

Evert Bisschop Boele, March 19, 2012, London

# INDIVIDUALIZING THE AUDIENCE

Research Group Lifelong Learning in Music & the Arts  
Centre of Applied Research and Innovation 'Arts & Society'



## **Individualizing the audience**

- I. Introduction
- II. What do music students in Groningen say about their future audience(s)?
- III. What does Dutch conservatoire teaching material say about music audiences?
- IV. What do possible members of the audience say?
- V. Some alternative thoughts on reaching the audience

I.  
**Introduction: Conservatoire life as everyday life**

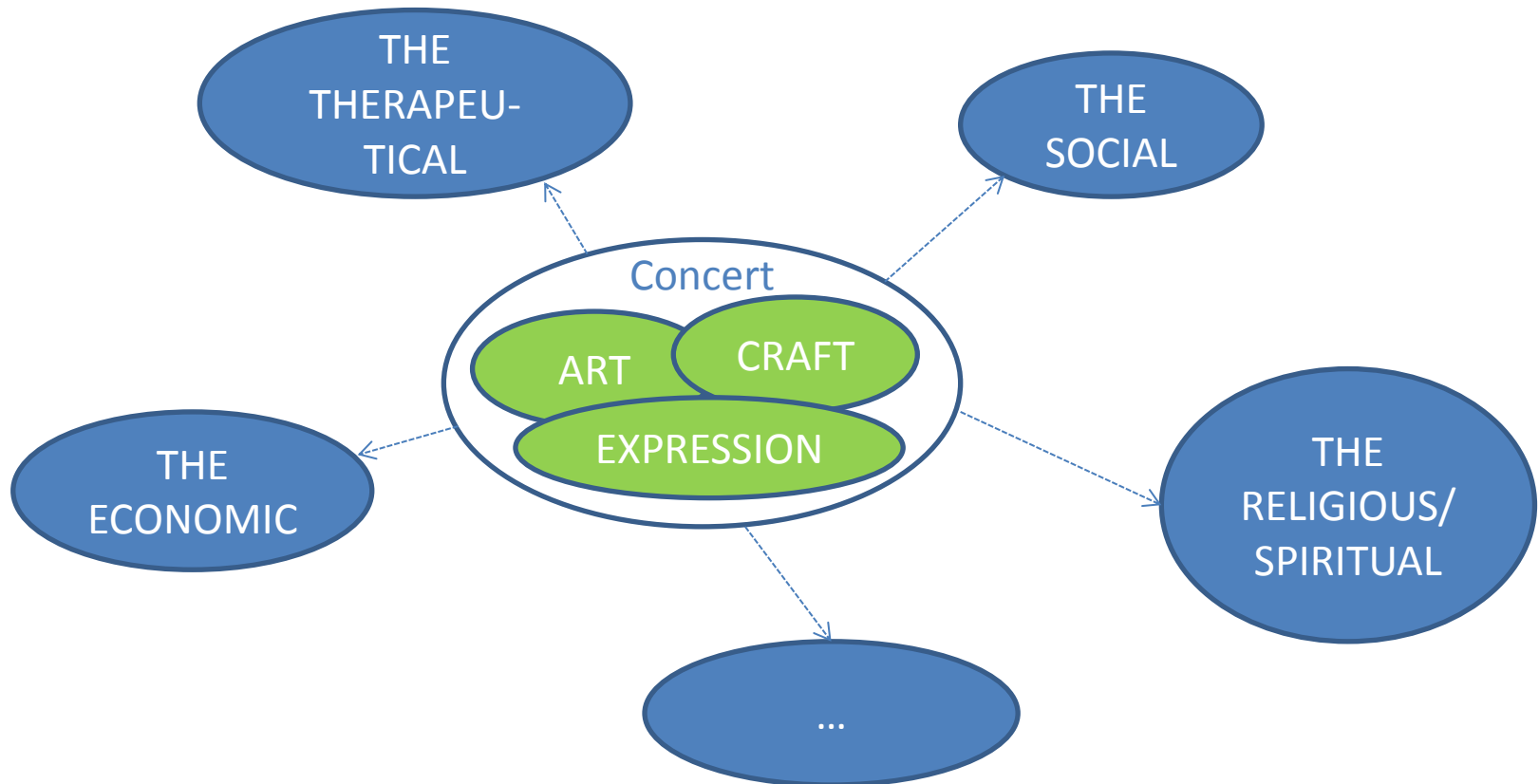
## Conservatoire life as everyday life

Everyday life - common understanding

`... the socially standardized and standardizing, “seen but unnoticed”, expected background features of everyday scenes.’ (Garfinkel 1976)

Garfinkel’s `breaching experiments’ – `start with the familiar scenes and ask what can be done to make trouble.’ (id.)

## Everyday life in the conservatoire



## **II.**

**Thirteen music students in Groningen on their future audience(s)**

## What students say: Dimitri

‘People for whom I will play:

As long as I do not have a famous “name”, as for example [Dutch violinist] Janine Jansen, people who will come to my concerts will probably be interested in my instrument/genre or compositions I will play. If they like it they will probably return.

So the people for whom I play are interested in classical music. Maybe they even have a musical background, maybe they are only music lovers. The fact is that those people often have a rather high level of education and age varies from about 30 to 80 I think.

Probably there will be friends and family present occasionally, but those I will have invited myself.’

## What students say: Hanna

### Audience:

A lot of students (art; law school; pedagogy), male & female, 18-25 years old  
Punkers of all ages

Different nationalities who really party

A lot of Spanish people and also Italian and more (Mediterranean) people.  
(Who study here)

Friendly people (the atmosphere is very positive)

Ska-lovers

My parents

