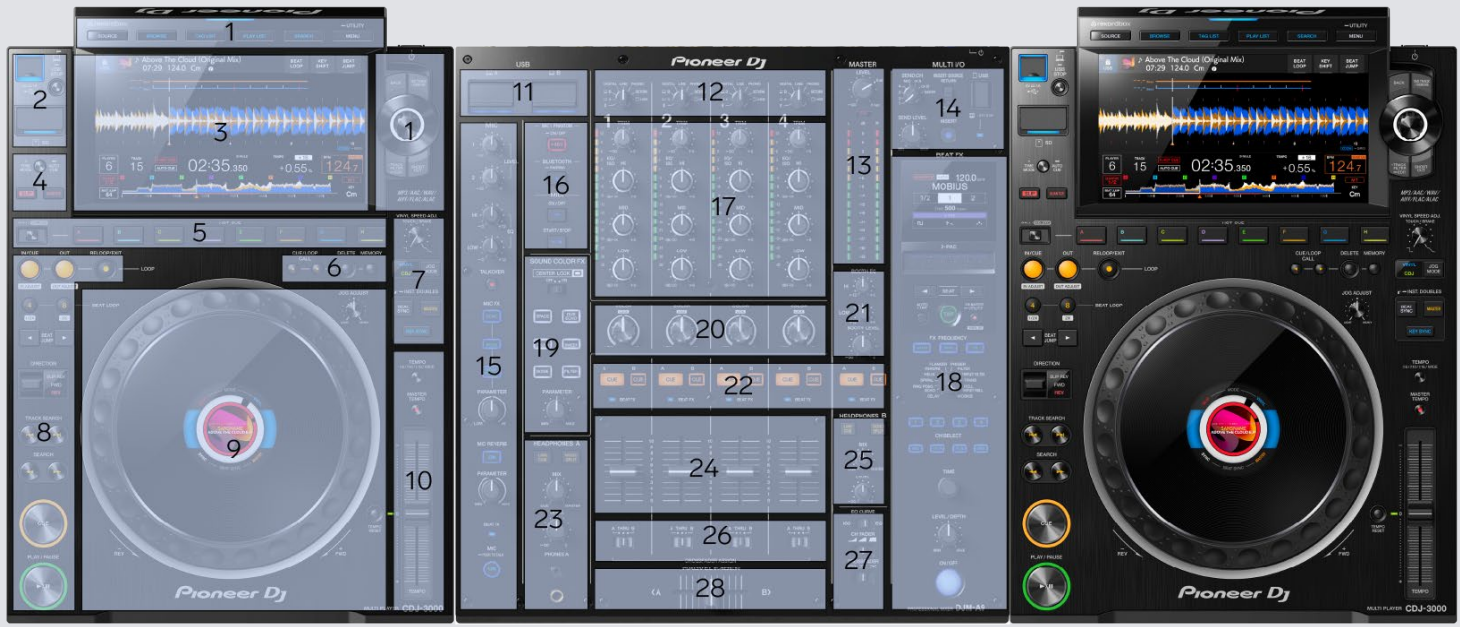




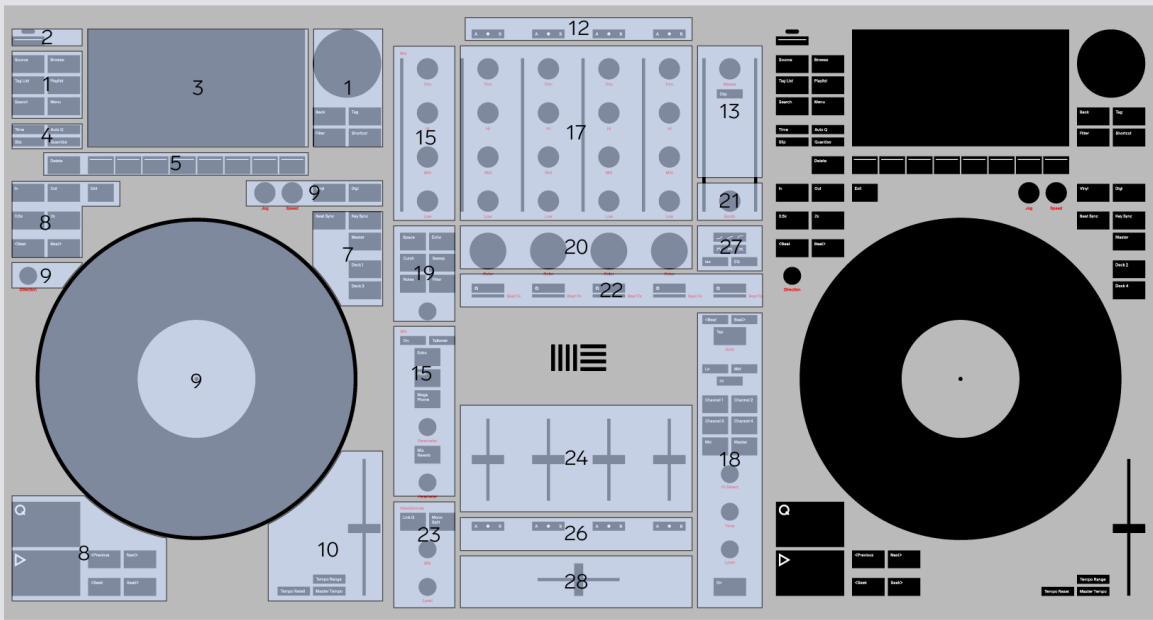
Sketches



2D Mapping



- 1 Browse/Menu Selection
- 2 USB/Eject
- 3 Main Display
- 4 Time Mode / Auto Cue / Slip Controls
- 5 Hot Cues
- 6 Memory Cues
- 7 Sync Controls
- 8 Transport Controls
- 9 Jog Wheel / Jog Controls
- 10 Tempo Slider/Range
- 11 USB Inputs
- 12 Input Select
- 13 Master Level
- 14 Send/Return Effects Routing
- 15 Mic / Mic FX Section
- 16 MIDI Controls
- 17 Channel EQ
- 18 Beat FX Controls
- 19 Sound Color FX
- 20 Sound Color Adjust
- 21 Booth Level
- 22 Cue Section
- 23 Headphones Controls
- 24 Channel Faders
- 25 Headphone B Controls
- 26 Input Select
- 27 Curve Controls
- 28 Crossfader

