

# Real musicians on AI in music



Survey by Muse Group among users of  
Ultimate Guitar, MuseScore, Audacity,  
and MuseHub

March 2026

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# Introduction

You're reading our first report on how music creators in our community view AI tools in their everyday work.

The responses come from practicing musicians who use our platforms to learn, create, and share. A beginner guitarist learning songs on Ultimate Guitar, a pianist working with scores in MuseScore, a podcaster editing an episode in Audacity, or a producer using sound libraries in MuseHub. Across all products, Muse Group reaches more than 400 million creators worldwide across a wide range of skill levels, instruments, and backgrounds. This gives us a rare opportunity to ask a large group of working musicians how AI tools fit into real creative workflows.

We ran this survey because the conversation around AI in music has grown quickly and often moves ahead of the people who actually make music. Public debate frequently focuses on large promises or large fears. We wanted to document real creators' perspectives while the technology is still evolving and before industry narratives become fixed.

Most musicians in our community do not reject AI tools outright. Many are open to them when they serve as practical assistants within the creative process. Tools that help clean recordings, correct technical problems, or handle repetitive steps are generally seen as helpful. At the same time, creators draw clear boundaries around authorship. They want to understand what has changed, keep control over the final result, and remain responsible for the finished piece.

We hope that, with the help of our community and the insights they shared, we can contribute to shaping how AI develops in music in a way that supports the creative process and does not replace the act of creating itself.

**Mo Chahdi, COO and Chairman, Muse Group**

# Key findings

## **Musicians are open to AI but only within clear boundaries.**

Overall openness to using AI features in music tools: **77.66%** are open to AI, **10.16%** are neutral, **12.18%** are opposed

- Most prefer AI for technical tasks or cleanup (27.82% and 23.47%). 20.65% accept suggestions only, 18.15% accept generation, and 6.69% want no AI.
- 35.73% want control over AI, 29.52% accept it if they stay the author. 19.92% see it as technical only, 8.23% don't want it, 6.53% don't trust it yet.

## **Creator-first means control.**

- 93.39% prefer more control, even if it takes longer. 6.61% prefer speed over control.
- 57.82% prefer accuracy over creativity. 42.18% prefer creativity, even with mistakes.
- Trust depends on control: clear labeling (42.98%), undo and compare (39.27%), and fine controls (24.76%).
- Most want AI off by default (23.47%), to ask before actions (20.16%), or to suggest only (19.68%). Only 14.68% accept automatic changes.

## **The trust contract is transparency plus reversibility.**

- Trust comes from control: labeling (42.98%), ownership (41.94%), undo/compare (39.27%), accuracy (34.35%).
- 81.29% say the industry needs stronger rules and transparency.
- Over half expect clear labeling (55.08%) and a changelog (53.39%).

## **AI is already helping musicians with routine work.**

AI features are already widely used: **69.69%** used them in the last 3 months.

- Main uses: removing noise/cleaning audio (53.98%), ideas (46.18%), sound generation (39.63%), stem separation (37.75%), pitch correction/tuning (35.10%), practice help (31.83%), transcription to notes/MIDI/notation (27.93%).
- Experience is mostly positive: 55.44% very positive, 35.83% somewhat positive; negatives are minimal.

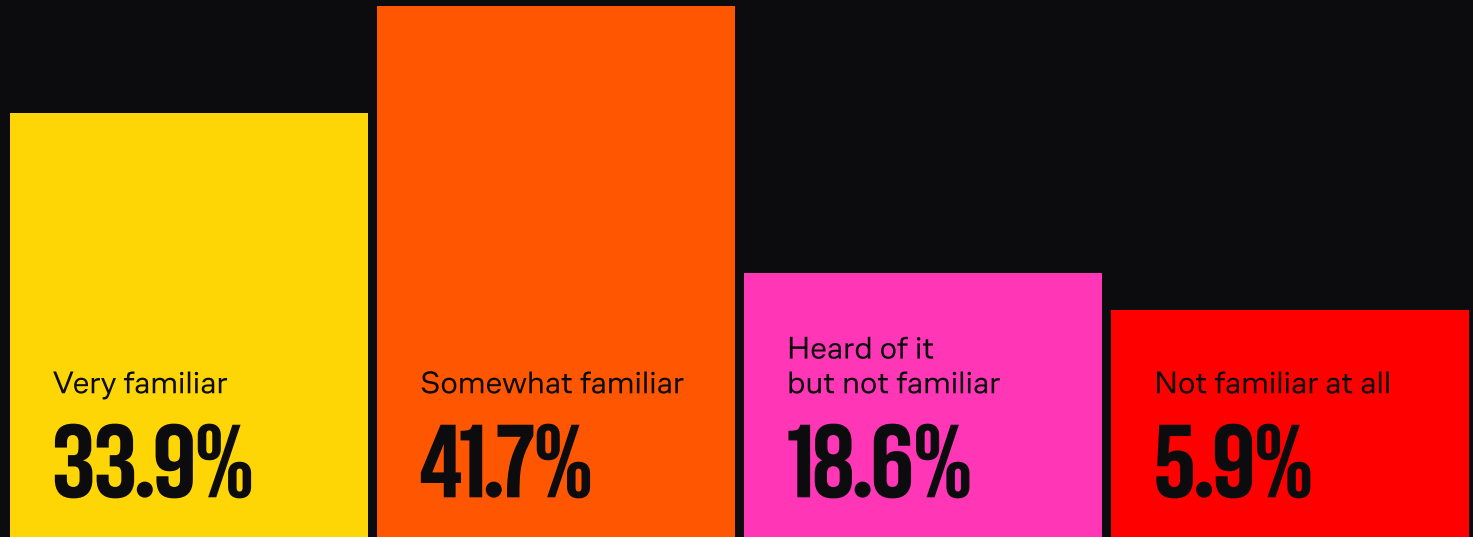
## **Younger generation is the most skeptical and polarized group.**

They are the least likely to report recent use: 45.6% yes vs 49.7% no. They also show the most negative reaction profile: highest concern (26.1%) and by far the highest frustration (21.1%). At the same time, they are the least excited group: only 14.1%.

# Awareness and current adoption

## Familiarity with AI in music tools

AI familiarity is moderate to high overall. 75.6% report at least some familiarity with AI features in music tools (41.7% somewhat, 33.9% very), while 24.4% have low familiarity (18.6% have heard of it but aren't familiar, 5.9% not familiar at all).



## By skill level

### Familiarity tracks strongly with user skill.

Beginners are the least familiar, with 48.4% reporting low familiarity and only 19.2% saying they are very familiar. Advanced and Professional users show the opposite, with 46.6% and 56.1% reporting high familiarity. Intermediates mostly fall into “somewhat familiar” (50.3%), meaning they understand the basics but may still need guidance to use these features effectively.