### People I would also like to reach:

Jazz people (Big guys like Benjamin Herman)

I will teach at a music school, so hopefully I will have a few students'



## Analysis of remarks on audiences by students: the connoisseur

- the music connoisseur
  - ‘conscious listeners’
  - interested in music
  - interested in instrument
  - lovers of certain compositions
  - understanding the music
- the general connoisseur → demographic characteristics
  - culturally interested
  - wealthy
  - older
  - higher educational level
- exceptions: ‘everybody’; ‘friendly people’

## **Remarks on audiences by students: the ‘super-connoisseurs’**

- people ‘with a musical background’ (‘doen aan muziek’)
- music students
- musicians
- exemplary musicians
  
- information seekers
- researchers

## **Remarks on audiences by students: the non-connoisseur**

- the audience will not grasp everything
- not knowledgeable people
- not finding it boring
  
- ‘knowing music’ still the core concept

## Remarks on audiences by students: the experience-seeker

- people bored of 'Muzak'
  - people looking for an emotional response
  - people going for a night out
  - people looking for something new
  - lovers of live music
  - party-goers
- 
- 'knowing music' still the core concept?

**III.**  
**The connoisseur as a target group**  
**Conservatoire educational material on audiences**

## Dutch educational material on audiences

### Website 'Culture-entrepreneurship'

[www.cultuur-ondernemen.nl](http://www.cultuur-ondernemen.nl)

### Profession: Artist

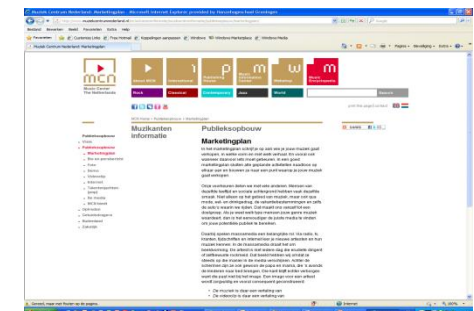
[www.beroepkunstenaar.nl](http://www.beroepkunstenaar.nl)

### Music Centre the Netherlands – Marketing plan

[www.mcn.nl](http://www.mcn.nl)

### Handbook Marketing and Communication for the Starting Musician

[www.lifelonglearninginmusic.org](http://www.lifelonglearninginmusic.org)



## **Handbook Marketing and Communication for the Starting Musician**

[www.lifelonglearninginmusic.org](http://www.lifelonglearninginmusic.org)

‘The audience does not exist! The audience is a collection of people, coming from different backgrounds in society, each with their own needs and preferences.’

