> think TikTok is great because you don't really get that. And if people do comment stuff like that, and are, like, this doesn't happen, then you get an army of other women in music. […] You know, there's this great backing. There's this great support system, and I love that. (Caity Gyorgy, interview)

In light of this experience, Caity suggests that TikTok can also be used as a platform to draw attention to specific grievances, particularly sexism, within the field of jazz. Caity asserts that it is not imperative for musicians to create solemn-looking videos in order to convey such matters. Given the prevalence of comedic content on TikTok, musicians have the potential to address more profound issues with subtle allusions, provided that the audience can relate to the content:

> There's the ones about, like, you know, being a woman in the music and lots of people can relate to that too. And I also think it's good to post that because a lot of people in the comment sections on those videos are, like, I had no idea this was happening. Like, I can't believe this happened to you and I'm, like, well, it has and it has not stopping and it keeps happening. And so I guess the comedic ones are just sort of based on my experiences and I post them sort of to be funny but also just to sort of raise awareness. (Caity Gyorgy, interview)

It can thus be argued that the platform may provide musicians with the opportunity to disseminate feminist or other socially critical messages. Kellin Hanas, for instance, employs a comparable approach in her videos, presenting the role of women in jazz in a manner that is both humorous and critical. Nevertheless, the analysis of the popularity peaks in jazz on TikTok reveals that the platform primarily incites actions that perpetuate sexist stereotypes, rather than prompting a critical examination of these stereotypes.

6.8 TikTok as "Opportunity Generator"

The preceding explanations demonstrate that musicians frequently invest a considerable amount of time and energy in their TikTok careers and in professionalizing their activities on the platform. Consequently, it is evident that their presence on TikTok constitutes a significant aspect of their artistic output. Nevertheless, none of the interviewees perceived TikTok to be the primary aspect of their musical endeavors or a substantial source of revenue. Rather,

for the interviewees, TikTok constitutes, to varying extents, merely a single – albeit crucial – component of their overall career trajectory, and not necessarily a comprehensive representation of their creative work. Nevertheless, all of the musicians interviewed supported the view that the platform represents an exceptionally potent instrument for rapidly and relatively effortlessly augmenting one's popularity, which is of paramount importance for the advancement of a flourishing musical career.

The ability to increase one's prominence and reach is not exclusive to TikTok. As Caity Gyorgy notes, TikTok is also an effective platform for acquiring followers across various digital platforms. She has observed this phenomenon particularly with regard to Spotify:

> I've put my Spotify link in my bio on TikTok, and as soon as I did that I started getting Spotify followers like crazy and I was, like, oh my goodness. This is something that is very, very useful to get my music across to a whole different demographic. I think my demographics on Spotify used to be, like, mostly above, like, age 35. And now, like, that 18 to 25 year old demographic has really grabbed up. (Caity Gyorgy, interview)

A certain degree of recognition on TikTok has been observed to have a beneficial impact on musicians on other platforms. Additionally, in some instances, it has resulted in the interviewees being brought to the attention of prominent media organizations that extend beyond the digital platform context. This is particularly evident in the case of Rachel Chiu, who was a contestant in the twentieth season of the talent show *American Idol*, which was broadcast on ABC in 2022. Rachel states that numerous scouts are tasked with searching for prospective contestants for the television program and utilize platforms such as TikTok. She did not submit an application to participate in the show herself but she was discovered on TikTok and subsequently invited to attend the casting event:

> They have people who are, like, scouts. And they found me on TikTok. […] I got a phone call and someone asked me: "Do you want to join *American Idol*?" And I thought it was, like, a prank call or, like, a scam because I've actually searched up how to sign up before. And it says you can't sign up unless you're American. I'm from Canada, so there's no way you could sign up. And when the person called, I was, like, no, I'm okay. And so I hung up. And then again, they called me a week later and then they were, like, would you like to join? This is real, you could search my name up, I'm a producer. I won't say her name but I searched her up and she was real. She was on IMDB and all that stuff.

