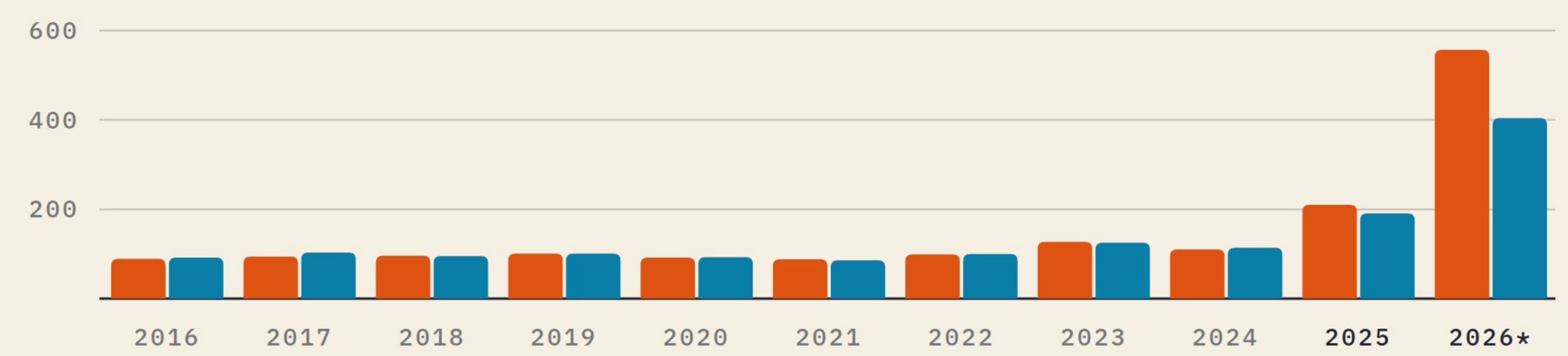


THE MICRO-APP FLOOD

How many music learning apps now launch, who builds them, and who uses them.



557

new music learning apps in the first nine months of 2026. About 100 a year until 2024. 87% of the new ones have fewer than 10 ratings.

Anyone can ship a music learning app now. Almost nobody uses the new ones.

On 25 September 2026 I pulled every music learning and practice app that Apple's search shows for 46 searches, in the US and UK stores, and sorted them by the year they first launched. Four numbers carry the argument.

APPLE APP STORE ONLY • US AND UK • ENGLISH SEARCHES • NO ANDROID

5x

more launches: 557 in the first nine months of 2026, against about 100 in each full year from 2019 to 2024. slide 3

87%

of the 767 apps launched since 2025 have fewer than 10 ratings. Half have none. slide 4

<1%

of all the ratings go to those new apps, though they are 37% of the apps. They hold 15% of the top search spots. slide 7