	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced	Professional
Not familiar at all	15.38%	5.89%	2.44%	4.08%
Heard of it but not familiar	32.97%	20.24%	11.31%	16.33%
Somewhat familiar	32.42%	50.29%	39.69%	23.47%
Very familiar	19.23%	23.58%	46.56%	56.12%

## By age group

Age effects show up mostly at the top and bottom ends.

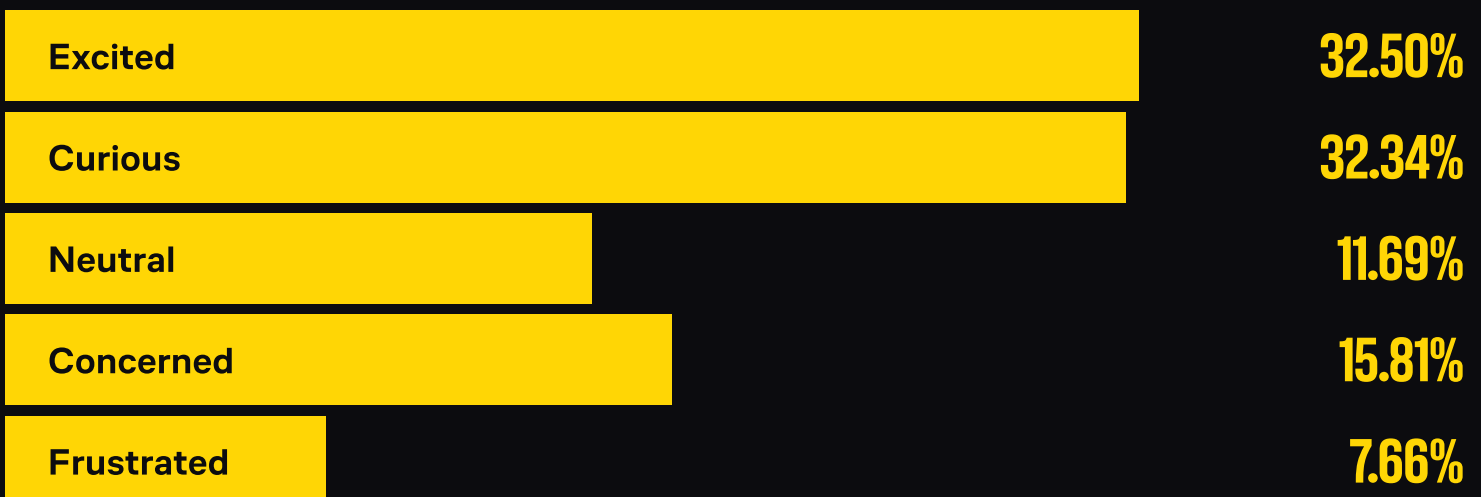
- **25–44:** highest familiarity (around 40–41% very familiar).
- **55+:** lower familiarity (42.5% low, 19.0% very familiar).
- **18–24:** more somewhat familiar than very familiar, suggesting awareness without depth.

	18–24	25–34	35–44	45–54	55+
Not familiar at all	8.04%	3.27%	2.98%	4.94%	12.22%
Heard of it but not familiar	18.09%	13.82%	13.58%	19.75%	30.32%
Somewhat familiar	42.71%	41.82%	43.05%	41.98%	38.46%
Very familiar	31.16%	41.09%	40.40%	33.33%	19.00%

# First reaction to “AI in music tools”

Overall reaction is positive, but not uniformly enthusiastic.

- **64.8%** respond with interest or optimism (32.3% curious, 32.5% excited).
- **23.5%** are negative (15.8% concerned, 7.7% frustrated).
- **11.7%** are neutral.



## By skill level

Enthusiasm rises with experience.

- **Beginners:** least excited (20.3%), most neutral (18.1%), higher concern (18.1%).
- **Advanced:** more positive (41.2% excited, 12.9% concerned).
- **Professionals:** still positive (36.7% excited) but more frustrated (around 10%). That combination usually signals “I know what I want and I’ve seen bad implementations.”

	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced	Professional	All participants
Excited	<b>20.33%</b>	<b>28.29%</b>	<b>41.24%</b>	<b>36.73%</b>	<b>32.50%</b>
Curious	<b>36.81%</b>	<b>33.40%</b>	<b>29.49%</b>	<b>31.63%</b>	<b>32.34%</b>
Neutral	<b>18.13%</b>	<b>10.61%</b>	<b>11.31%</b>	<b>7.14%</b>	<b>11.69%</b>
Concerned	<b>18.13%</b>	<b>17.88%</b>	<b>12.86%</b>	<b>14.29%</b>	<b>15.81%</b>
Frustrated	<b>6.59%</b>	<b>9.82%</b>	<b>5.10%</b>	<b>10.20%</b>	<b>7.66%</b>

## By age group

- **18–24** stands out: highest concern (26.1%) and frustration (21.1%), lowest excitement (14.1%), pointing to distrust or negative experience.
- **25–54:** most positive (36–42% excited) and least frustrated (3–6%).
- **55+:** more curious (41.2%) than excited (25.3%), suggesting openness with a need for clarity and reassurance.

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55+
Excited	<b>14.07%</b>	<b>36.36%</b>	<b>42.38%</b>	<b>37.45%</b>	<b>25.34%</b>
Curious	<b>24.62%</b>	<b>30.55%</b>	<b>30.79%</b>	<b>34.57%</b>	<b>41.18%</b>
Neutral	<b>14.07%</b>	<b>11.64%</b>	<b>10.26%</b>	<b>11.11%</b>	<b>12.22%</b>
Concerned	<b>26.13%</b>	<b>15.64%</b>	<b>10.60%</b>	<b>13.58%</b>	<b>16.29%</b>
Frustrated	<b>21.11%</b>	<b>5.82%</b>	<b>5.96%</b>	<b>3.29%</b>	<b>4.98%</b>

# What “AI features” means to respondents

## Assistive vs suggestive vs generative

### Overall

AI is mostly understood as generative or assistive.

- 40.3% think of generation, 32.0% of assistive tasks, 18.7% of suggestions, 9.1% not sure.
- Users associate AI more with creating or automating work than with recommendations.



### By skill level

Skill level does not change how people understand AI. From beginners to professionals, most think of it as generating content first (around 38–42%), then helping with tasks (29–33%), and only then making suggestions (17–21%). This means the differences in enthusiasm are not about different definitions. People are reacting differently to the same idea.

	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced	Professional
Assistive AI (helps with technical tasks like cleanup, transcription, practice feedback)	30.08%	32.42%	33.33%	28.57%
Suggestive AI (suggests options like chords, fingerings, arrangements)	21.05%	17.27%	18.57%	21.43%
Generative AI (creates new content like melodies, beats, lyrics, sounds)	38.35%	41.52%	40.00%	39.29%
Not sure	10.53%	8.79%	8.10%	10.71%

## By age group

Age affects how people think about AI more than skill level. Younger users, especially 18–24 and 25–34, most often associate it with generating content (48.3% and 46.9%). Older groups (35–54) lean more toward assistive use (36.1–38.8%) and less toward generation (40.8% down to 33.1%). The 55+ group shows the highest uncertainty (18.4% not sure).

