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From 'Craftsmanship & Artistry' to Idiosyncratic
'Musickership' - Calling a Paradigm into Question

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Research Group Lifelong Learning in Music & the Arts



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Music in schools

What is the importance of music in schools?

Social functioning; the aesthetic experience; expressing the self; cognition/brain; ...



... it always made my
day ...
... meaningful ...
... our lesson ...
... gave music an even
bigger place in my life
...

- I. Craftsmanship & artistry and the conservatoire model of the essence of music
- II. A broader picture of what music really 'is' for individuals in Western society
- III. What's wrong with school music today?
- IV. Summing up - idiosyncratic musickership in the classroom

I. Craftsmanship & artistry and the conservatoire model of the essence of music

'Conference program

This conference draws our attention to the core aspects of music education. It focuses on general music education – on **artistry, musicianship, craftsmanship, skills and knowledge** and the question of how to achieve **high quality music education** in classrooms and communities. ...'

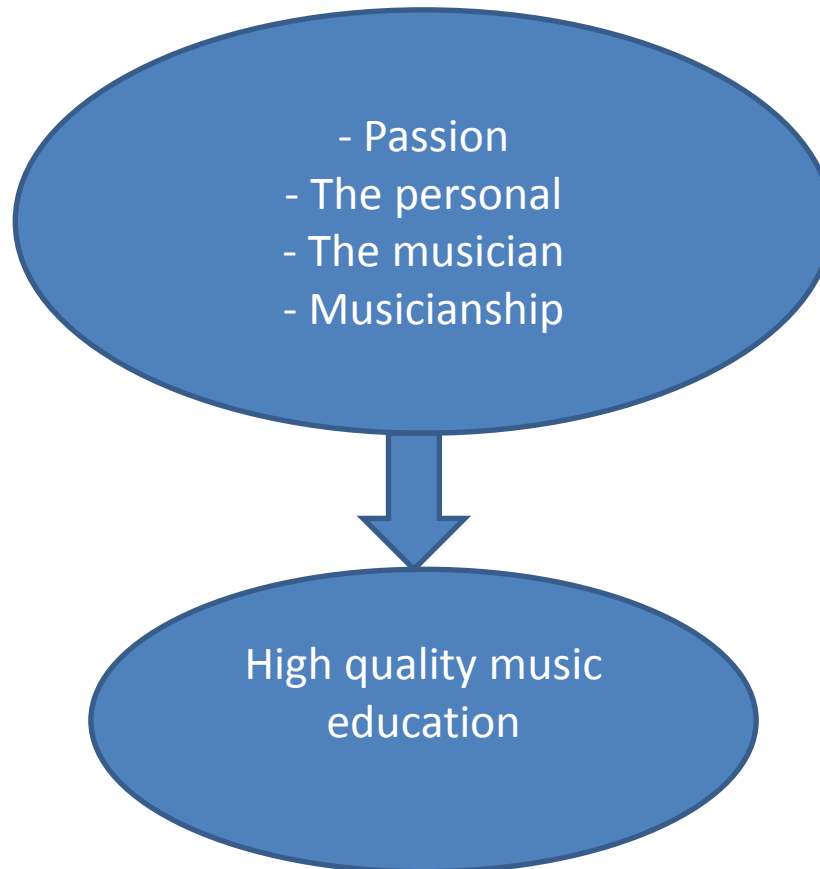
(<http://www.koncon.nl/en/EAS2012/Conference%20program>, 22-3-2012)

'The teacher as musician

If you ask a music teacher whether they see themselves as **teacher** or **musician**, the answer may be obvious although not unambiguous. Many music teachers exercise their profession from a **musical passion**. This is the basis of their **professional teaching**. It is often said that in teaching a balance is needed between **personal** and **professional** development. There is also the common view that **pedagogical and didactic skills** are inextricably bound up with **domain competences**. What kinds of **musical and artistic expertise** are necessary for **music teachers**? How do music teachers relate their **own musicianship** to their **teaching**? And what does **the artistic and musical development** look like in **music teacher training**? ...'

(<http://www.koncon.nl/en/EAS2012/Conference%20program>, 22-3-2012)

Craftsmanship & artistry?