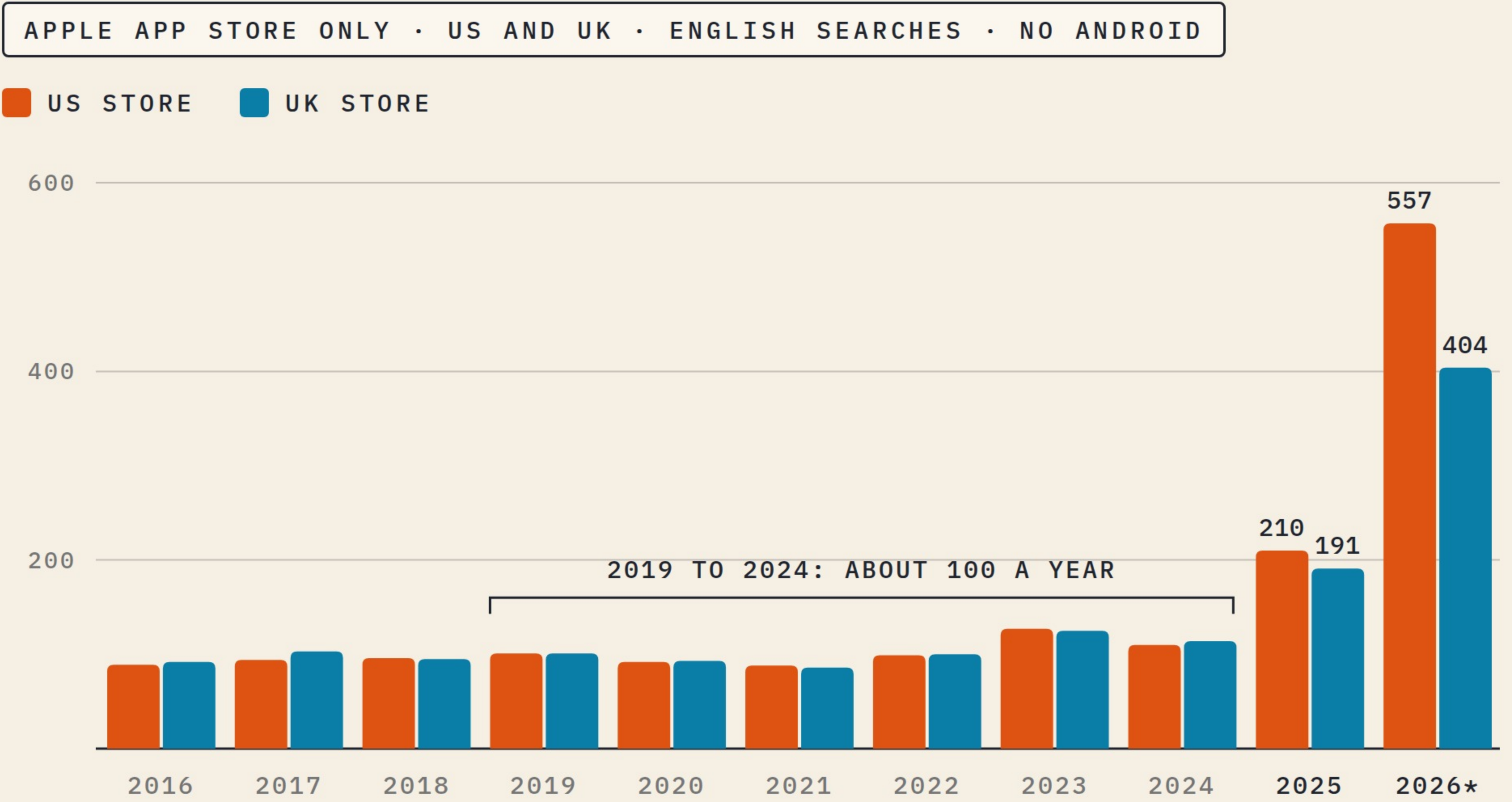
15 of 20

new apps that reached 100 ratings are built by companies. Yet 7 in 10 new apps come from one person. slides 5 and 8

The flood is real. It reaches almost nobody. And the top of the store has not moved.

For six years the line was flat. Then it broke.

Each app is counted once, in the year it first launched. From 2019 to 2024 about 100 new music learning apps a year show up in Apple's search. In 2025 it doubled. In 2026 it passed five times that before the year was out. The UK store shows the same shape.



* 2026 = 1 January to 25 September. Context: Apple counted 1,961,596 apps on the whole App Store at the end of 2024, 4.9% more than a year before, and removed 82,509 that year (App Store Transparency Reports 2023 and 2024).

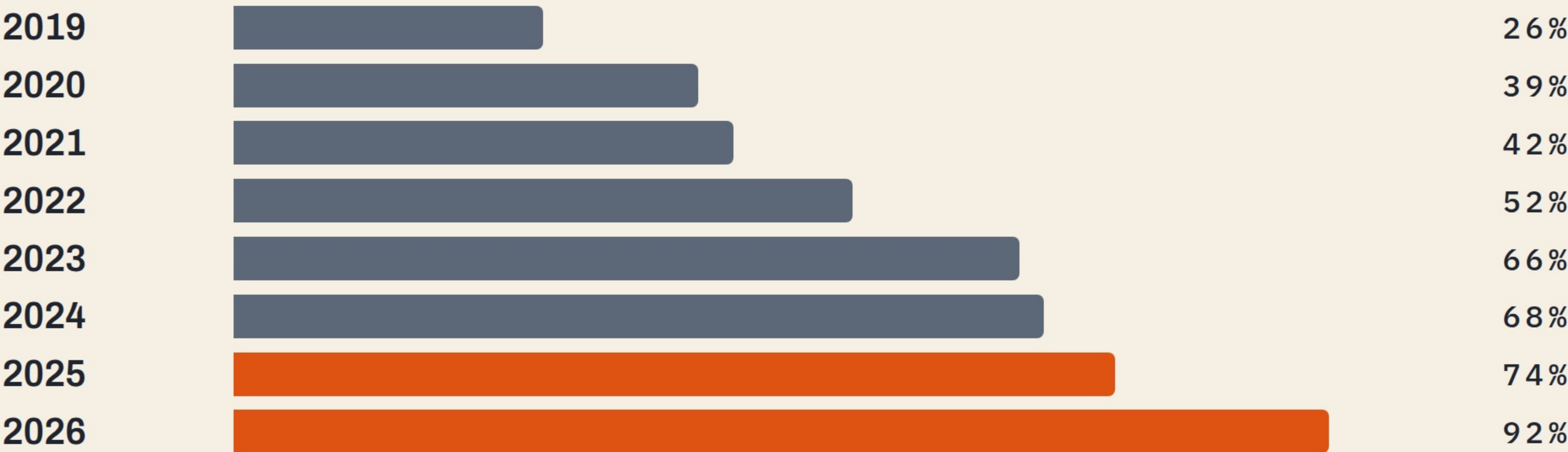
Caveat: apps removed from the store are invisible, so older years lose some apps. If that loss were large, the older years would sit far below 2024. They do not. Not included: Android (Google Play has no public API), searches in other languages, and apps that never reach a store.