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55+
Assistive AI (helps with technical tasks like cleanup, transcription, practice feedback)	26.67%	28.91%	36.09%	38.75%	26.97%
Suggestive AI (suggests options like chords, fingerings, arrangements)	15.00%	21.09%	16.57%	21.25%	19.08%
Generative AI (creates new content like melodies, beats, lyrics, sounds)	48.33%	46.88%	40.83%	33.13%	35.53%
Not sure	10.00%	3.13%	6.51%	6.88%	18.42%

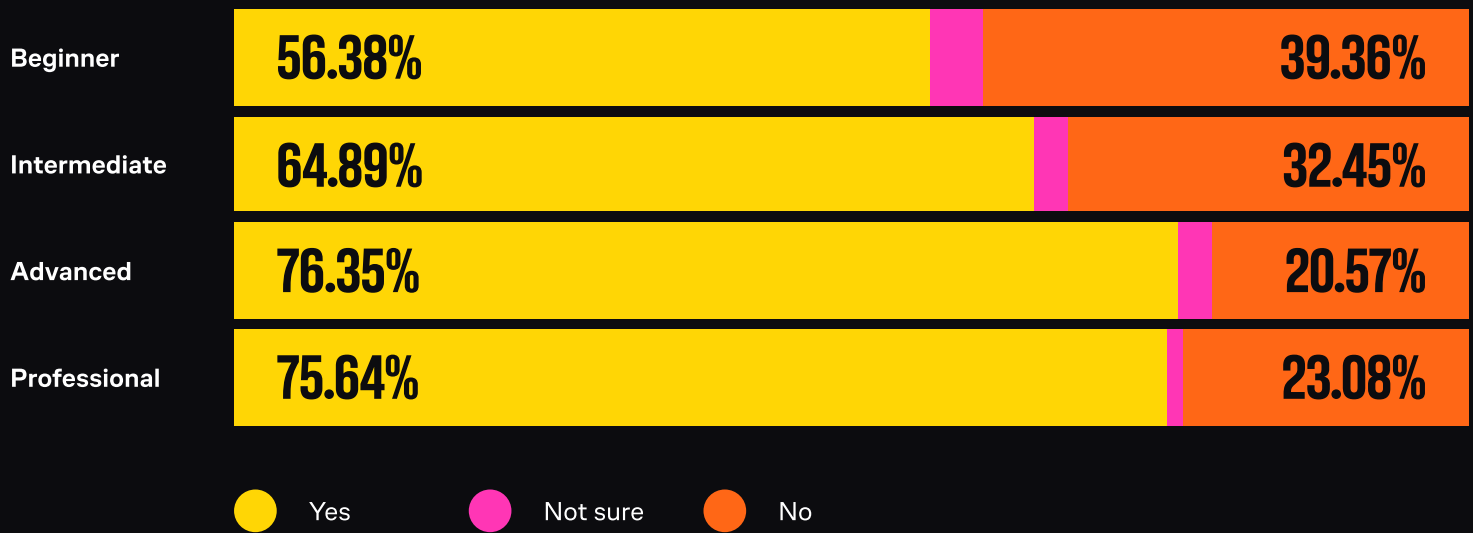
## Recent usage of AI features

Recent usage is high but not universal. In the last 3 months, **69.7%** say they've used an AI feature in a music tool, while **27.4%** have not and **2.9%** aren't sure. This shows it is already part of the workflow for about 7 in 10 users, not just a future feature.



## By skill level

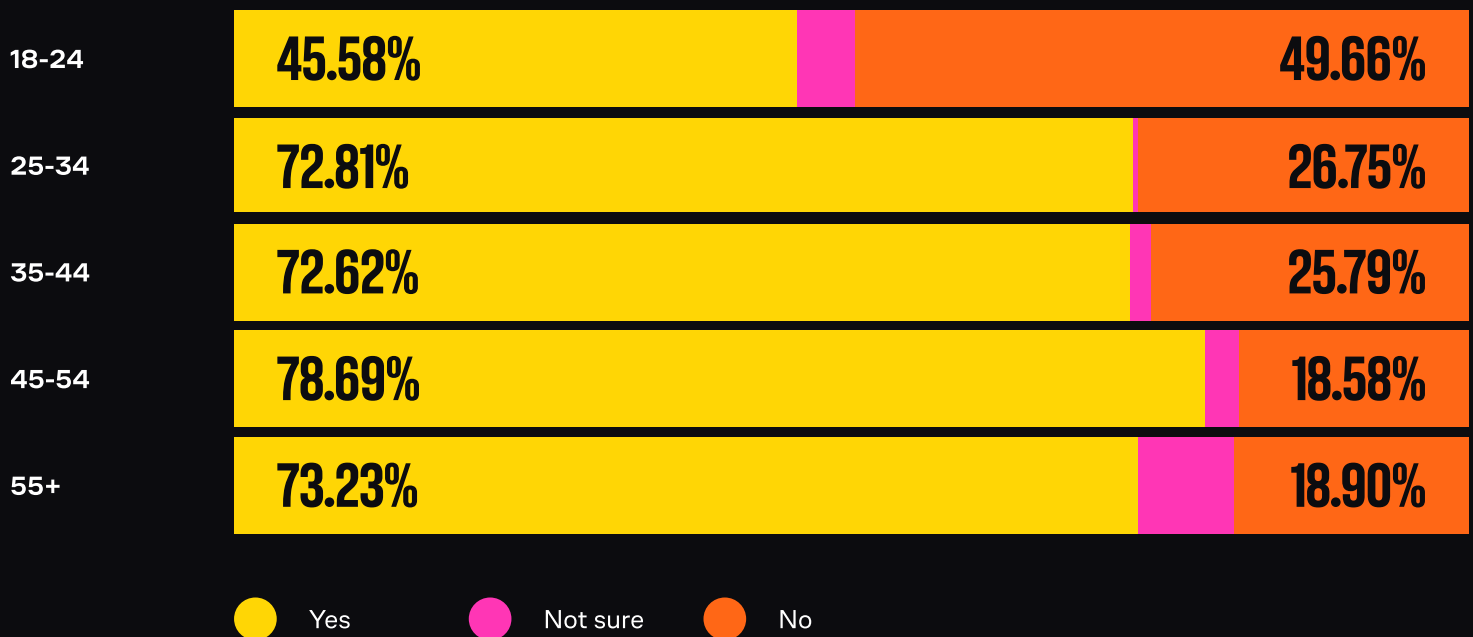
Skill level is the clearest divider. **Beginners** are less likely to have used AI recently (56.4% yes, 39.4% no), **intermediates** rise to 64.9%, and **advanced** and **professional** users reach around 76%. This suggests usage is driven less by awareness and more by need, with more complex tasks, editing and production.



