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REWORK_ is an app version of Beck's recent Philip Glass album.

It's filled with semi-interactive animations--3-D, physics-driven work that will respond to your touch but not quite bend to your will.

But the Glass Machine may be the app's standout feature. Using two discs, you can instantly create polyrhythmic counterpoints, mixing them in real time like a DJ.

Now, I'm not sure I could go through the whole app in one sitting (as it features over an hour of abstract animations), but for a few minutes of mind-numbing meditation here and there, it's fantastic.

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Glass with the app's creator, Scott Snibbe.



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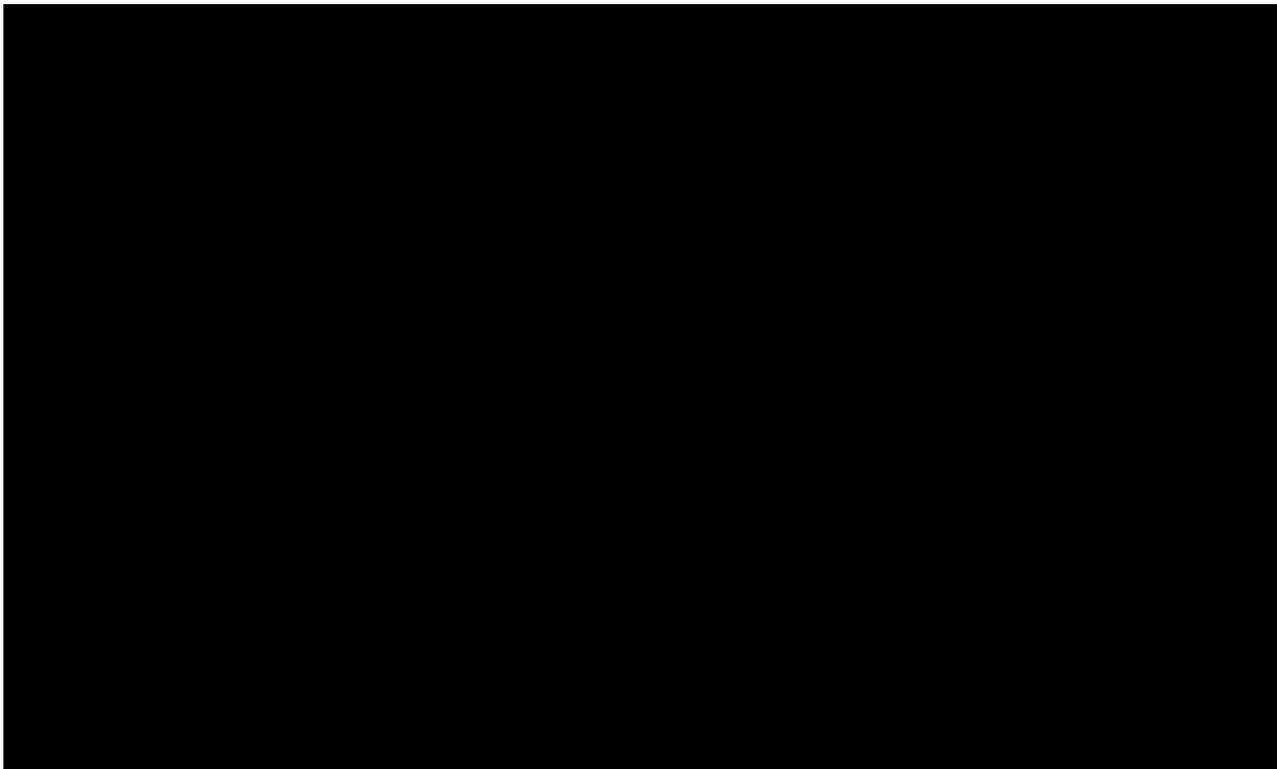
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A Magical App For Exploring A Philip Glass Remix By Beck

Two months back, Beck released an album of Philip Glass songs, remixed. Now, Snibbe Studio has made the experience into an interactive touch screen app.

[Philip Glass](#) is the pop music of classical. His repetitious phrases hit you like a Justin Bieber hook, grind into your ears like electronica, and eventually lull you into hypnosis. Liberal use of cellos ensures that you can be super pretentious about it, too.

Not so long ago, Beck remixed some of Glass's tracks, reeling in several fellow musicians to help create a [two-disc homage](#) to the master of minimalism. Now, [Snibbe Studio](#) (the same group behind Björk's [Biophilia](#)) has released [REWORK](#), a universal iOS app version of the album. It's a collection of Beck-produced tracks coupled with 3-D, semi-interactive animations.

