Heuristic Evaluation of Sign Along

Problem

Sign Along is an application that empowers deaf users to vote for their favorite interpreter to come onstage and sign for their favorite artists and gives interpreters the opportunity to engage in passion projects that do not require certification.

Violations Found

1. H2-5. Error prevention / Severity 3 / Found by: A, D
In the contest screen, interpreter-users are given the option to select the "Done" button despite not having chosen any song/track option to sign along to. This also occurs in subsequent screens, where users can select the "Done" button without having chosen anything. This can be confusing to users, and can be alleviated by only providing "Done" buttons when the user has chosen an option.

2. H2-8. Aesthetic and minimalist design / Severity 2 / Found by: A, B, C, D
The color contrast between the light grey text and the graded grey background is sometimes poor and can cause the user strain when trying to read. The color contrast between the text and background can be improved by adhering to suggested color guidelines to improve readability.

3. H2-7. Flexibility and efficiency of use / Severity 2 / Found by: A, B, C, D
In the user selection screen, users have to perform the extraneous motion of first selecting their user type (interpreter or concert goer) and then subsequently hitting the "Done" button. An improvement to efficiency would be to allow users to just select their user type without having to additionally click the "Done" button. The same heuristic error is seen in the contest screen, where interpreter-users have to first click on the song they would like to sign along to, and subsequently the "Done" button. The improvement would be the same as the user selection case – remove the need to click on the "Done" button.

4. H2-1. Visibility of system status / Severity 3 / Found by: B, C, D
In the screen when the interpreter-user has just recorded a video of his/her interpretation, there is insufficient system indication as to whether the video has actually been saved – in that the "Record" button is still available for selection, and the "Save" button is the same color as before when no video had been recorded. Create a notification message to inform the user that he/she has finished recording a video. Additionally, there could be a change in color in the buttons to inform the user that the video can now be saved and the record button cannot be selected.

5. H2-4. Consistency and standards / Severity 1 / Found by: D
There is a lack of consistency when it comes to naming the video recording function. In one screen, the term used is "Create", while in a subsequent screen, the term used is "Compose". Additionally, the lack of consistency in the styles of both screens is confusing. Make the screen styles consistent and choose one of the terms: either "Create" or "Compose" for the record function.

6. H2-2. Match between system and real world / Severity 1 / Found by: A, C, D
On the "Compose" screen, the "New" button is hard to see due to lack of contrast against the background. It's also unclear whether new indicates a chance for the user to redo the recording, in which case it might be more helpful to label it "redo" or "record again."

7. H2-10. Help and documentation / Severity 3 / Found by: B, C, D
As a user, I am unclear as to the difference between the star and heart icons on this display. Intuitively, I wonder the difference between "starring" or "hearting" something-- in my mind, it would equate the same action, like "liking" something. If the starring equated bookmarking something, it should have a more bookmark-like icon. Instead, in order to eliminate this obscured status of system components, I would choose icons that carry more specific connotations than heart and star do in order to differentiate them, or I would merge them into one.

8. H2-4: Consistency and Standards / Severity 4 / Found by: A, B, C
When the concert-goer sees the list of upcoming concerts, some concerts have a "vote" button next to them, and some have a "buy" button. This part of the interface is inconsistent. It is unclear why each concert doesn't have both buttons, since the user should presumably have the option to both vote and buy for each concert. Buttons for both "vote" and "buy" should be added to each concert to make the user's available actions more consistent.

9. H2-10. Help and documentation / Severity 4 / Found by: C, D
In the screen that shows all concerts close by, it is not apparent that concert-going users have to first vote for their favorite interpreters before they can purchase early bird tickets. Additionally, the Med-Fi prototype is confusing because the concert is today – and presumably, early bird tickets would have been released way earlier. Better documentation can be provided to explain to the concert going-user that they have to first vote on their favorite interpreters before they can get early bird tickets.

10. H2-5. Error Prevention / Severity 3 / Found by: A, B, D
When the user is taken to the screen where she is to vote on her favorite interpreter, it is unclear how to vote. Currently, the method is to tap on the picture of the person and then tap on the "heart" button. However, this method is confusing and prone to errors, so I would suggest a Tinder-like interface where the user can swipe left or right based on whether or not she liked the interpreter.

