

ever, as the research results presented here clearly demonstrate, this is not contingent on the platform's algorithms alone. Ruha Benjamin underscores the influence of socio-technical constellations in digital spaces with regard to the perpetuation of cultural hegemony, but particularly in relation to the actions and worldviews of human actors who shape the evolution of algorithms. As demonstrated in this study, the content creators' pursuit of visibility and their strategies also play a pivotal role in shaping the representation of music cultures on TikTok. The content creators are guided by two key factors in determining their strategies of action: their own algorithmic imaginaries and their experience and assumptions regarding how TikTok users respond to their videos. The TikTok universe is characterized by complex socio-technical relationships between the platform, its algorithmic system, musicians, and users. These relationships shape the image of jazz that emerges on TikTok, with all the heterogeneous actors involved, human and non-human, playing a role in this process.

## 7.4 Socio-Technical Canon Building

TikTok has the potential to structure actions and affords certain music-related content and stagings. Concurrently, cultural hegemony exerts an influence over the portrayal of jazz on TikTok, which has been a constitutive factor in the negotiations of media visibility in a comparable form for many decades. Moreover, jazz musicians who are active and successful on TikTok play an active role in the negotiations surrounding the visibility of individuals and content within the jazz context on TikTok through their interpretations of the functional logic of TikTok. Consequently, there are divergences from the predominantly academically constituted jazz canon that has been perpetuated for decades. This is evidenced by the absence of "jazz icons" (Whyton 2010) from the domain of popularity peaks in jazz on TikTok. This is primarily due to the fact that, according to the interviewees, these icons do not align with the platform's logic of popularization. Additionally, TikTok tends to prioritize specific body norms that young female musicians are more likely to conform to.

It is evident that on TikTok, specific aspects of jazz become more prominent than others due to the interplay between human and non-human actors. These processes are not solely determined by technology or exclusively shaped by society. Algorithmic sorting logic and platform-specific affordances influ-

ence the processes of cultural hierarchization, yet human actions and established cultural hierarchies continue to play a significant role. The consequence is a selective shift in focus with regard to the media visibility of specific facets of jazz. However, the groups of people and the musical repertoires that are popular on TikTok are not isolated from the tendencies towards canon building and homogenization that also exist beyond the platform. Although the young female musicians conform to the prevailing standards of beauty and can leverage their physical appearance as a form of capital in the digital landscape (Gugutzer 2022, 97–105), where visibility is paramount, the celebrated Great American Songbook songs and jazz standards occupy a distinguished position within the canon of musical repertoire (Michaelsen 2013). However, this canonization does not align with the conventional norms established by traditional gate-keeping institutions, such as jazz journalism and jazz research.

The interactions between platform mechanisms, user reactions, and musicians striving for success on the platform have led to the emergence of *socio-technical canon-building* processes on TikTok. These processes are not independent of established canon-building processes but nevertheless develop their own logic. TikTok is thus not a hermetically sealed digital space that produces cultural hegemonies independently of or in isolation from external influences. However, well-known hegemonies can be perpetuated and potentially intensified on TikTok due to the platform's homogenizing logic.

Recent developments demonstrate that the influence of individual platforms can indeed wane over time. For example, Facebook and X (formerly Twitter) are likely to be far less relevant to young people than Instagram and TikTok. Additionally, numerous former users have boycotted X for political reasons, primarily in the wake of the acquisition of the platform by Elon Musk. It seems inevitable that TikTok will lose its relevance in the near future. However, the socio-technically induced canon-building processes that are currently taking place on TikTok are not exclusive to this platform. Rather, they are a cross-platform phenomenon that can also be observed in modified form on other platforms such as YouTube and Instagram. Since the cultural hierarchies that are specific to TikTok are in many ways based on well-known canons, they have the potential to have an impact beyond the platform in the long term.