## **Handbook Marketing and Communication for the Starting Musician – contd.**

‘Knowledge of the target group ... is of importance.

You can say something in general about culture lovers or rather, culture consumers. Often these are people who do not have small children, they are relatively well educated and have a higher income on average. Culture lovers are not necessarily culture connoisseurs, although they often have a reasonable degree of general education.

Put into words in general terms which kind(s) of audience you want to reach and in which time, based on a number of general background aspects, such as age, region/country, life style, possibly also income and level of education.’



## **IV.**

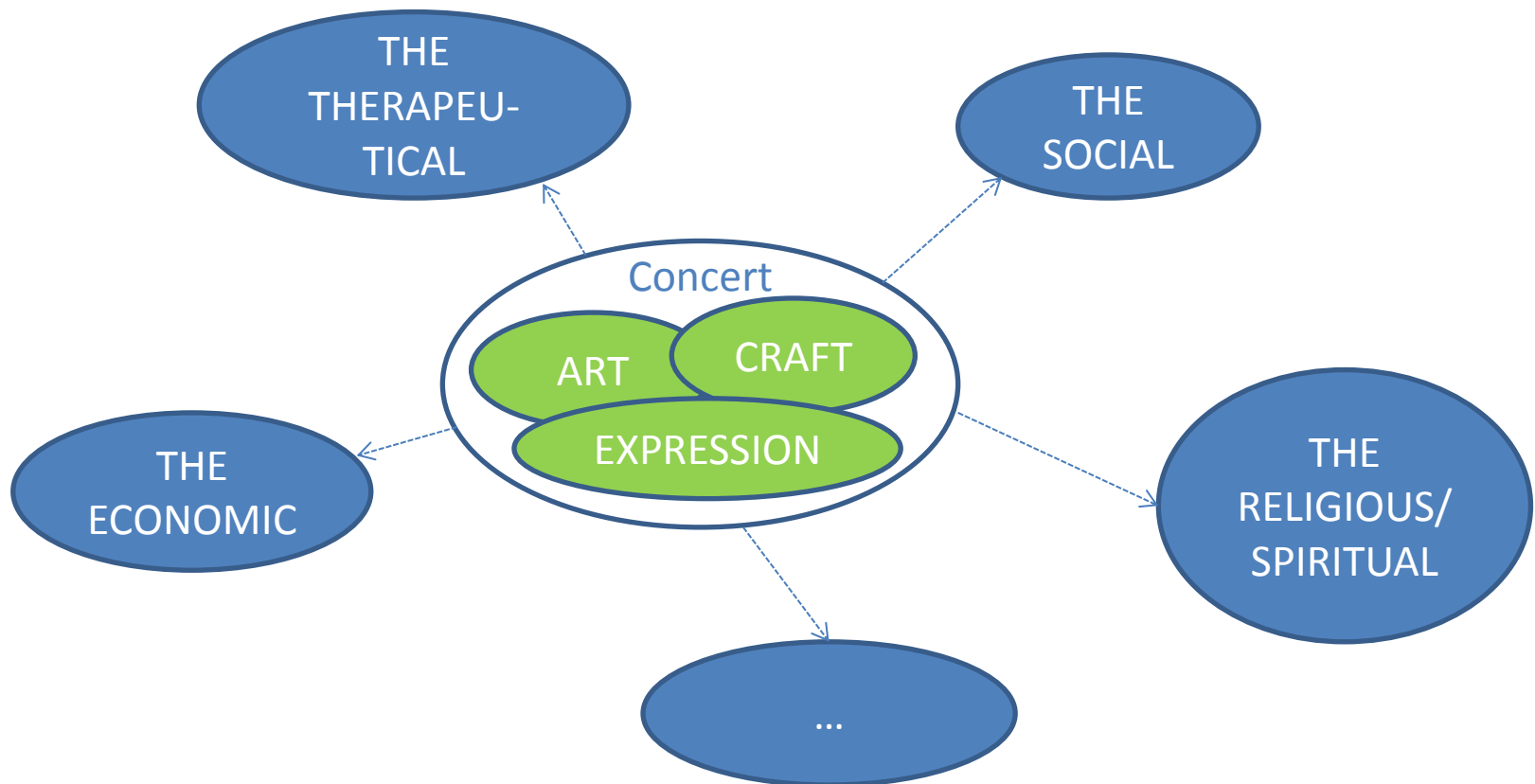
**Possible members of the audience on being a possible audience member**