This is not a slow drift. It is a break, and it came in 2025.

Almost nobody comes.

Ratings are not users. They are the one public signal every app has, so they are the fairest way to compare two thousand apps. Most new apps have almost none. Even the apps launched in 2025, live for nine to twenty-one months, mostly sit under ten.

SHARE OF APPS WITH FEWER THAN 10 RATINGS, BY THE YEAR THEY LAUNCHED • US STORE



half

of the 767 apps launched since 2025 have no rating at all. In the UK store, 95% have fewer than ten.

0.74%

of all the ratings in the sample belong to them, though they are 37% of the apps. Duolingo left out; it is a language app.

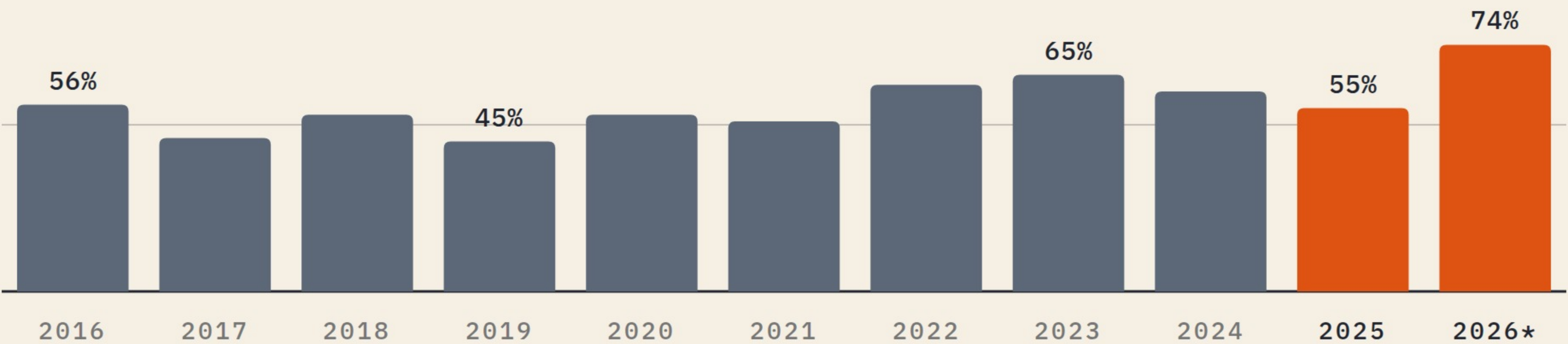
* 2026 apps are months old. The trend started before the flood: apps launched in 2023 were already mostly unrated.

A launch is not a user. Most of the flood has never been rated by anyone.

Seven in ten new apps come from one person. That is not new.

Apple shows who sells every app: a company under its legal name, a person under their own name. One person has published about half of these apps every year since 2016. “Vibe coding” was Collins Dictionary's word of the year for 2025. What changed is how many people build, not who.

SHARE OF EACH YEAR'S NEW APPS PUBLISHED BY ONE PERSON · US STORE



MARCH 2026 · COLOUR, NOT SCALE

A father builds a falling-notes piano game for his young daughter with Claude Code. It stays on GitHub.

VICTOR ANTOS, VICTORANTOS.COM

JANUARY 2026 · COLOUR, NOT SCALE

A musician builds his own music learning app on his phone, “waiting in line at the supermarket”. It stays personal.

TAIVO PUNGAS, TAIVO.AI

* 2026 is the least reliable bar: a one-person app disappears when its builder stops paying Apple's yearly fee, and 2026 apps have not had time to.

The builder did not change. The number of builders did.

Most new apps solve one small problem.