> And so I was, like, okay, maybe, you know, for now they're not asking for my credit card, they're not asking for my personal information, so I'll just go with it and see how it goes. And we did some online Zoom auditions throughout the summer. There were two rounds and I remember it was very fast pace. I actually had work that day and I asked my boss. I was, like, please, can I go to my interview? And I had to drive home to my piano. Go on the Zoom meeting, and they said it would be for half an hour. So I did it, and it was half an hour, and then they're, like, wait, we need you for the next round. And so it took another hour. But I got through the online one and then they send me an email, like, congratulations, you made it. And they flew me out to Texas, which is one of their audition locations. And that's where I got to actually go and audition in front of Katy Perry, Lionel Richie and Luke Bryan, and it was super exciting. (Rachel Chiu, interview)

Rachel's story indicates that she did not anticipate these developments at the outset of her TikTok career. Nevertheless, the prospect of establishing a media presence beyond the platform is one that the interviewees are keen to pursue. Erny Nunez's experience was similar. He was featured on FOX's *Alter Ego* in 2021, at the age of seventeen, and was also head-hunted by the program's staff via TikTok:

> TikTok actually helped me get this TV show. I didn't expect it would ever. I was just making my videos one day and I got a message from Fox, saying: "Hey, I want you to be part of this TV show." And I was just, like, what? This isn't real. This is not happening. And I thought it was fake. So I was just, like, you know what? Let me just take the chance and let's see how it turns out. And it turned out to be *Alter Ego*. […] I did love the show a lot. They use a lot of technology. I wasn't used to that. I'm used to use, like, you know, less technology when I record videos and just going from that to immediately using all sorts of things, it just it blew my mind away. So *Alter Ego* is one of those shows where you just either get it or you don't. At the moment I am going on another TV show, but I cannot say what show it is just yet. (Erny Nunez, interview)

This evidence indicates that TikTok has the potential to facilitate the growth of musicians' careers, providing them with access to more conventional mass media formats and consequently enhancing their popularity. It is evident that TikTok represents a pivotal platform for the musicians who participated in this study. Nevertheless, it seems that appearing on major television pro-

grams such as *American Idol* and *Alter Ego* is of even greater significance for the interviewees. This is suggested by Rachel and Erny's descriptions of their feelings of euphoria and excitement at having the opportunity to participate in these formats. It would appear that achieving success on TikTok, which can be considerable, is not the overarching objective for musicians. Furthermore, the allure of traditional media formats, such as TV shows, persists despite the ascendancy of digital platforms.

In the course of the interviews, the relevance of TikTok for musicians was addressed. Some of the interviewees stated that they had initially feared that their presence on the platform might even have a negative impact on their musical careers. This apprehension is largely attributed to the prevailing perception of TikTok as a platform where relatively young individuals disseminate frivolous or sentimental videos, with a paucity of serious content. Initially, the interviewees expressed concern about potential ridicule or even judgment from other jazz musicians due to their engagement with TikTok. They stressed the importance of upholding the seriousness of jazz as an art form, emphasizing that the objective of TikTok videos should not be to disparage or poke fun at jazz. Consequently, they had reservations about their credibility within the jazz community, as Kellin Hanas articulates:

> Some people in the jazz community were, like, you know, oh, this is corny. So I kind of stopped because I felt really insecure about what I was making. […] But now I'm even more self-conscious than I was worried about. Like, what do people think about what I'm making? Do people think that I'm making fun of the art form? Do people think that I'm corny? (Kellin Hanas, interview)

In contrast, Stella Cole has first-hand experience of the fact that the majority of professional jazz musicians are not deterred by the prospect of engaging with TikTok. Rather, they recognize the potential offered by the platform, particularly in terms of expanding their reach. Nevertheless, she too initially feared that her TikTok presence would be met with rejection from the jazz community:

> When I first got onto the jazz scene in New York, I actually got really insecure about my TikTok and I was, like, oh, they're not going to think I'm a jazz singer because I'm just singing, like, "Fly Me to the Moon." Like, maybe I'm singing the wrong stuff. Or this isn't, like, truly jazz, you know? I definitely did feel insecure about that at some point, especially when I first got onto