11. H2-10. Help and documentation / Severity 3 / Found by: B, D
There is no documentation as to what the tabs at the bottom of the screen are used for – and they are also not used at all in the Med-fi prototype, so we are also unable to identify their function. An improvement could be to include a descriptive label at the bottom of each symbol.

12. H2-8. Aesthetic and minimalist design / Severity 2 / Found by: A, B, C, D
In the screen where concert goer-users can interact with their favorite interpreters, the color contrast between the text on the background photo is poor and causes strain on the reader's eyes. Make the text background opaque, or at least reduce the background color interference on the text.

13. H2-6. Recognition rather than recall / Severity 2 / Found by: A, D
In the screen where the concert going-user and the interpreter can chat, it is not immediately apparent who the user is talking to. This can be fixed by displaying the name of the interpreter at the top of the screen. As a user, I would like to have an icon, too. This would keep the two different users chatting on the same level, keeping the characteristics of each of them consistent. In order to level this playing field, I would add an icon for the user, too.

14. H2-3. User control and freedom / Severity 3 / Found by: A, B, D
In the same screen mentioned above, when the user hits the "Done" button, he/she will be in the user selection screen. This is extremely confusing, as concert going users who decide to end a conversation with an interpreter would more likely want to view the other concerts in the area, or see more details about the upcoming concert. An improvement could be to take the user back to the screen that displays the details of the concert which they voted for.

15. H2-6. Recognition rather than recall / Severity 2 / Found by: C
The option to log in with Facebook versus email seems unnecessary because users typically only make that selection once when signing up. When logging in, most apps default to whatever account was used when signing up and I would suggest that Sign Along do the same.

16. H2-2. Match between system and the real world / Severity 3 / Found by: A, C
It's a bit confusing why there is a choice to log in as an interpreter versus a concert goer (shouldn't this be permanent for each user based on their hearing impairment or knowledge of ASL?). The app also doesn't make clear whether this is a one-time selection upon registration or a choice the user makes every time he/she logs in, though this may be due to the nature and incomplete implementation of a medium-fi prototype.

17. H2-2. Match between system and the real world / Severity 1 / Found by: C
On screens showing upcoming events (for concert goers) and active contests (for interpreters), there are date discrepancies. WED and THU have the same date, and the upcoming event later in the month has an earlier date than upcoming events that week and that day. Try to pay attention to chronological consistency in the information displayed.

18. H2-4. Consistency and standards / Severity 2 / Found by: C
On screens showing upcoming events (for concert goers) and active contests (for interpreters), there is no "view more" option for Kanye because it is grouped with Rihanna in the same cell. Even if the "view more" option under Rihanna applies to both the Rihanna and Kanye events, I would recommend separating out event details directly under each event and making a "view more" option for all events, even if they fall on the same day.

19. H2-4. Consistency and standards / Severity 1 / Found by: C
On the "Upcoming Events" screen, "Buy" is capitalized but "vote" isn't, so these should probably be standardized. Likewise, for the recording task, the "SAVE" button uses inconsistent capitalization from all other buttons on that screen, as well as prior and later screens. Also, after voting for an interpreter, the early bird purchase button can be made more consistent with the normal purchase button in terms of text and icon.

20. H2-8. Aesthetic and minimalist design / Severity 1 / Found by: C
Under "Meet Sam Patel," the chat icon stands out from the rest of the design and doesn't really mash well visually with the text description for Sam. I think the chat icon can also be more clearly designed as a button, possibly by outlining a rounded rectangle or moving the icon away from the text.

21. H2-7. Flexibility and efficiency of use / Severity 1 / Found by: A, C
On the "Log in As" screen, it's not obvious that the user can click on the "Interpreter" or "Concert goer" text to choose an option. They might think they need to click within the bullet points, so you could think about formatting the selections as wide, visible buttons rather than as bullet points.

22. H2-1. Visibility of System Status / Severity 3 / Found by: A
When the interpreter is about to record her video, she is given the option to "create" the video or to "upload." It is not clear whether "upload" means to upload an external video from the user's camera roll. Once she clicks "create," she is then taken to a screen to record and save the video; the screen after that allows her to "submit" the video. It is not clear what the difference is here between "upload" and submit." The app should keep the user informed about the difference between the two options, with documentation if necessary.