## Preliminary remarks

- Concerts are ...
- ... elements of `everyday life`
- ... social situations – a coming together at a specific place and time of various individuals for various reasons
- ... a site where a social situation is produced by social actors
- ... `cultural practices in and through which aesthetic materials [are] appropriated and used (dynamic) to produce social life` (DeNora 2000)

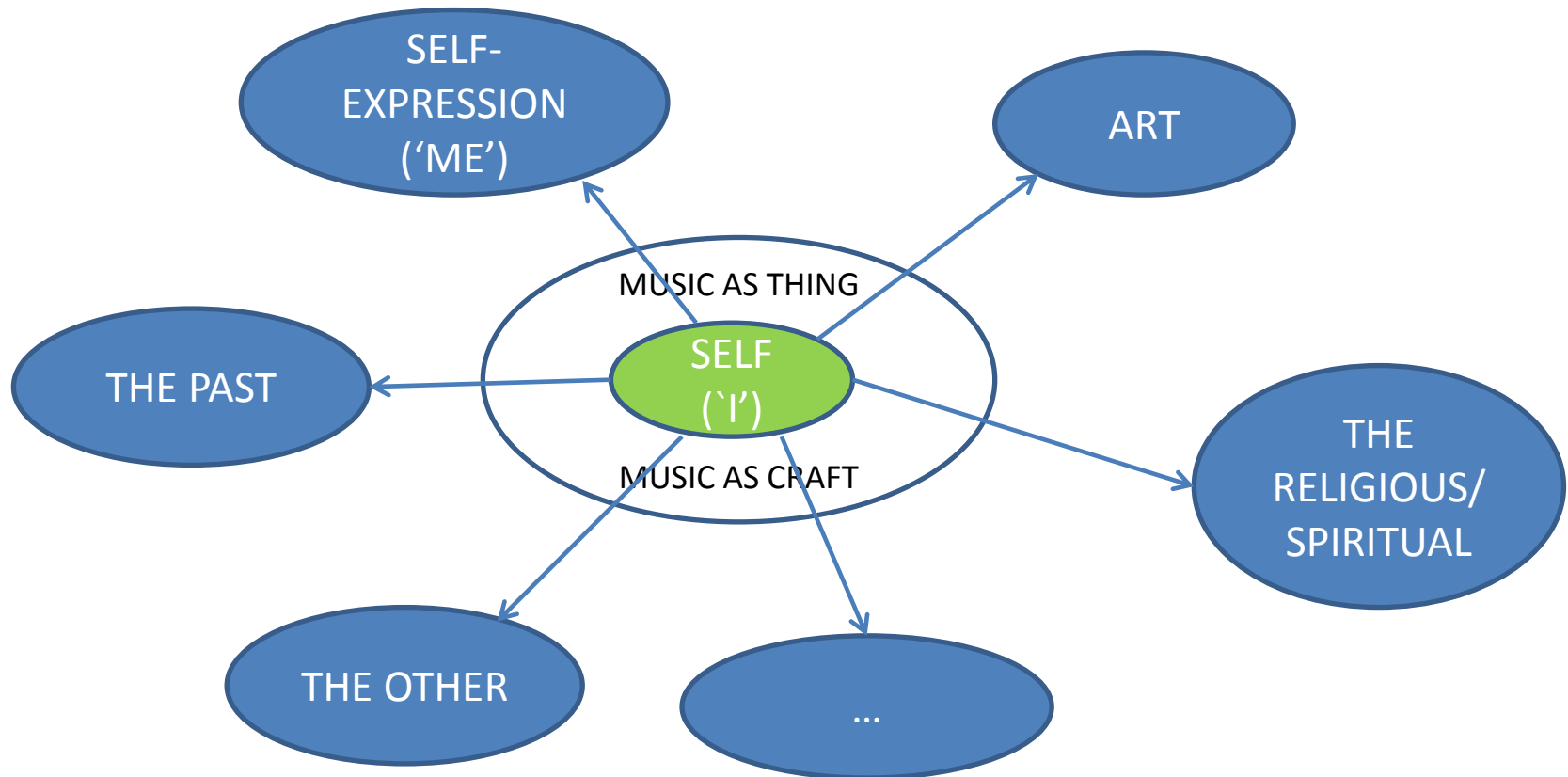
## Why would people visit a concert?