> the scene. Because doing it on the internet is very different than doing it in person, obviously. But what I've actually found is that 95% of the musicians, singers, everybody that I meet, they're, like, wow, that's so cool that you have that platform. Musicians are always, like, oh, I'll play for one of your videos anytime. Like, I'll do a live stream with you. Like, they're very interested in it because all of them love this music and, like, any way to have thousands of people seeing it, they're down, you know? (Stella Cole, interview)

However, as Stella also notes, the TikTok platform presents only a limited aspect of her musical output. At times, she is "focusing a little less on TikTok and a little more on singing in real life." This illustrates once again that TikTok has a preference for certain types of jazz-related content over others. Consequently, musicians must align their activities on the platform with these preferences, even if their overall musical output differs from the content they create for the platform. It was similarly important for Sam Ambers to highlight that his artistic endeavors extend beyond TikTok:

> I think it's all well and good having casual fun videos on TikTok. But in terms of Spotify, you know, that's where the serious music comes into play and that's the true reflection of you as an artist, I guess. With TikTok, you're jumping through hoops, you know, you're ticking boxes. Whereas at Spotify, you want it to be as close to an accurate representation of your musical self as possible. So going forward, hopefully that's going to be the case. I'm looking to do a lot more jazz work and that will probably be more kind of commercial stuff for engagements, corporate things, weddings, whatever. I also want to have my own band that will be releasing music itself, and whether I release music through the band or independently is still to be seen. (Sam Ambers, interview)

In light of the interviewees' extensive reach on TikTok, it is pertinent to ask to what extent platform-specific activities can be monetized. Strikingly, the interviewees assert that they generate minimal to no income directly from TikTok. Nevertheless, the majority of interviews indicate that musicians can potentially derive financial benefits from their TikTok reach, albeit indirectly. Caity Gyorgy, for instance, states that the TikTok guidelines prohibit her from monetizing her videos directly. The TikTok creator fund provides financial compensation to selected content creators who meet specific criteria in terms of reach and origin. The program is open to content creators based in the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, France, or Spain who are at

least eighteen years old, have a minimum of 10,000 followers, and have generated a minimum of 100,000 views within the past thirty days. Initially, only content creators based in the United States were eligible to apply for the creator fund (TikTok n.d.; TikTok 2021a; TikTok 2021b). At the time of the interview, Canadian national Caity Gyorgy was unable to access the creator fund. However, she utilizes her popularity on TikTok to draw users to her profiles on other platforms, as previously mentioned, and to generate income. She is currently able to pay some bills based on her Spotify streams, which were indirectly facilitated by her presence on TikTok. She also receives offers for live performances through TikTok:

> I'm Canadian, I don't have access to the creator fund. […] I don't make any money from TikTok directly. But indirectly, yes. […] [I]ndirectly, more people [are] listening to my music [on Spotify]. They add up. I pay my rent – even more than my rent – every single month with Spotify streams. So it helped that way. I've gotten some other really great opportunities through TikTok where I've been hired to do singing work. And, I mean, it's not enough to sustain me, like, I would need one of those every single month to be able to, you know, live. But there have been opportunities that I've gotten from TikTok indirectly that have paid very well. I haven't done any sponsorship stuff before. I'd like to, like, look into getting to that. […] For me, nothing directly from the app, only indirectly through, like, Spotify or from people, like, going to my Instagram and buying a ticket to a show or buy my album on Bandcamp. (Caity Gyorgy, interview)

Kellin Hanas has stated that she has received numerous invitations to perform live via TikTok. On occasion, these offers have provided her with the opportunity to collaborate with high-profile media personalities, which is not likely to have occurred without her substantial reach on the platform:

> I really started to get hired a lot from TikTok. Like, once I started becoming popular on TikTok, the actor Darren Criss – he was on *Glee* – reached out to me after one of my TikToks and was, like, I want you to be the trumpet player for my Christmas show. So I ended up playing with Darren Criss for Christmas because of TikTok. So I see it as a way to get my music out there because everybody's on TikTok now. […] I mean, it's important to me. (Kellin Hanas, interview)