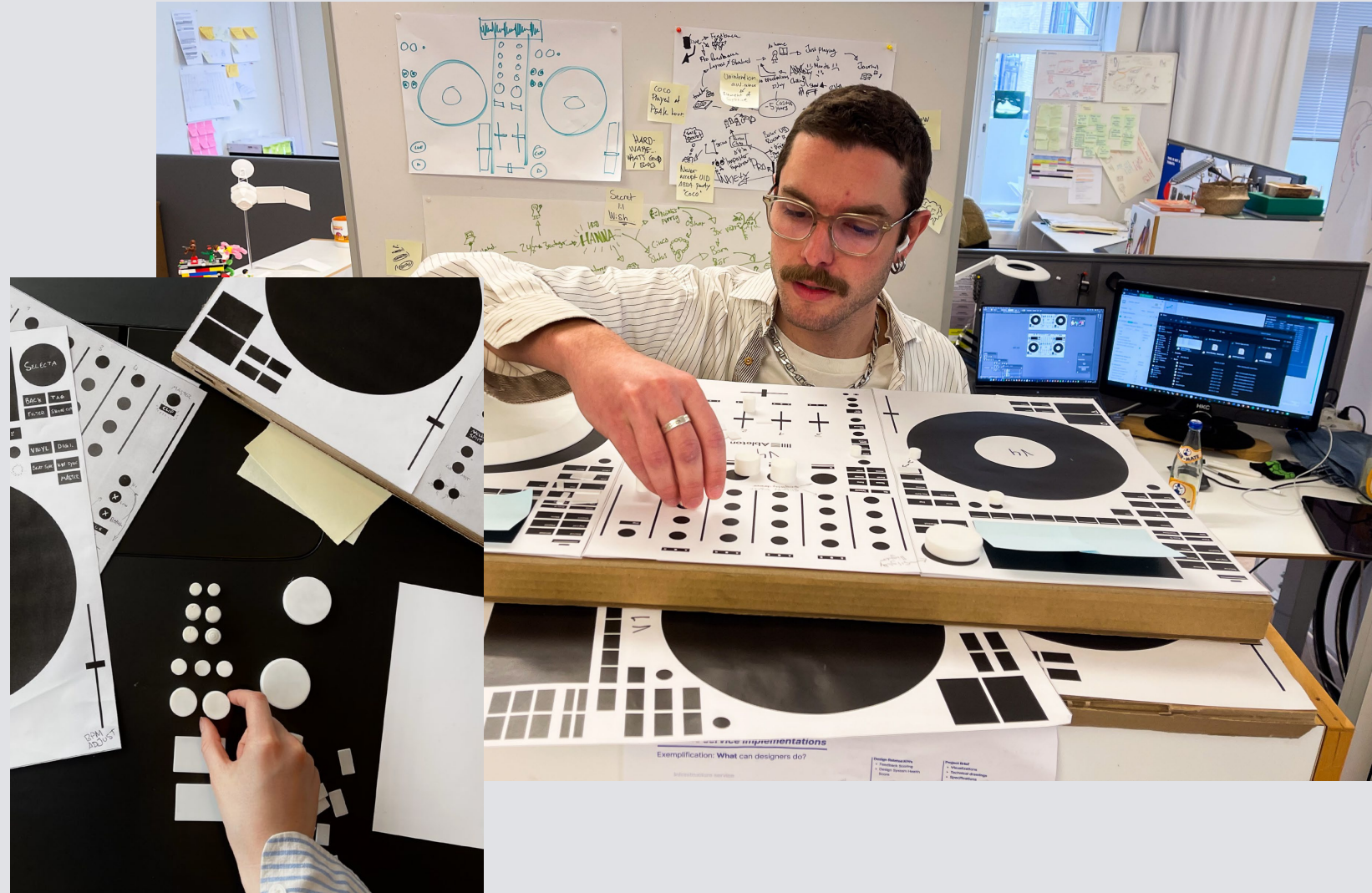


Lo-Fi Prototyping

Paper

Cardboard models

3D Printing



User Validation

“The screen tilts toward me now, much easier, if I’m looking at the screen, I want it to look back at me.”

- Max Westergård

“Big plus that all the mic features are included too. Looks insanely good.”

- Isidor Xavier, ISI-X

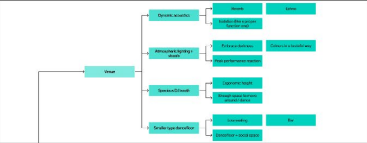
Learning Tool Development

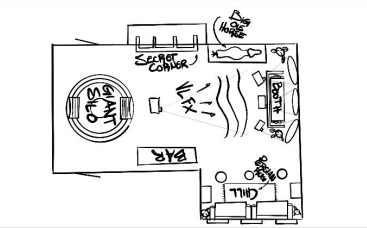
Benchmark

In Pursuit of Repetitive Beats (GOOD FIDELITY GOAL)