### A sketch of the 'meaning of music according to the conservatoire'-model

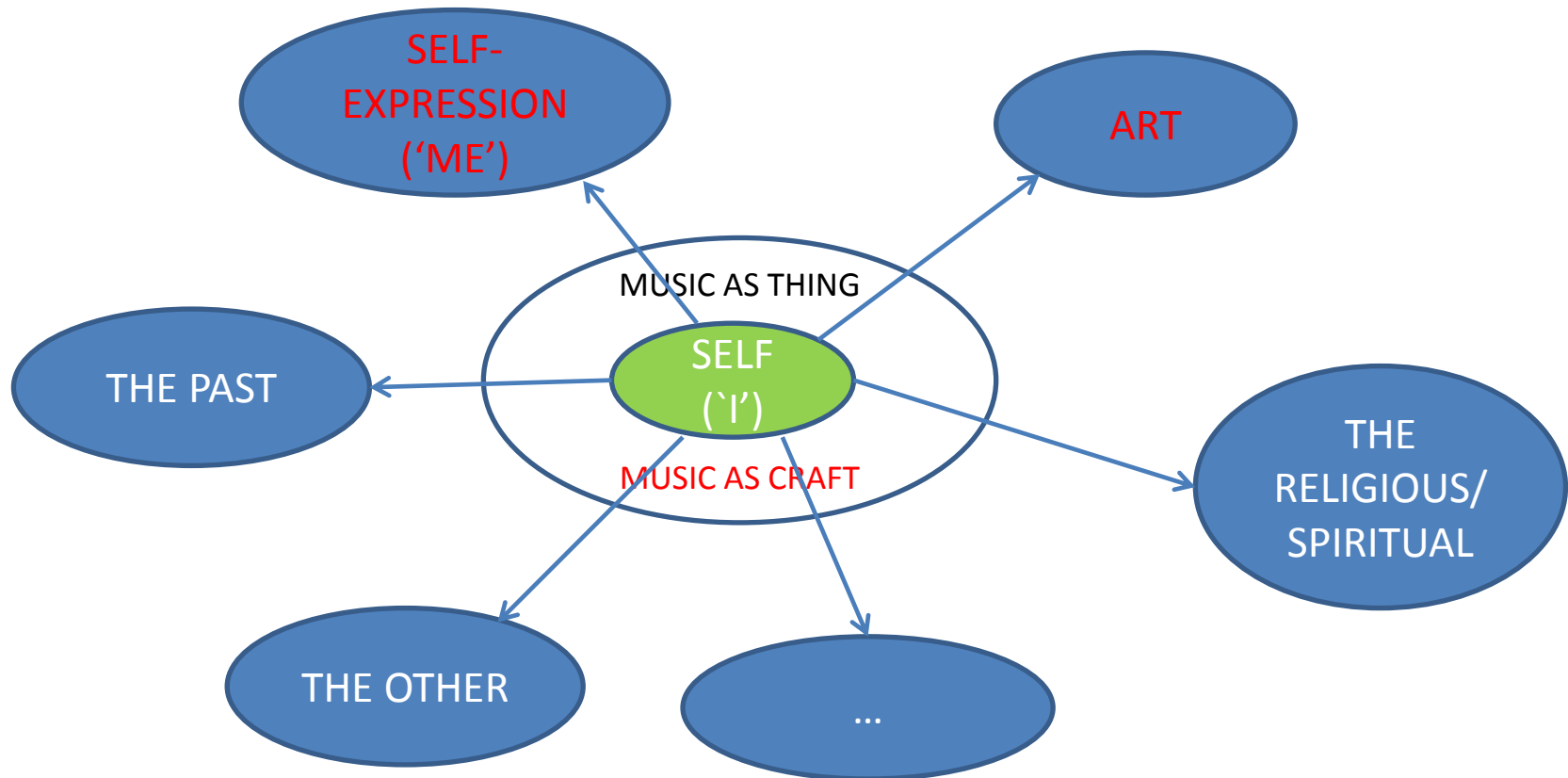