## By age group

Age shows a less obvious pattern. The **18–24** group reports the lowest recent use (45.6% yes, 49.7% no), despite being close to new tech. This matches their higher concern and frustration and points to skepticism or a higher bar for what feels useful.

In contrast, ages **25–54** show consistently high usage (72.6% to 78.7%). The **55+** group is also high (73.2%) but has the most “not sure” responses (7.9%), which likely comes down to terminology rather than actual use.



## What participants use AI for

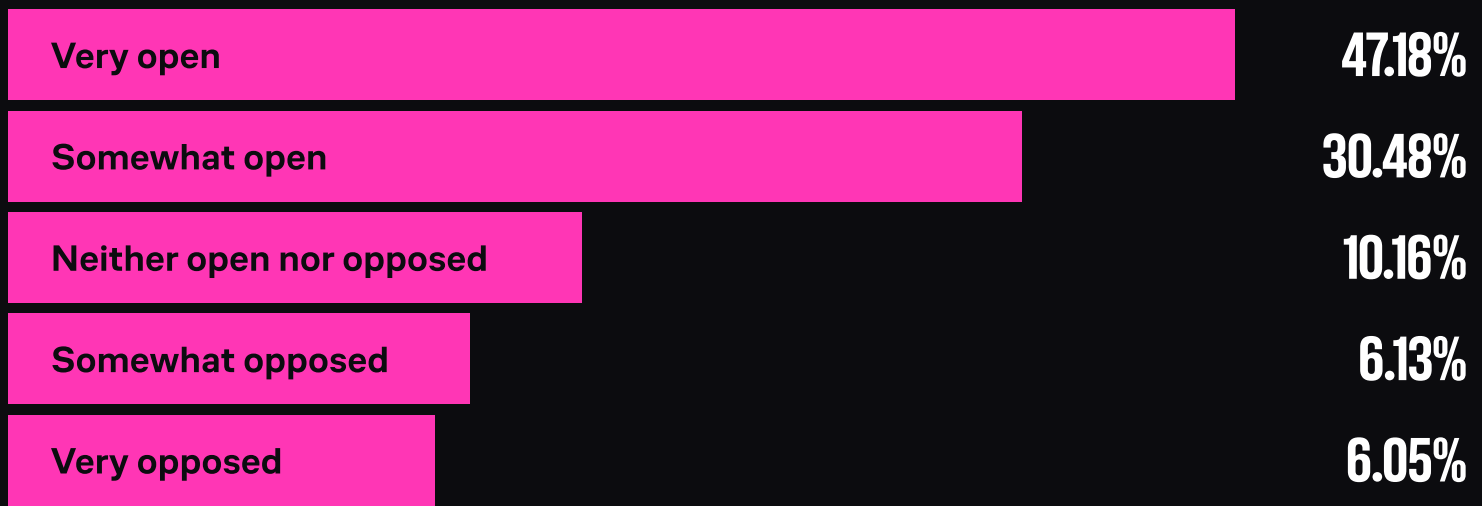
People mainly use AI for practical cleanup and creative support. The most common use is removing noise or cleaning audio (54.0%), followed by generating ideas (46.2%), stem separation (37.8%), and pitch correction or tuning (35.1%).

Removing noise or cleaning audio	53.98%
Generating ideas (melodies, chords, beats, lyrics)	46.18%
Generating sounds (presets, timbres, textures)	39.63%
Separating instruments or vocals (stems)	37.75%
Pitch correction or tuning	35.10%
Helping practice (feedback, mistakes, tempo, guidance)	31.83%
Transcribing audio to notes / MIDI / notation	27.93%
Mixing or mastering assistance	23.56%
Matching to a style or reference	21.37%
Finding or organizing music (search, tags, recommendations)	14.82%

# Openness and acceptability boundaries

## General openness to AI features

Openness to AI is high. **77.7%** are open (47.2% very, 30.5% somewhat), **12.2%** are opposed (6.1% somewhat, 6.1% very), and **10.2%** are neutral.



## By skill level

Openness generally increases with skill level, with one exception. **Advanced** and **professional** users are the most likely to be very open (56.8% and 52.0%), while **beginners** are less enthusiastic (35.2%) and more often neutral (15.9%). At the same time, **professionals** also have the highest share of strong opposition (10.2% very opposed), pointing to a smaller group with clear concerns around quality or principles.

	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced	Professional
Very open	35.16%	42.04%	56.76%	52.04%
Somewhat open	34.62%	34.58%	26.61%	19.39%
Neither open nor opposed	15.93%	10.61%	7.54%	9.18%
Somewhat opposed	7.69%	5.70%	5.32%	9.18%
Very opposed	6.59%	7.07%	3.77%	10.20%

## By age group

Age is where the split becomes clear. The 18–24 group is the least open and the most divided. Only 25.6% are very open, while 28.1% are opposed. All other age groups are mostly very open (46.6% to 53.6%) with much lower opposition (around 7% to 11%). This matches earlier results – the youngest group is the most wary and the least enthusiastic.

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55+
Very open	25.63%	52.36%	53.64%	51.44%	46.61%
Somewhat open	31.16%	30.55%	29.80%	32.10%	28.96%
Neither open nor opposed	15.58%	8.36%	7.95%	9.47%	11.31%
Somewhat opposed	14.07%	3.64%	3.97%	3.70%	7.69%
Very opposed	13.57%	5.09%	4.64%	3.29%	5.43%

# Openness by AI type

## Assistive vs suggestive vs generative

Users draw a clear line between help and creation.