23. H2-8. Aesthetic and minimalist design / Severity 1 / Found by: A
When the user is given the option to buy an "early bird" ticket, the text for "early bird" is written in a very small, white font on a yellow background, and this is extremely difficult to read. I would suggest that the contrast between colors be increased so that the user can more easily read the text.

24. H2-1. Visibility of System Status / Severity 2 / Found by: A

As of now, it is unclear where the video will go after it is recorded. Will all of the videos be saved between sessions? Will the videos be saved to the phone's camera roll or just within the app? The app should keep the user informed as to where the videos are being saved and whether or not they can be retrieved between sessions.

25. H2-2. Match between system and the real world / Severity 2 / Found by: A, B
On one screen, the interpreter is given the lyrics to the song she chooses to interpret, but when she clicks "create" to create the video, she is taken to a different screen, and the lyrics are nowhere to be found. The information does not appear in a logical order; the lyrics should be shown while the interpreter is recording the video.

26. H2-8. Aesthetic and Minimalist Design / Severity 1 / Found by: B
While I love the slogan, I wish I could read it better. The teal text does not stand out well enough against the semi-transparent colored images in the background, making the text somewhat unreadable. I would suggest making the text white or adding some outline/shadow to the letters to differentiate them more.

27. H2-6. Recognition rather than recall / Severity 2 / Found by: B
On this screen, it is unclear whether the user should be clicking the "play" buttons, or the song title, or on the numbers. Instructions should be visible here or else the user won't be able to recognize what it is exactly that he or she should be selecting. So, I would either insert instructions or make it clear that there is just one choice to select.

28. H2-4. Consistency and Standards / Severity 1 / Found by: B
When I see lyrics, I'm not sure what it specifies. I wonder if it is just labeling the fact that there are lyrics already on the screen, which is redundant, or if I select it, if it will bring up another window with the full lyrics on screen. This label is inconsistent. I would suggest removing the label because it is unnecessary.

29. H2-2. Match between system and real world / Severity 3 / Found by: B
I am confused why you would need to know how many hours there were left until an event that seems so far away (i.e. Nov 20). Intuitively, I would think this timer would only be relevant for events that are really quickly approaching. If it weren't specifying how many hours until the event itself, I wouldn't know what the "hours left" corresponded to. Therefore, in order to eliminate confusion about the "hours until" upcoming events, I would eliminate this metric except on events that are less than 24 hours away.

Summary of Violations

Category	# Viol. (sev 0)	# Viol. (sev 1)	# Viol. (sev 2)	# Viol. (sev 3)	# Viol. (sev 4)	# Viol. (total)
H2-1: Visibility of Status			1	2		3
H2-2: Match Sys & World		2	1	2		5
H2-3: User Control				1		1
H2-4: Consistency		3	1		1	5
H2-5: Error Prevention				2		2
H2-6: Recognition not Recall			3			3
H2-7: Efficiency of Use		1	1			2
H2-8: Minimalist Design		3	2			5
H2-9: Help Users with Errors						0
H2-10: Documentation				2	1	3
Total Violations by Severity		**9**	**9**	**9**	**2**	**29**
Note: check your answer for the green box by making sure the sum of the last column is equal to the sum of the last row (not including the green box)						

4. Evaluation Statistics

Severity / Evaluator	Evaluator A	Evaluator B	Evaluator C	Evaluator D
sev. 0	0	0	0	0
sev. 1	3	2	5	2
sev. 2	6	5	5	4
sev. 3	5	6	3	6
sev. 4	1	1	2	1
total (sev. 3 & 4)	6	7	4	7
total (all severity levels)	15	14	15	14

5. Summary Recommendations

Overall the app's heuristic violations concentrate around consistency, efficient design, and intuitiveness. There aren't many fields for users to enter text or submit complicated information, so error handling is not much of an issue. Our main suggestions are to double check for design consistencies among buttons and layouts, within the same screen as well as between related screens, and to streamline the app's efficiency of use by automating transitions after the user makes a selection rather than requiring the user to prompt each transition by clicking "Done." We would also recommend going through each button and making sure its function is clear, and providing help documentation for potentially confusing interfaces. In terms of overall visually design, the team might also consider brightening the background or increasing font contrast to ensure that the app is visually accessible to everyone. Great work so far!