## Why would people visit a concert?

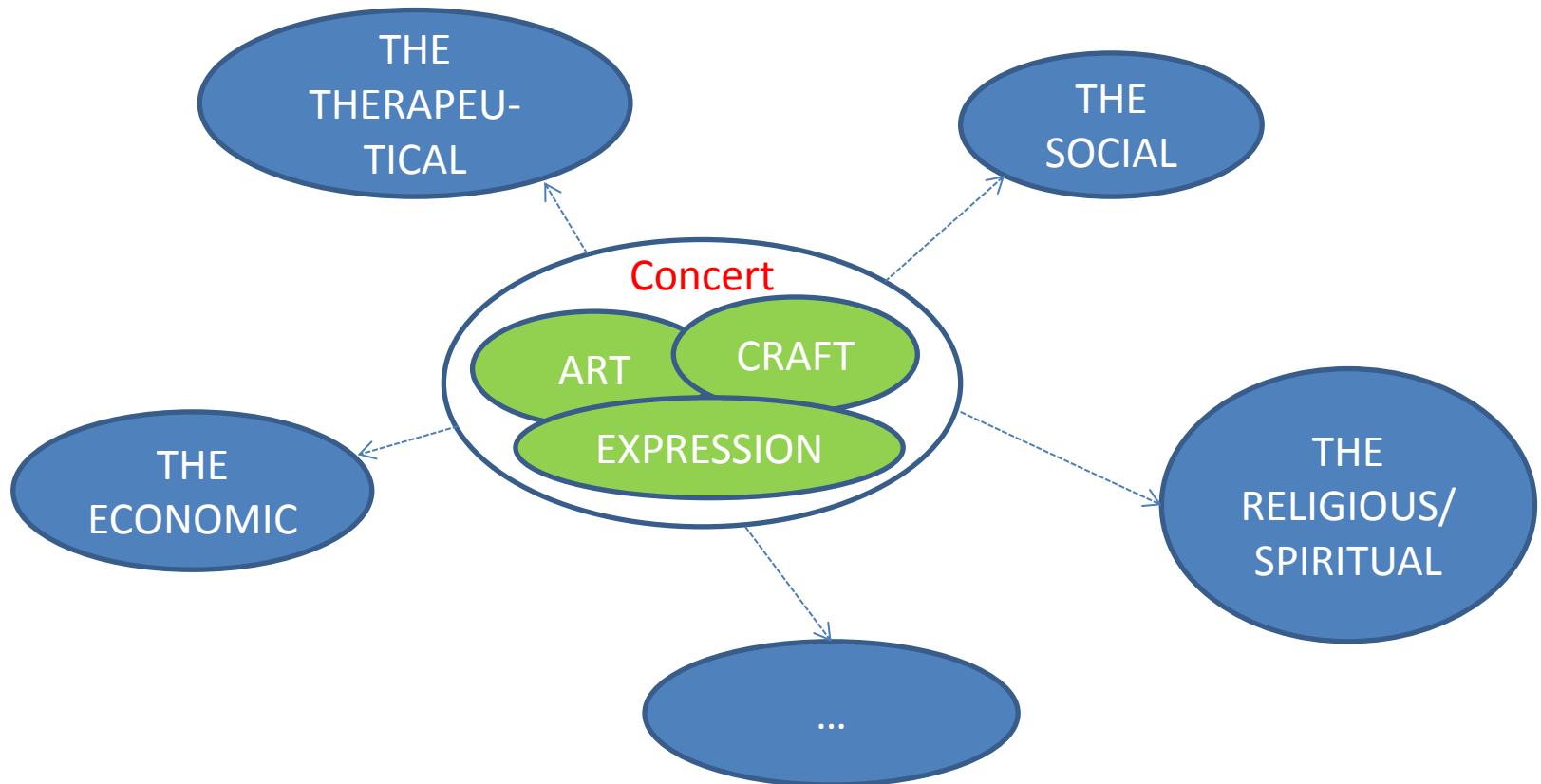
### A sketch of the 'meaning of music in every day life'-model