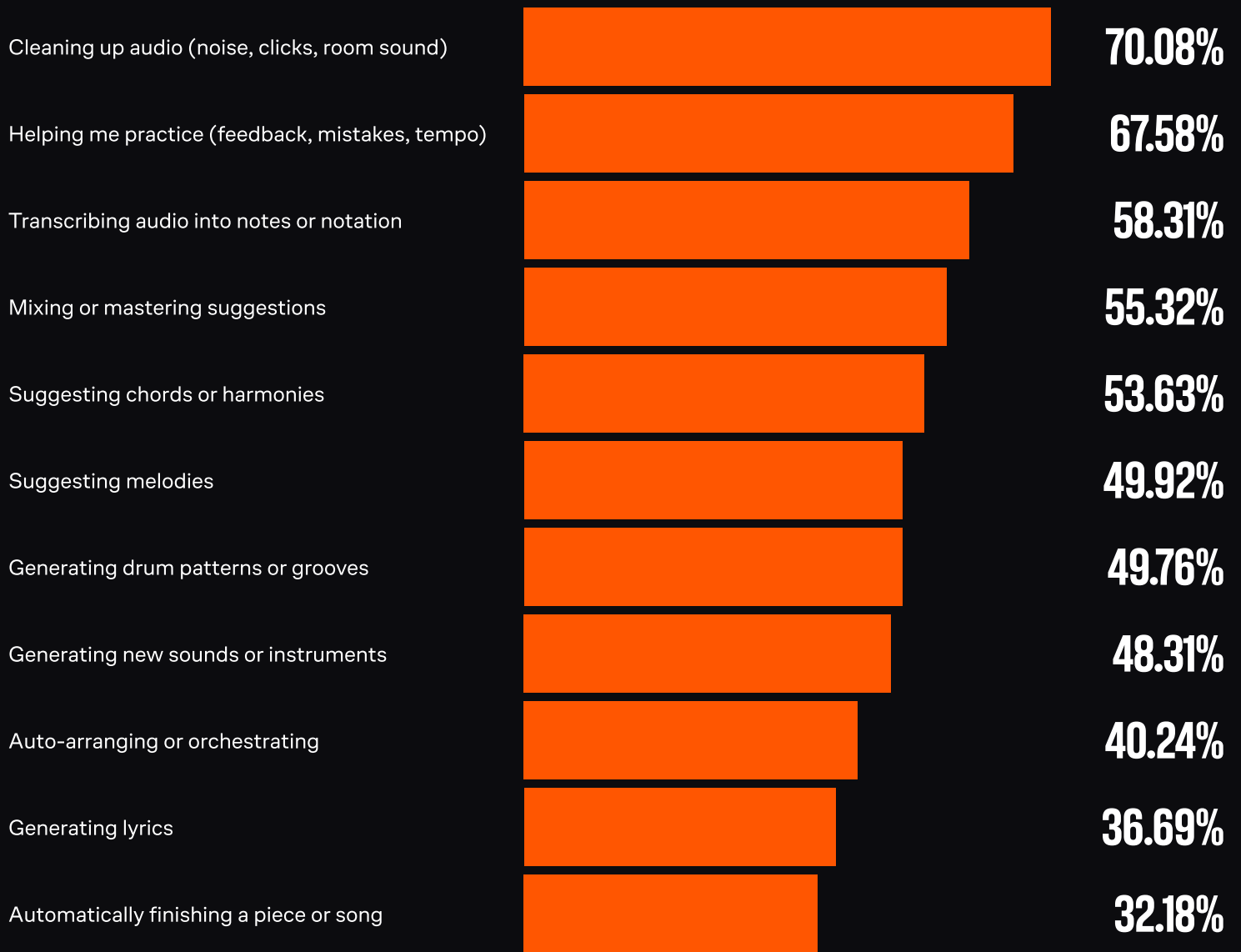
- **Assistive use** is the most accepted. 75.96% are open (47.98% very, 27.98% somewhat), with only 9.75% opposed and 13.55% neutral. This is the most stable and widely accepted category.
- **Suggestive use** is still broadly accepted but slightly less so. 72.09% are open (41.53% very, 30.56% somewhat), 11.94% opposed, and 15.08% neutral. The drop reflects sensitivity around taste and control.
- **Generative use** shows the most tension. Openness remains a majority at 67.26% (39.92% very, 27.34% somewhat), but opposition rises to 17.42%, with 10.48% strongly opposed. This is where views diverge most clearly.

	Assistive AI	Suggestive AI	Generative AI
Very open	<b>47.98%</b>	<b>41.53%</b>	<b>39.92%</b>
Somewhat open	<b>27.98%</b>	<b>30.56%</b>	<b>27.34%</b>
Neither open nor opposed	<b>13.55%</b>	<b>15.08%</b>	<b>14.27%</b>
Somewhat opposed	<b>5.40%</b>	<b>5.65%</b>	<b>6.94%</b>
Very opposed	<b>4.35%</b>	<b>6.29%</b>	<b>10.48%</b>

# Acceptability by use cases

Acceptability drops as AI moves from assistance to creation.

- **Assistive** tasks are widely accepted. Cleaning audio leads (70.1% acceptable, 6.9% not), followed by practice help (67.6%, 7.7%) and transcription (58.3%, 11.4%). These keep control with the user.
- **Suggestions** are accepted with conditions. Mixing and mastering suggestions sit at 55.3% acceptable, with a high 30.0% saying it depends. Control and reversibility are expected.
- **Content suggestions** are more cautious. Chords and harmonies (53.6%), melodies (49.9%), and drum patterns (49.8%) all come with large “depends” shares and growing rejection. These are seen as ideas, not decisions.
- **Generative** content is more sensitive. Sounds are still broadly acceptable (48.3%), but lyrics drop to 36.7% acceptable with 28.7% not acceptable. Arranging shows similar tension (40.2% acceptable, 36.9% depends).
- The clearest boundary is **full delegation**. Only 32.2% accept AI finishing a song, while 30.0% reject it.



A simple boundary model is that technical help is welcomed, creative authority stays with the human, and fully autonomous creation is the most contested