The second Canadian interviewee, Rachel Chiu, expressed a similar viewpoint to Caity Gyorgy regarding the potential for financial gain. She too does not receive any direct remuneration from TikTok, but instead views the platform as an "opportunity generator." Her presence on TikTok has not only resulted in her being selected to participate in *American Idol*, but has also prompted offers of collaboration from prominent corporations, some of which she has accepted:

> As a Canadian, I can't access the creator fund on TikTok, which means I can't make revenue directly from my videos. […] I see TikTok more as a bridge to opportunities. For example, *American Idol* or different job opportunities for getting my name out there, so that in the future, if I do release music, I will have a platform to post on. I don't see it much as a revenue generator [but as an] opportunity generator. I have made a small revenue on, like, doing live streaming on TikTok, but I wouldn't say this is where I want my job to be. […] I kind of like it that way because I feel, like, if there's monetary value placed on my videos, then it becomes a lot more, like, work for me and takes my passion away from it. […] It's just opportunities and collaborations. I make money indirectly. For example, I did my collaboration with HP or I have done different collaborations with smaller companies. Those brands will either send me their products or I get a small pay or both. (Rachel Chiu, interview)

Collaborations such as the one referenced by Rachel with the U.S. computer and printer manufacturer HP represent a significant source of revenue for content creators on digital platforms. Content creators present a curated selection of products and frequently share discount codes from collaborating partners that offer their followers a lower price on these products. A number of the interviewees indicated that they frequently receive requests for such collaborative projects. This illustrates that jazz musicians operating in digital environments are occasionally engaged in fully commercial arrangements and, on occasion, exploit these remunerative prospects. This is, in principle, an obvious conclusion, and is a common business model in the context of digital platforms. However, the idea of anti-commercialism is, in fact, an essential aspect of representations of jazz history and aesthetic concepts within the context of jazz itself, as Scott DeVeaux (1991) elucidated in the early 1990s. The concept of commerce is viewed with skepticism in this context, and many jazz enthusiasts and performers believe that the genre should be free from the influence of contemporary market forces. A similar set of narratives is observed in a number of musical genres, and the term *commerce* continues to evoke strong emotional responses among fans and musicians alike. It is, nevertheless, a reason-

able assumption that young jazz musicians are driven by the desire or the need to generate income, which may lead them to capitalize on such opportunities. From their perspective, monetizing their TikTok presence is an integral aspect of their professional development as artists. For instance, Brooklyn Stafford indicates that she began working with a manager with the objective of having a professional partner present during her collaborative endeavors:

> He helps me manage my emails if I have, like, business collaborations, right? Some people want to send you clothes, some people want commissions. And he helps me set up fees. For example, like, Beanie Babies. They reached out to me and they wanted me to do a little ad. […] I didn't know what to charge. I don't know anything about that. But he's, like, ok, we're going to charge that and see what happens. And they did. They pulled through, and it was really good because obviously your artist manager gets a percentage of what you make, right? And so they're always going to advocate for you to give more money. So it's a win-win for everybody. (Brooklyn Stafford, interview)

Beanie Babies are soft toys produced by the U.S. company Ty, for which Brooklyn uploaded two commercials to TikTok. This example demonstrates that the musical artists' advertising partners need not have a direct connection to jazz, or even music, for these collaborations to be effective. It is similar to the collaboration between Rachel Chiu and HP. On occasion, Brooklyn notes, music-related companies inquire about potential collaborations, such as the app developer Simply, which offers applications for learning musical instruments. Brooklyn created one of her most popular videos, an adaptation of the third movement (Rondo "alla Turca") of Mozart's Piano Sonata no. 11, in response to a request from Simply (Stafford 2022):

> A lot of apps reach out to you and they want you to make a video to advertise their platform. For example, one of the videos that actually went viral was because of an idea that an app gave to me. Simply Piano, they wanted me to record [a] Mozart piece. And they said, maybe you can do a pop aspect to it, but I wanted to do a Latin remix to it. […] I posted that on my Instagram and TikTok and those both went off, but that was actually for an ad. And so I gave the ad to them and they posted it and whatever. And that's the origins of that. So yes, in long story, yes, you can make money off of TikTok from apps and people reaching out to you for commissions. (Brooklyn Stafford, interview)