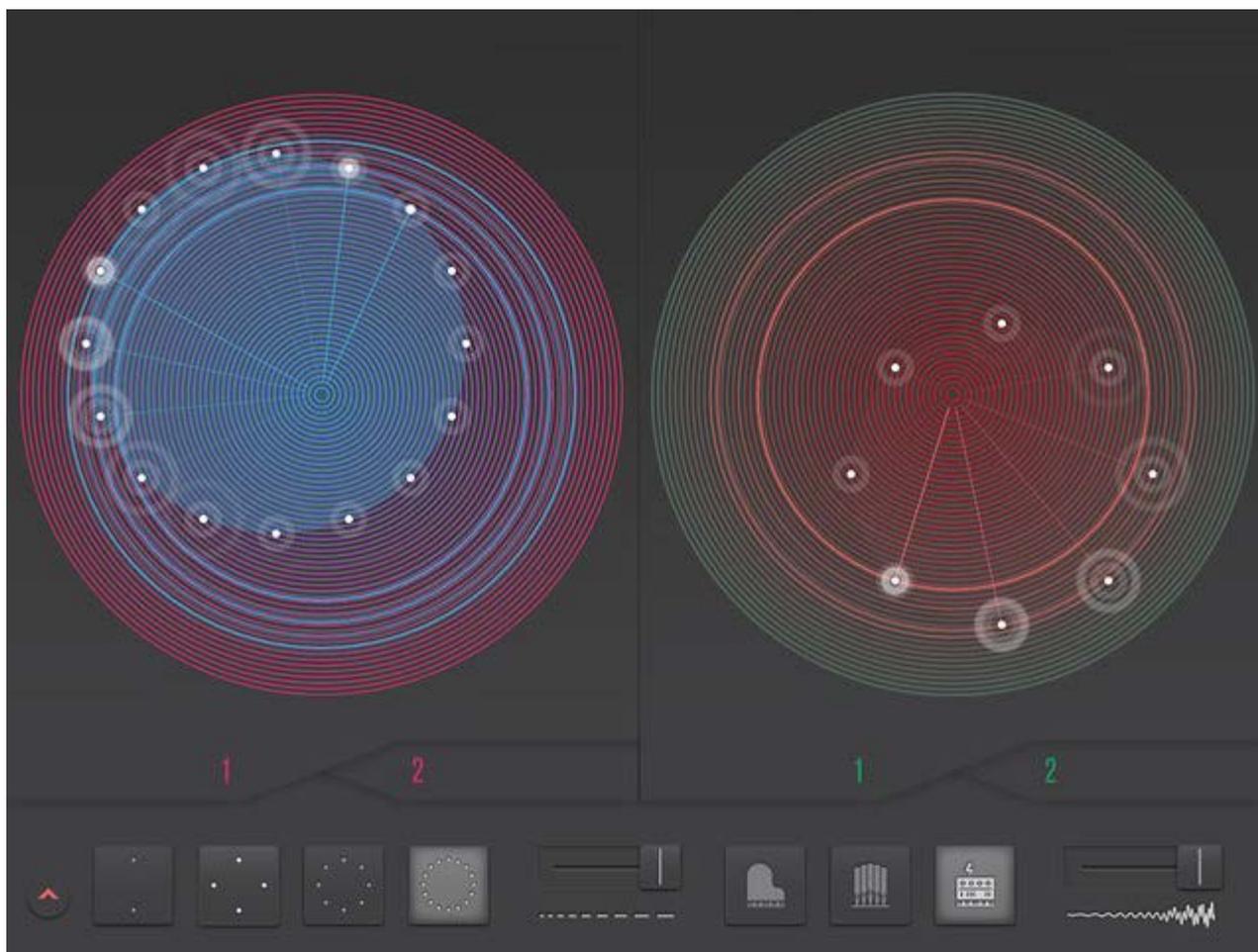


"The musical album has essentially disappeared from popular culture, and people's attention spans continue to shorten," [REWORK](#)_ producer Ahna Girshick tells Co.Design. "We see the app album as a new way to bring back that engrossing experience we used to have of buying a musical album and putting it on the record player for the first time, sitting on the floor and reading the liner notes and looking at the album art."

It's an interesting experience. Not quite a music video but not quite a simple visualization, each track can be played with over an hour of abstract, 3-D animations. The tracks are interactive, but not to the extent of most apps. You can't control their intensity or color, nor is there any sort of game involved, but you can pull and pluck the patterns, leaving your mark on them temporarily, while a physics engine rectifies your intervention like a pond rippling before going still.

"With the visualizations, we had to find a delicate balance. We wanted them to mesmerize a passive non-interacting viewer," Girshick explains. "The 'medium' of our studio, however, is interactivity, and we delight in using tablets to encourage playful engagement with the visualizations. Each visualization has its own virtual world, with its own laws of physics and interaction. When one touches the screen, one directly learns more about this world and its constraints. By somewhat constraining the type of interactions, users get transported into that space and get the chance to believe it."

On an 8.9-inch iPad screen, I'm not sure I'd call the experience immersive, but it's certainly a satisfying way to fidget while listening to Beck's take on Glass.



That said, the app does hide a very powerful, quite immersive audio mixer called the "Glass Machine" that allows you to instantly emulate Glass's polyrhythmic counterpoints. You wield two disks, pinching to affect pitch, and using some simple controls to augment the patterns. Thanks to some obvious training wheels, it's addictive to play with, and a pulsating visual delight to boot. Within about five seconds, you'll be convinced you're the next Philip Glass. And who knows, maybe you are*.

If you'd like to try *REWORK_*, it's available in the iTunes store now.

[Download it here.](#)

**You aren't. Sorry.*



[Mark Wilson](#)

Mark Wilson is a writer who started Philanthroper.com, a simple way to give back every day. [Continued](#)

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December 12, 2012 | 5:54 PM

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- DebbyBruck [2 years ago](#)

Fascinating. Sounds like it would keep your attention for a long time. I love Phillip Glass.

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- derventio [2 years ago](#)

The glass engine is an outstanding piece of software design by Lukas Girling the same guy who bought us the occilascoop app again out of the snibbe studio.

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