## Why would people visit a concert? A sketch of the 'every day life model'



## Why would people visit a concert?



## A concert is `just' ...

- ... a specific form of musical behavior from a long list of forms of musical behavior ('musicking' Small 1998)

administrating  
broadcasting  
collecting  
composing  
contesting  
counterfacting  
crying  
dancing  
dj-ing

doing  
exchange  
games  
leading  
making instruments  
meeting like-minded  
organising  
pageturning  
performing  
playbacking

playing mediated  
music  
playing mediated  
music - background  
playing instruments  
playing instruments  
together  
producing  
rap  
reading staff notation  
recording  
singing

singing together  
talking  
teaching  
**visiting concerts**  
visiting dance  
performances  
watching audience  
watching musicians  
writing teaching  
materials

## In words

- Music seems to be primarily something that ‘speaks to the self’ (the ‘I’ Mead 1934)
- On that basis, music fulfills many functions which may be conceptualized in terms of ‘connections’
- Music functions for some as an artistic device (connecting to an ‘ideal artistic object’) or as an expressive device (connecting to the social ‘Me’ Mead 1934)
- But music functions in many other ways: connecting to the divine, to the social (to others), to the past...



## In words – contd.

- Individuals always combine different functions in different ratios, varying over time and place
- Variation seems hard to abstract into traditional ‘target groups’
- ‘Each person is unique. Like your fingerprints, your signature, and your voice, your choices of music and the ways you relate to music are plural and interconnected in a pattern that is all yours, an “idioculture” or idiosyncratic culture in sound. ... (M)ost people think of the musical tastes of others in highly stereotyped ways that are based on layered prejudices ... Our musical lives are much more complicated than that.’ (Crafts, Cavicchi & Keil 1993)
- An audience does not consist of members of a target group – it consists of individuals using music functionally in a very specific way

## **V.**

# **Possible consequences for the professional training of musicians**

## 1. Decentering the ‘conservatoire model’ - connecting to new audiences through innovative practices

- The artistic/expressive/craftsmanship definition of music (the ‘conservatoire model’ – the ‘connoisseur’ as target group): possible, not universal
- The artistic/expressive/craftsmanship definition of music: ‘hegemonic tendencies’ (Reckwitz 2006) in conservatoire and society-at-large
- Students understanding breadth & depth of music functions in everyday life -> a wide variety of individuals outside ‘conservatoire culture’
- Offer students the possibility to function in a wide variety of functional contexts (‘breaching experiments’ Garfinkel 1967), thus extending work opportunities

## 2. Redefining the musician

- Changing the definition of what a professional musician has on offer
- From an artistic/expressive/craftsmanship *product* for target groups to musicianship as a *service*, something to be used in a **variety of functions**
- Guide students in (re)defining their role as a professional musician *in and for society-at-large*
- Students (re)connecting to themselves not as future music professionals but as ‘musicking’ human beings – ‘the student as listener’

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