Nevertheless, the responses of the surveyed musicians on the subject of collaboration differ widely. For some, collaboration with companies is an unfeasible proposition, as Erny Nunez affirms:

> I've been offered, you know, some collaborations to promote, like, a product, but I always declined because I don't want to gain money off of TikTok. That's not what I made the account for, you know. Yes, I've got a lot of, like, companies saying, hey, I want you to promote this product. But that's not really what I find fun. I find it better, you know, if I just sing. I just like doing what I do. It's, like, a hobby. (Erny Nunez, interview)

Sam Ambers, on the other hand, says that he is amenable to collaborations, provided that they align with his TikTok profile. He asserts that the crucial consideration is to only engage in collaborations that he and TikTok users can understand. A potential collaboration with Samsung, for instance, would be a viable option. A few weeks after the interview, he did in fact post a commercial video for Samsung (Ambers 2022b). Sam characterizes his stance on collaborations as follows:

> I've got of a lot of friends that I've known through TikTok that do a lot of personality-based videos. So it's not music or anything. It's maybe a bit of comedy and, you know, they can get brand deals very easily. And let me tell you, they're making a lot of money. Whereas, you know, with my account, you want to keep it authentic to a certain degree. So that means that you can't sell out to brand deals and things like that because what is that? You know, that is almost a bit of a stain on your kind of artistic portfolio or the way that you're viewed, basically. I think I do need to be a bit smarter. I do need to be a bit more clever with TikTok because there are really good opportunities and there are brand deals that are viable and that I'd absolutely love to do. I think the obvious one is Samsung. I think that absolutely makes sense. I have absolutely no problem with that. And if there was a brand deal that I could deliver in an entertaining, engaging, artistic way, there's nothing wrong with that whatsoever. But, you know, I think the goal for me is to become a musician, not an online personality. So that's kind of where I draw the line. (Sam Ambers, interview)

While attitudes toward collaborative opportunities and sources of income vary, a certain fundamental proficiency in self-marketing appears to be a universal necessity in the contemporary music industry. Stella Cole, for instance, says

that musicians must initially establish a certain degree of reach within the platform context to capture the attention of record labels and management. Subsequently, they must possess the capacity to effectively delegate such marketing responsibilities when necessary:

> It's so interesting that artists are now expected to – I mean, artists have always had to market themselves, but now it's not, like, you sign to a label and then they market you and they're, like, okay, this is what your brand should be. This is how we're going to get you exposed to people. It's, like, you do the work of yourself to the world. And then a label will find you, like, Stacey [Ryan] signed with [Island Records]. They wouldn't have wanted to sign her until her video got eight million views. (Stella Cole, interview)

TikTok appears to provide optimal conditions for the form of self-marketing described by Stella. The interviewees concurred that TikTok is a relatively low-threshold avenue for reaching new listeners, and that this can be a pivotal factor in advancing a musical career beyond the platform. Sam Ambers offers a perspective on this: "Effectively, it has to be used as a platform to ultimately assist a musical career, which is kind of what I want to develop." For Caity Gyorgy, the primary benefit of TikTok is its capacity to disseminate content to a vast audience in a relatively short period of time, extending even beyond the confines of the platform. This represents a novel experience for her, and a crucial distinction from other social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram. Caity elaborates:

> I've always been super interested in, like, social media marketing. But I had mainly done that through Instagram and Facebook and then along comes TikTok, and it just made a world of difference. […] I'm very grateful for the app. […] [W]hen [one of my "Cardiologist" videos] went viral, I gained 2,000 followers on Spotify. […] When I started TikTok, I had around like 2,000, 2,500 Spotify followers, and now I'm up to over 9,500 Spotify followers and I credit that entirely to TikTok. It's been pretty fantastic. It's really nice to get the music around to different people. […] Instagram is very limited with the amount of reach you can get to other people and, like, I have a transcription account on Instagram, that's taken me years to grow and I haven't posted on it in a while because I've been so busy. But even now, like, I would post and I'm, like, oh, I have a new single! Nobody cares about that on Instagram. But on TikTok – it's pretty phenomenal. […] If they hear a song they like, if they hear lyrics that they resonate to, if there's a beat that they find interesting or a