# Trust, risk, and dealbreakers

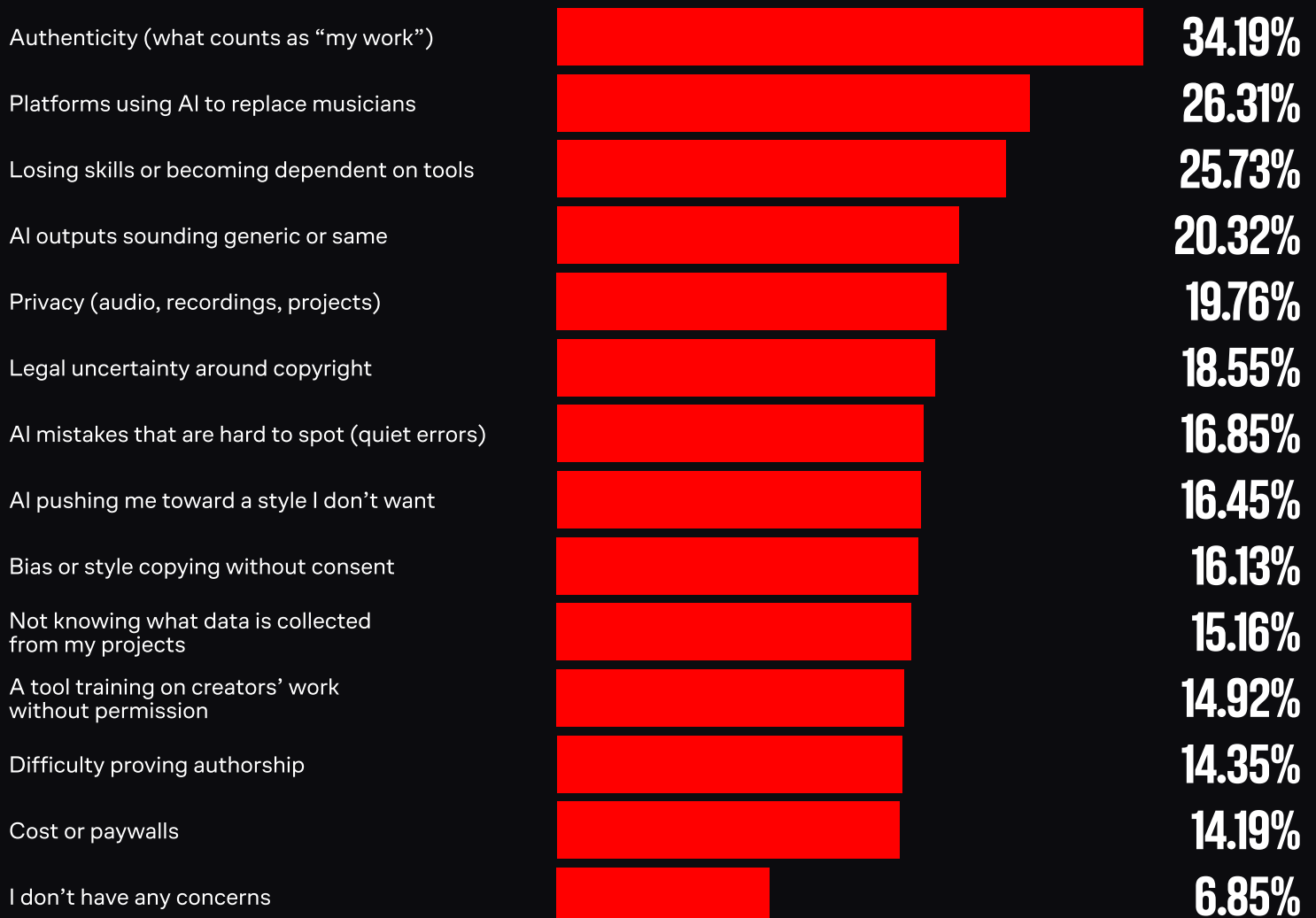
## Top concerns

Only **6.9%** say they have no concerns. Most users come to these features with at least some hesitation, even if they are open to using them.

The main concern is authenticity. **34.2%** question what still counts as “my work” when these tools are involved. People are comfortable as long as they stay in control and remain the author.

Two other concerns sit close to this.

- **26.1%** worry about platforms using these tools to replace musicians. This reflects concern about incentives, not just functionality.
- **25.7%** worry about losing skills or becoming dependent on tools. This is about long-term impact on craft.



Some conditions are clear dealbreakers. Performance alone is not enough if consent, ownership, or control are compromised.

- **Creator rights** are the main dealbreaker: 40.9% reject use without permission, 40.0% reject style copying, 34.3% reject unclear ownership.
- **Transparency and control** matter: ~32% reject unclear changes or lack of undo/compare.
- **Training practices** matter: 25.2% reject default training.

It used other creators' work without permission	40.89%
It copied recognizable artist styles without consent	40.00%
It produced outputs with unclear ownership/copyright	34.27%
It wasn't clear what it changed or generated	32.18%
I couldn't undo or compare changes easily	31.77%
It was bundled into a subscription with no way to disable it	30.16%
I couldn't export my work without restrictions	27.18%
It trained on my work by default (no opt-in)	25.24%
It required uploading my audio/scores to the cloud	22.82%
None of these are dealbreakers	10.65%

# How musicians see AI's impact

(earnings, job risk, productivity, rules and transparency, control)

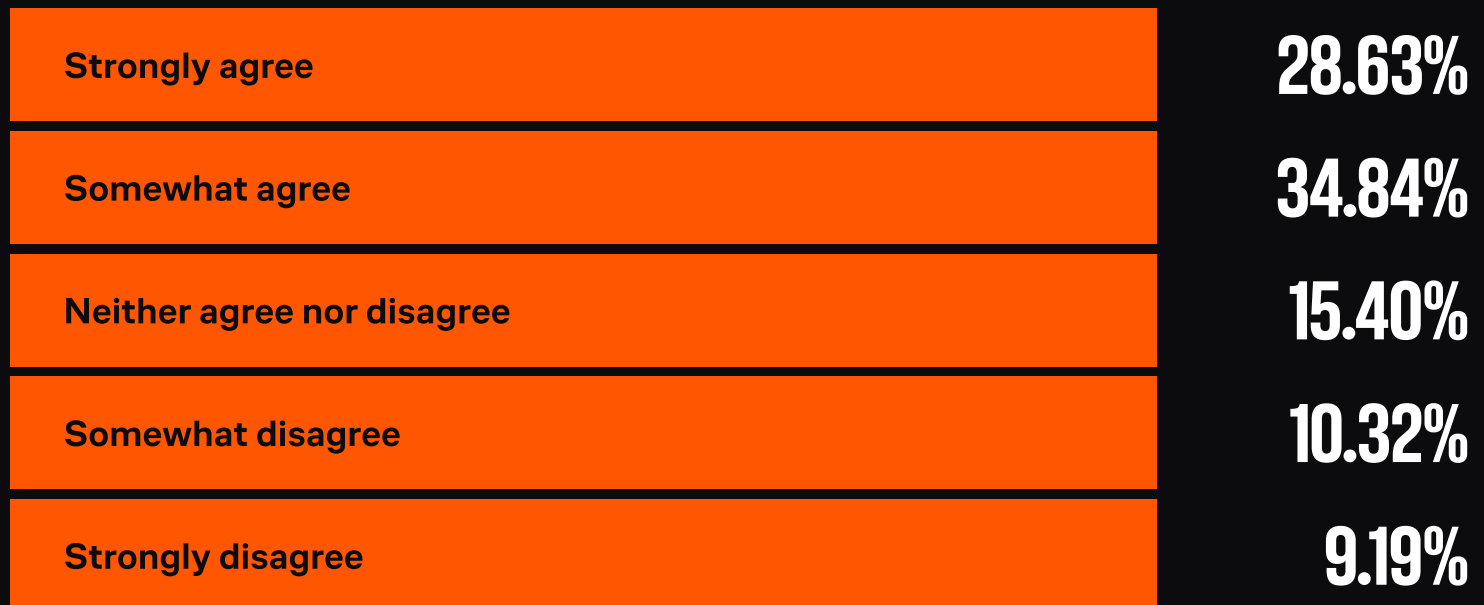
Musicians expect these tools to help in daily work, but also to disrupt the job market and require rules. Both views exist at the same time.

**On earnings, the sentiment is mostly negative.**

63.5% believe it will become harder to earn money (34.8% somewhat, 28.6% strongly). 19.5% disagree, while 15.4% are neutral and 1.6% are not sure.

Even users who benefit from these tools still expect a negative impact on musicians overall.

**“AI tools will make it harder for musicians to earn money.”**



**Replacement fears are even stronger.**

68.0% expect some types of musicians to be replaced (40.1% somewhat, 27.9% strongly), while 17.3% disagree. This matches earlier concerns about replacement and authenticity. It is not seen as a full wipeout, but as displacement in specific roles.

## “AI tools will replace some types of musicians.”

Strongly agree	27.90%
Somewhat agree	40.08%
Neither agree nor disagree	12.50%
Somewhat disagree	9.76%
Strongly disagree	7.58%

At the same time, users also believe AI will help them be more productive.