A metronome. An ear trainer. A chord finder. A practice log. Each one fixes a real pain a musician has, and each one is small. Two in three apps launched since 2025 are tools like these rather than a full course. In 2022 to 2024 it was about half.

THE 767 APPS LAUNCHED SINCE JANUARY 2025, BY WHAT THEY DO • US STORE



Sorted by the words in each app's name, so the split is approximate. By instrument: piano 129, voice 110, guitar 106, drums 37.

112

new metronome and rhythm apps in the 21 months since January 2025. In the three years before, 38.

Real pains, one at a time. Every one of them fights for the same few searches.

The top of the store has not moved.

A beginner types “learn piano” and sees the top of the list. Across all 46 searches, apps launched since 2025 take 15% of the top ten spots, though they are 37% of the apps. The apps that were there before the flood are still there, and every one of them is still shipping.

15% of the top ten search spots go to apps launched since 2025. UK store: 12%.

66% of all the ratings belong to just ten apps (Duolingo left out).

US RATINGS AND LAST UPDATE, 25 SEPTEMBER 2026

Simply Piano	SINCE 2015	852,319	UPDATED 15 SEPT
Yousician	SINCE 2015	138,393	UPDATED 14 SEPT
flowkey	SINCE 2015	65,348	UPDATED 18 SEPT
Fender Play	SINCE 2017	60,611	UPDATED 9 SEPT
Skoove	SINCE 2017	22,157	UPDATED 4 AUG

The flood cannot squeeze apps it does not reach. If the paid middle is under pressure, the cause is somewhere else.

The few that breakthrough have one job and a team.

A few new apps did find people. They have two things in common: they do one job a musician already wants done, and most have a company behind them. The biggest one does a single thing well: you give it a song and it gives you the chords.

20 of 767 new apps have reached 100 ratings in the US store. 15 are sold by companies, 3 by one person.

THE TOP FIVE, US RATINGS ON 25 SEPTEMBER 2026

20,048 **Strum: Play Guitar** AUG 2025
Any song to chords, from a YouTube link or a file. A company.

2,517 **Artie: Learn Piano with AI** SEP 2025
Piano songs; it listens as you play and gives tips. A company.

1,300 **Trill: Ear Training Daily** AUG 2025
Daily ear training. A company.

1,207 **Pickup Music** JUL 2025
Structured guitar, piano and bass lessons. A company.

270 **Guitar Wiz** APR 2025
Apple Design Award 2026 for inclusivity. Sold under its developer's own name.

Not in the list: the wave's biggest music app is not a teacher. Mixy (Y Combinator, Fall 2025) makes mashups: 19,028 US ratings.

Quality gets you noticed by Apple. One real pain and a team get you users.

More apps. Same first year.

The flood changes what a beginner sees on the shelf. It does not change what happens after the download. The Promise Map showed that most people who start an instrument stop. More apps on the shelf do not change that on their own.

FOR BEGINNERS

1 in 4

of the top 20 results for “learn piano” and six other beginner searches has had no update in a year. More choice, and more noise.

FOR BUILDERS

easy to ship

hard to be found. The ways out: exceptional quality, a way to be found, and keeping the users you get. A builder's view.

FOR INSTRUMENT MAKERS

choose on record

The app layer next to your instrument is crowded with one-person tools. Pick partners on update record and users, not launch news.

Beginner searches: learn piano, learn guitar, learn drums, learn ukulele, learn violin, learn bass, learn to sing. US 25%, UK 27%.

2 in 3

people who learned the piano or the drums no longer play it. YouGov, 3,000 US adults, 2022. The Promise Map, slide 4. The flood is about the first day. That number is about the years after.

Building got cheap. Being found and being kept did not.

Three things this map says.

- 1 The flood is real. About 100 new music learning apps a year until 2024; 557 in nine months of 2026.**
- 2 It reaches almost nobody. The new apps hold under 1% of the ratings, and the top of the store has not moved.**
- 3 Building got cheap. Being found and being kept did not. That is where the next winners will be made.**

Learning to play should not be intimidating.

I build music learning apps at Upbeat Studio, so I am one of the builders on this map. Our apps are in the data and are not named.

NEXT MAP • 17 NOV What the industry told me in Miami and Shanghai.

CORRECTIONS Welcome, and credited. Method and full tables on the sources page.

HOW THIS MAP WAS MADE

Apple's public search API, 46 searches across eleven instruments and practice tools, US and UK stores, 25 September 2026. 2,054 US apps kept after a keyword filter and a hand check of 260 apps. Apps removed from the store cannot be seen, and Android is not included.