In light of these considerations, it seems plausible that the particular representation of jazz on TikTok may exert an influence not only on the platform itself but also, at the very least, on the social perception of this musical culture. The social establishment of new media has the potential to exert a profound influence on processes of social communication, thereby also affecting

the construction of reality that is produced under the influence of specific media (Menke and Grittmann 2023, 72). Given that processes of cultural canon building, which have long been constitutive for various music cultures, occur in modified form on a platform as popular as TikTok, it is possible that they may also have a lasting impact on the perception of music cultures beyond the platform. The TikTok platform may not necessarily maintain its popularity for several decades or even to the late 2020s. Such a situation could change rapidly. The crucial factor is that what has already been canonized in society is made even more visible on TikTok, and that the platform actually plays a role in the everyday structures of countless individuals, especially young people. “In terms of musicality and artistry, [TikTok] really streamlines what people do,” as the interviewee Sam Ambers puts it – and this streamlining will probably have an impact on the reception practices of TikTok users to a certain extent. The increasing exposure of listeners to established repertoires, which in some cases pre-dates the advent of TikTok, may reinforce the canonization of these works. The considerable reach that popular jazz musicians can achieve on the platform is a key factor in this phenomenon. After all, TikTok is not a music magazine that is hardly read, nor a physical archive that almost no one knows about, let alone visits – it is one of the world’s most popular digital platforms, and its use is firmly embedded in the everyday lives of countless people. That is why the cultural hierarchizations that are documented on TikTok can spread much more widely than those that originate from more traditional gatekeepers.

Nevertheless, the platform’s vast user base does not ensure that the image of jazz emerging in the context of TikTok popularity will be perceived sustainably within the jazz community. It is plausible to assume that people working in the professional jazz sector, such as professional musicians and university educators, may not be exposed to the videos of the musicians interviewed for this study or comparable content. Disparate facets of jazz may prevail within the echo chambers of individuals inside and outside digital spaces. This would not be unexpected, given that canon-building processes are unable to achieve a universal impact (see above). Consequently, it is not reasonable to assume that under the influence of TikTok, all canon-building tendencies, some of which have existed and been maintained for decades, will suddenly become obsolete. Nevertheless, the jazz standards that are so popular on TikTok, such as “Fly Me to the Moon,” appear to be facets of jazz that are actually appreciated by many people, particularly outside of highly specialized academic circles. In this respect, the homogeneous jazz performances on TikTok have the potential to have a lasting effect on the broad social perception of jazz. Despite the

superficial volatility that characterizes its current status, TikTok represents a significant potential for musical canon building in the twenty-first century. In this context, established patterns of cultural hierarchization are undergoing a process of recontextualization, shaped by evolving media conditions and the influence of diverse actors, including human creators and users, as well as non-human entities such as algorithms.

## 7.5 Jazz Research and Platformization

At this point, I would like to return to the statement by Haftor Medbøe and José Dias quoted in the second chapter of this study: “Jazz has been slow to embrace the power of social media and seems to consistently arrive late at the table be it in the examples of MySpace, Facebook and Twitter” (Medbøe and Dias 2014, n.p.). It is evident that this assessment is no longer entirely accurate at the present time. However, if we modify it slightly and apply it to jazz research, it is still valid: “*Jazz research* has been late at the table.” As previously discussed in chapter 2, there is still little research on jazz in the context of online media. Even in a relatively new and comprehensive international publication such as the *Routledge Companion to Jazz Studies* (Gebhardt, Rustin-Paschal, and Whyton 2019), there is a paucity of material exploring the relationship between jazz and digital media, with the exception of the contribution by Barber (2019) in this compendium. However, in the past three decades, jazz research, particularly within the context of New Jazz Studies, has identified a number of core topics that are closely related to the key topics developed in this study. This applies in particular to publications on the topics of gender (e.g., Knauer 2016; Rustin and Tucker 2008; Reddan, Herzog, and Kahr 2023), canon building (e.g., Knauer 2018a; Whyton 2010; Whyton 2013) and mediality (e.g., Heile, Elsdon, and Doctor 2016; McGee 2009). Within this context, the topic of jazz on TikTok, or on digital platforms in general, appears to be quite compatible with jazz research. Jazz is currently integrated into contemporary media cultures in a variety of ways, and the major topics of recent international jazz research, supplemented by approaches from platform studies, provide a solid foundation for further research into these connections.

Furthermore, TikTok provides insights into the production and reception of jazz-related content that reaches a vast audience. The expressions of jazz that are popular on TikTok attract considerable attention from a vast number of individuals, as evidenced by the TikTok videos’ frequently sizeable number