67.8% agree with the productivity statement (38.6% somewhat, 29.3% strongly). Disagreement is low (16.2%), with 13.9% neutral.

## “AI tools will mostly help musicians be more productive.”

Strongly agree	29.27%
Somewhat agree	38.55%
Neither agree nor disagree	13.87%
Somewhat disagree	8.63%
Strongly disagree	7.58%

The strongest consensus in the set is governance.

81.3% agree that companies building AI in music need stronger rules and transparency, with 46.8% strongly agreeing. Only 5.9% disagree. Users expect clear policies, disclosure, and guardrails rather than self-regulation.

## “Companies building AI in music need stronger rules and transparency.”

Strongly agree	46.77%
Somewhat agree	34.52%
Neither agree nor disagree	10.97%
Somewhat disagree	3.95%
Strongly disagree	1.94%

## Trust builders

- **Transparency is the main driver of trust.** 43.0% want clear labeling of what was changed or generated, with the highest share in MuseScore (49.4%). Close behind is reversibility: 39.3% want to undo and compare to the original. The expectation is simple: make changes visible and reversible.
  - **Ownership and licensing are just as important.** 41.9% want clear terms on what they own, what they can publish, and how outputs can be used. This is especially strong among Audacity users (46.4%).
  - **Quality matters, but it is not the top factor.** 34.4% say fewer mistakes would increase trust. Users accept some imperfection, but not changes they cannot see or control.
- 10.9% say nothing would increase their trust.

Clear labeling of what AI changed or generated	42.98%
Clear ownership and licensing terms	41.94%
Ability to undo and compare to the original	39.27%

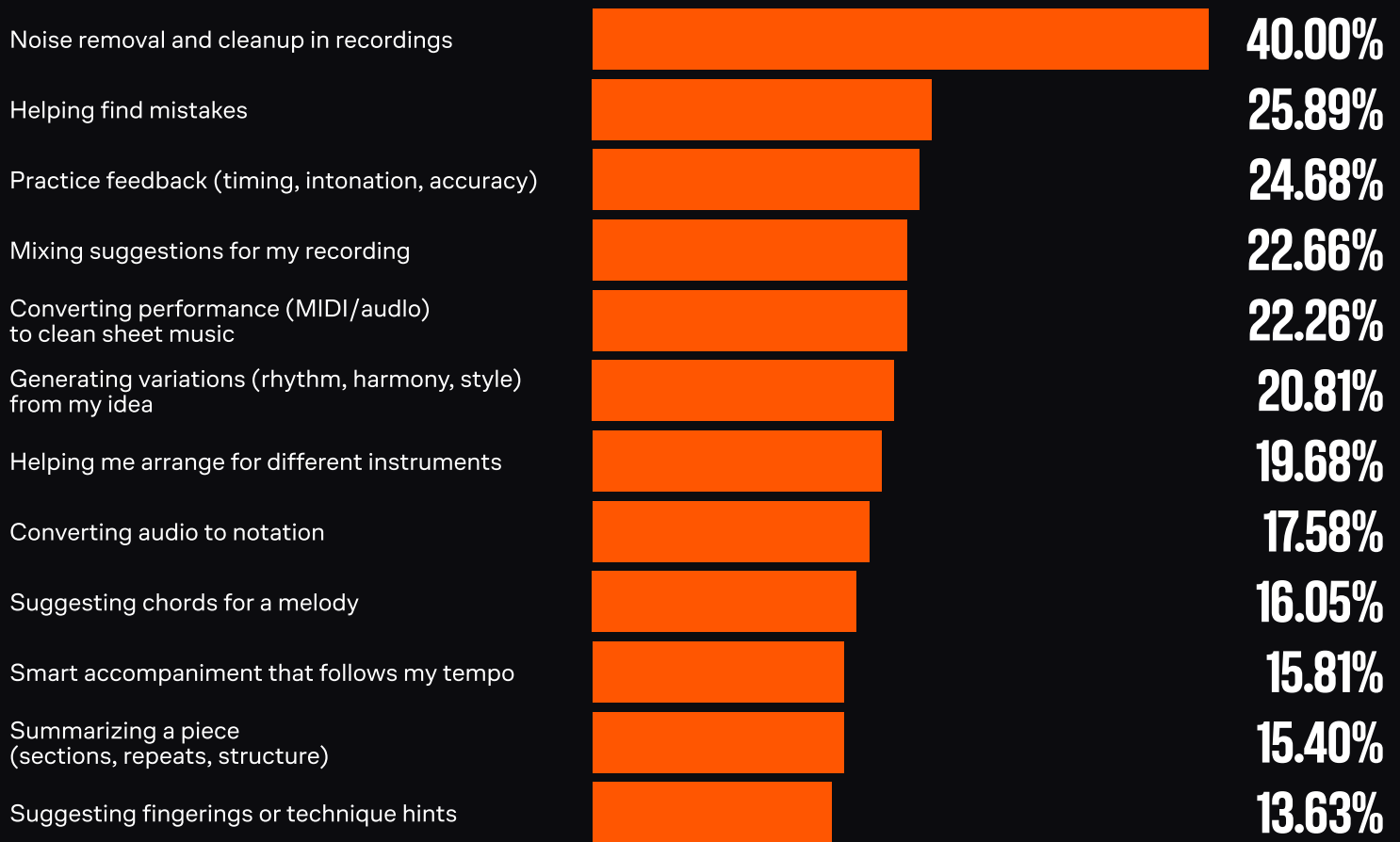
High accuracy with fewer “weird” mistakes	34.35%
Fine-grained controls (how strong, what parts)	24.76%
Transparent pricing	23.31%
No training on my content without opt-in	20.24%
Local processing option (on-device) for privacy	20.24%
Independent reviews or benchmarks	19.68%
Nothing would increase my trust	10.89%

