

‘TikTok is age-agnostic’: how Kylie and Fleetwood Mac found new young fans

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Author: Nadia Khomami

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They have long been a staple of older music lovers’ playlists, but classic stars – from Kate Bush to Fleetwood Mac and Kylie Minogue – are bypassing traditional music platforms to find younger audiences on TikTok, one of the app’s music heads has said. The platform, once regarded as a teen dance fad, has evolved into one of the key players in the music industry, allowing legacy superstars to connect with fans who were born decades after they started releasing music. “We don’t have any constraints as to who can be successful,” said Darina Connolly, the head of TikTok’s Label and Artist Partnerships. “The community is really age-agnostic and genre-agnostic, it doesn’t care how long an artist has been releasing music. “If it’s a genre of music they’ve never listened to before, they’re not going to say, ‘I’m not going to listen to that’. They’re just consuming music all the time. And if a track resonates, for whatever reason, it then tends to do really well.” Last week, Kylie became the first woman over 50 to break on to the Radio 1 playlist with a solo song in years. But the success of her recent hit Padam Padam – No 8 on the UK charts – can be traced to TikTok, where it was enjoyed and shared by gen Z, despite youth radio stations refusing to play it for weeks. Connolly said Padam Padam had been successful “because it’s an absolute tune. It’s upbeat, it’s catchy, it naturally creates a sense of joy and celebration.” On top of that, she said, the LGBTQ+ community got behind it, turning it into a gay summer anthem. “Kylie is a very well-known ally and her songs always promote acceptance and self-expression which really resonates with that community.” The track’s success echoed that of Kate Bush’s Running Up That Hill, which last year found renewed attention after it was featured on Netflix’s Stranger Things. It immediately went viral on TikTok among young devotees of the show, before topping the UK singles chart 37 years after it was originally released. “The community that was watching Stranger Things came straight over to TikTok,” Connolly said. “They’d never heard the song before but it really resonated with them because they’d seen it in this really epic TV moment.” Today, some of TikTok’s most engaged artists are over the age of 70, Connolly said. “Elton John absolutely knows how to use the platform and have fun with it. He posts about his music, his life, live shows, content from behind the scenes, he brings friends in. Rod Stewart is also super-engaged, helping an audience find his music, which will again be brand new music to a lot of people’s ears.” Stewart’s Do Ya Think I’m Sexy was even at the centre of a TikTok dance trend last year, and a video of the singer and his wife has so far generated more than 29m views. The first legacy track that really took off on the platform was Fleetwood Mac’s Dreams in 2020. After an infamous skating video, the track received a 374% increase in sales and an 89% rise in streams within a few months. When Mick Fleetwood made his own recreation of the original TikTok, the song re-entered the Billboard Hot 100 at No 21 after a 43-year absence, climbing to the Top 10 of Spotifys Global and US charts, and hit No 1 on

Apple Music. Meanwhile, Miguel's Sure Thing resurfaced recently due to a sped-up remix on TikTok, resulting in the original song re-entering the UK and Billboard Charts, becoming the singer's biggest ever hit more than a decade after its original release. "TikTok has absolutely changed the music industry," Connolly said. "There's democratisation [on the platform]. Everything is up for grabs. It just takes one creation to make a trend, one moment of magic that can lead to thousands and millions of creations, and, ultimately, success."