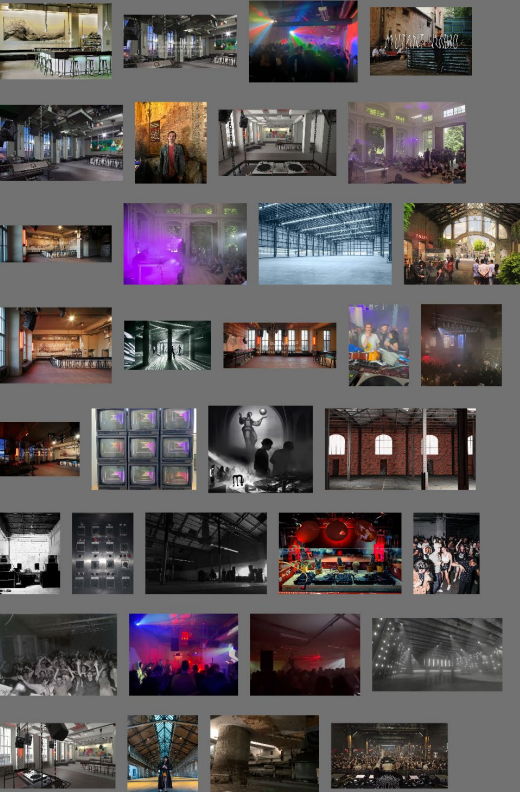


Architecture

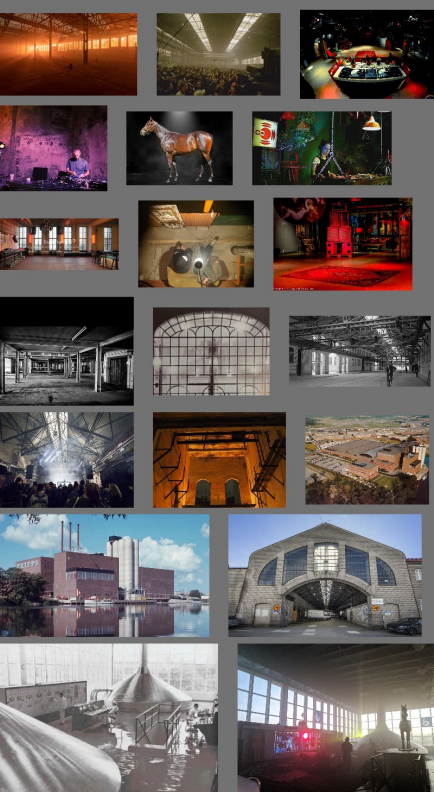




Idea Generation



Main References



Lighting



Process



Transition one



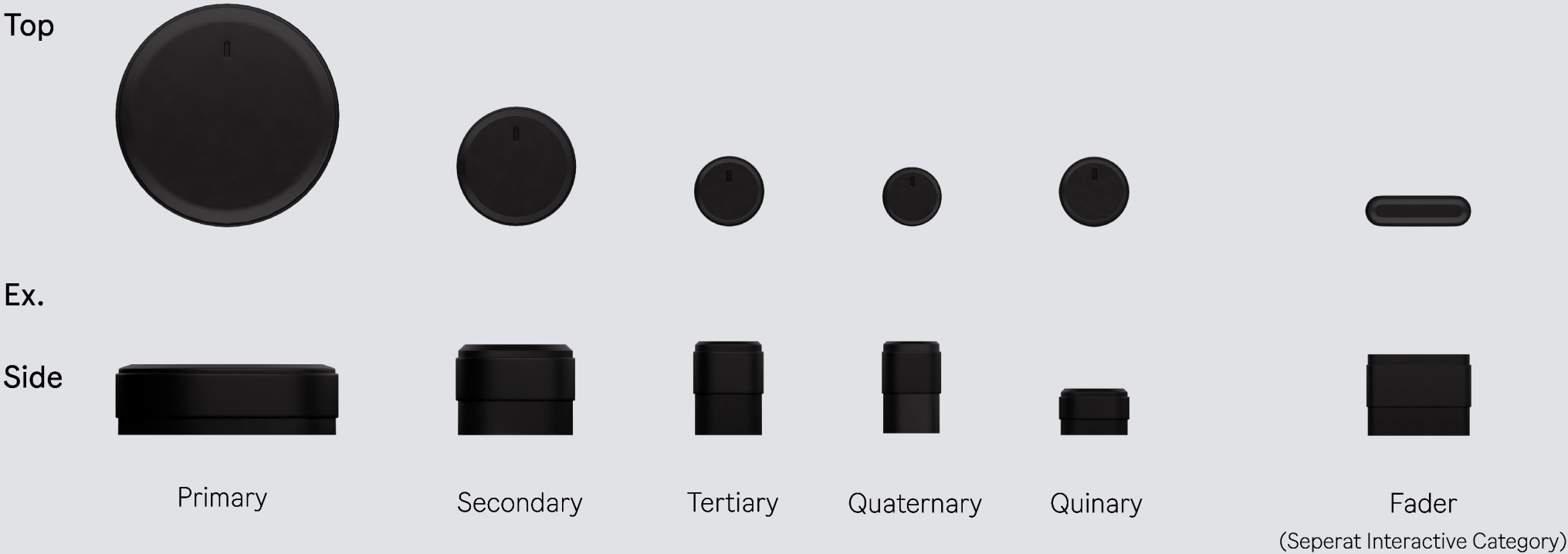
UI Functionality



Buttons & Functionality

Top		Active / Non-Active	Always Active	Active / Non-Active	Active / Non-Active	Active / Non-Active
Ex.	Cue Song	Vinyl Jog Mode	Hot Cue Points	Channel Cue	Quantise Align	Channel Fader / Headphone Channel Control
Side						
	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	Quaternary	Quinary	Senary (Multi functional buttons)

Knobs & Functionality





Light Indications

Outlets





Transition play



Transition play