# Feature demand

## Demand map

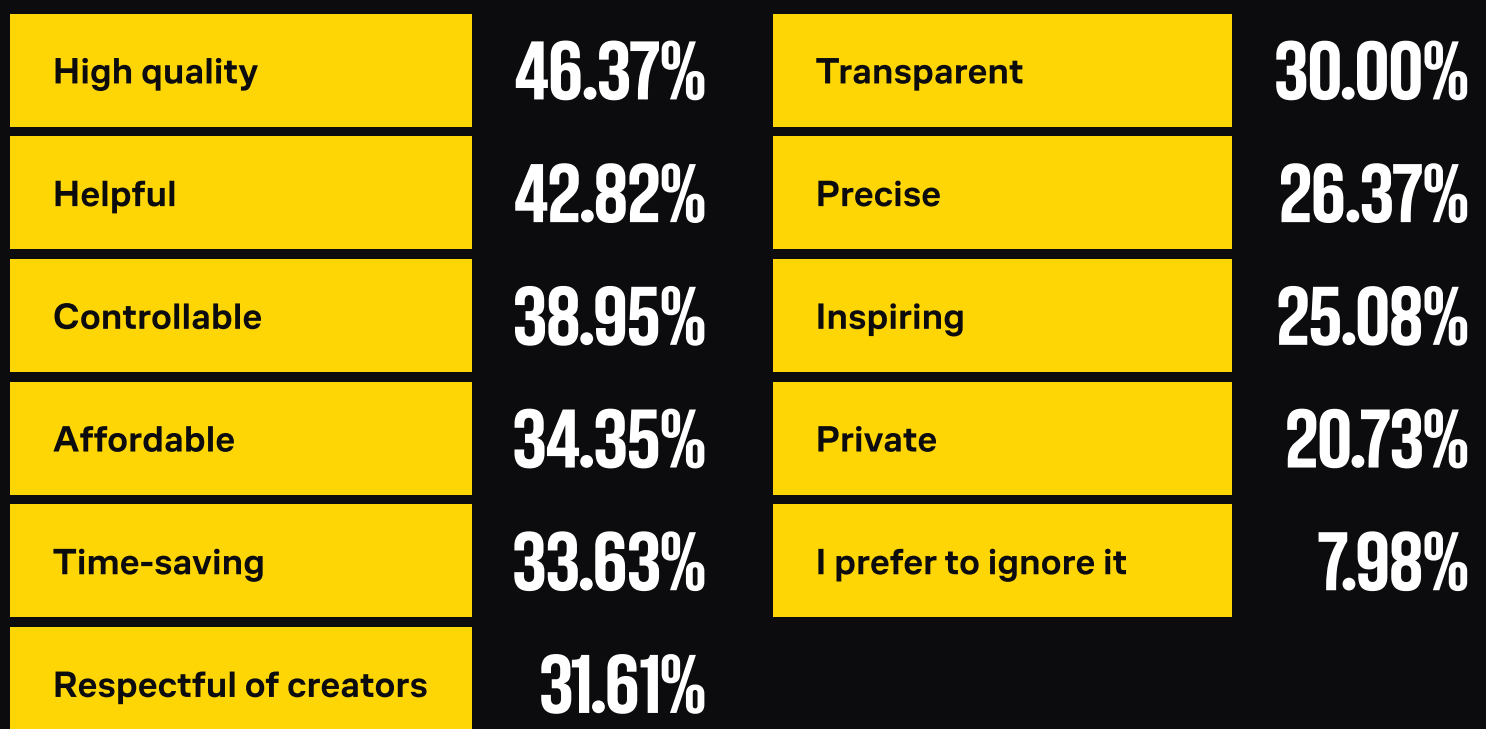
Users prioritize quality and learning support first, then creative support, and only later generative features.

- The top need is **noise removal** and **cleanup** (40%), which is both widely used and widely accepted. It’s the clearest “value with low controversy” category.
- Next comes **learning** and **feedback**. Finding mistakes (25.9%) and practice feedback (24.7%) rank high. This shows that users want support as learners, not just production help, and are comfortable when they remain the author.
- **Mixing suggestions** (22.7%) and **converting performance** to clean sheet music (22.3%) also rank high. These are still assistive, but depend on accuracy and clear, reversible changes.
- After that, interest shifts to **guided creativity**. Variations (20.8%) and arranging (19.7%) are relevant but clearly lower. Users want ideas and options, not full authorship transfer.



## What users want AI to feel like

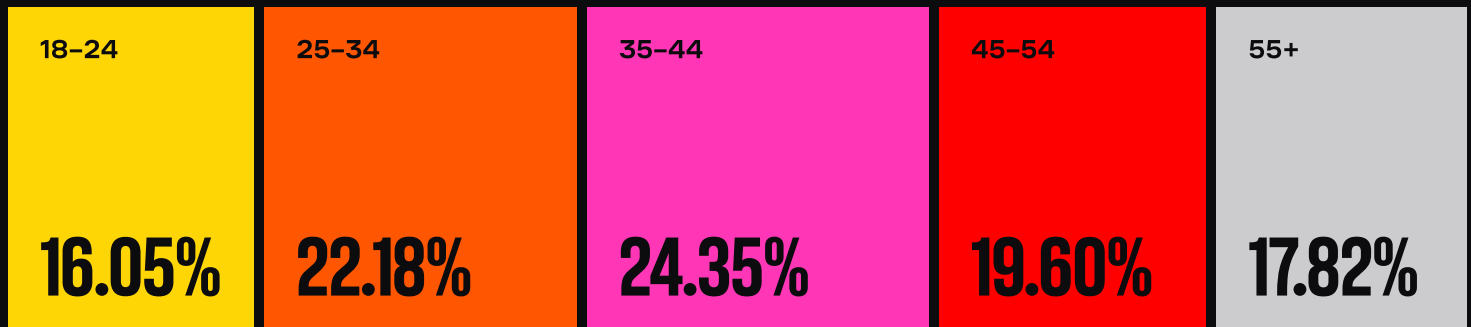
- The language people choose is very “**tool-first.**” They expect it to be high quality, helpful, controllable, and transparent, with “**inspiring**” as a secondary trait.
- The expected role is **high-quality assistance** under user control, with visible changes and respect for creators.



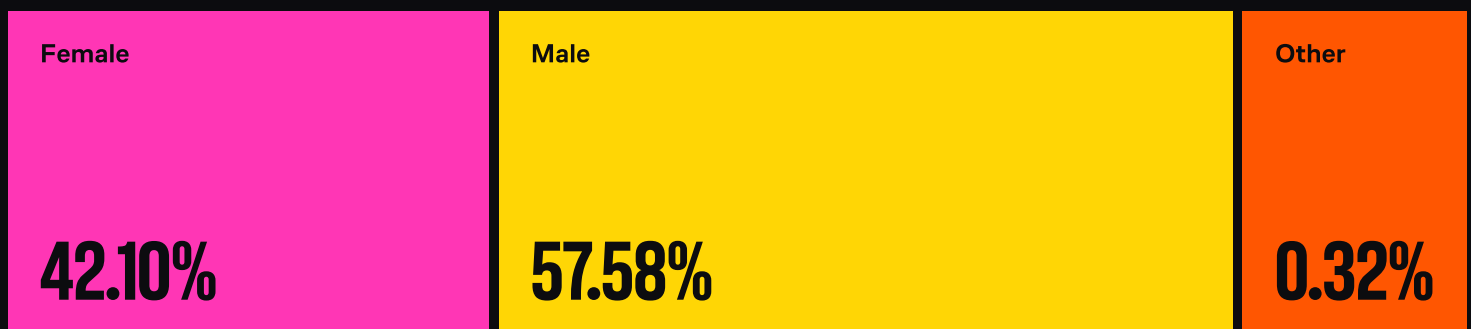
# Audience landscape

The sample includes 1,200 respondents across MuseScore, Ultimate Guitar, Audacity, and MuseHub, with analysis done overall, by product audience, and across key demographic and experience groups.

## Age



## Gender



## Skill level