> melody that catches their ear, they like it and they interact with it. And that's something that I've never experienced with apps like Instagram or Facebook before. I think the potential of reaching new people is insane. (Caity Gyorgy, interview)

Erny Nunez highlights that TikTok facilitates the "biggest amount of traction," a notable distinction from other platforms: "I started on YouTube. I didn't like it. I didn't really like YouTube. It was very slow. It was very random based. […] Instagram same. Anything else that I used, SoundCloud as well. So I would say TikTok is extremely important."

The interviewees frequently compare the platform to Instagram. It is noteworthy that all of the musicians interviewed are active on both platforms and that, without exception, they had significantly fewer followers on Instagram than on TikTok at the time of the interviews. They attribute this to the different functional logics of the platforms, with TikTok being characterized by a "virality-centered platform logic" (Zeng and Kaye 2022, 80). The prevailing view is that viral moments are uncommon on Instagram because the platform is designed to facilitate communication with users who have actively chosen to follow a particular profile. This is significantly less the case on TikTok, where the platform's For You page logic enables content creators to reach users with whom they have not yet established a connection. Kellin Hanas provides the following explanation:

> You can go viral on TikTok, but it's very rare to go viral on Instagram because that's just not how the platform works. [On] Instagram […], you connect with the people that you already know. And sometimes you get lucky with your videos and they reach a wider audience. But it's pretty much who already knows you is going to follow you. [On] TikTok, […] you upload a video. That video goes out to an audience of random people that the algorithm selects and it keeps going up and up and up to more random people. So it's just natural for me to upload a video on TikTok that goes viral. Then I've got 50,000 random people start following me and only 25% of them will look and see, oh, here's her Instagram and then follow me on Instagram. […] It's just easier to gain people on TikTok. (Kellin Hanas, interview)

Sam Ambers expressed a similar sentiment, pointing out that he probably only gained a few followers on Instagram because those people were already familiar with his TikTok account:

> I feel like it's quite easy to get views and develop a following on [TikTok]. [O]n Instagram, […], unless there was an exceptional amount of attention or traction to the video, it would only get shown to my followers. So there's such little room for growth. Any growth on Instagram tended to be from external sources. So the only reason why I've got a few thousand followers on Instagram is because my Instagram is attached to my TikTok. It trickles down followers. […] I mean, the case in point is that I had zero followers on TikTok when I posted my first video and then overnight I had 10,000 followers and, like, two million views. You know, that doesn't happen on Instagram. (Sam Ambers, interview)

It is noteworthy that other platforms apart from Instagram are only briefly referenced in the interviews. While some of the interviewees do mention Facebook, they seldom discuss other platforms such as YouTube, SoundCloud, Bandcamp, Twitch, or X (formerly Twitter). It is evident that the interviewees' age is a contributing factor. Individuals under the age of twenty-five are currently more inclined to utilize platforms like TikTok and Instagram. Conversely, as previously mentioned, Caity Gyorgy and Erny Nunez have provided insights into their experiences with other platforms, which are at times a cause for concern. It is similarly conceivable that the particular and relatively homogeneous content for which the interviewees became known on TikTok may not be equally popular on all platforms due to the presence of different functional logics and target groups.

6.9 TikTok's Potential Influence on Jazz Culture

It has been demonstrated that certain types of jazz-related content are more visible on TikTok than others. The musicians interviewed are aware of this phenomenon and, as a result, develop specific strategies and occasionally produce videos specifically for the platform with a high degree of precision and according to clearly defined criteria. In light of the considerable influence that musicians wield on TikTok, it is worth examining the extent to which the platform is shaping the public perception of jazz. The interviewees concur that TikTok presents a valuable opportunity to introduce jazz to new audiences, particularly younger individuals. In this context, the musician Laufey is referenced on numerous occasions. She is regarded as one of the most prominent jazz musicians on TikTok and is described in various journalistic articles as teaching