The hegemonic discourse on the essence of music

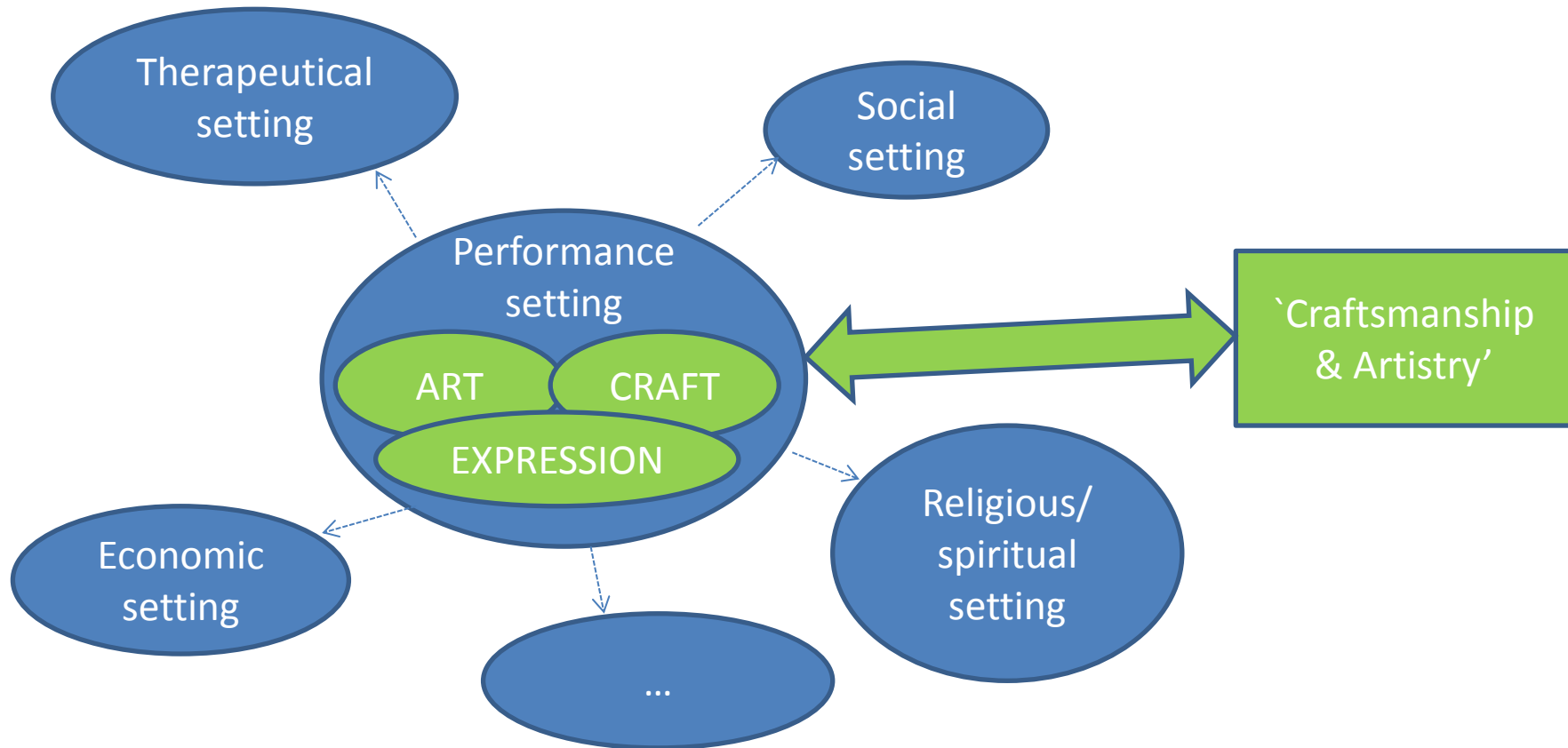
The conservatoire as the exemplary place where we can find the western hegemonic discourse on what music really 'is' (or 'ought to be').

The conservatoire is '... a complicated place (...). It's a place that aims specifically to teach a set of values, and it does so not only through practical instruction but also through the presentation of a quasi-religious system (...). It reflects the culture in which it lives, but it also tries to direct that culture in certain directions.' (Nettl 1995)

Conservatoire life as everyday life - common understanding
'... the socially standardized and standardizing, "seen but unnoticed", expected background features of everyday scenes.' (Garfinkel 1976)

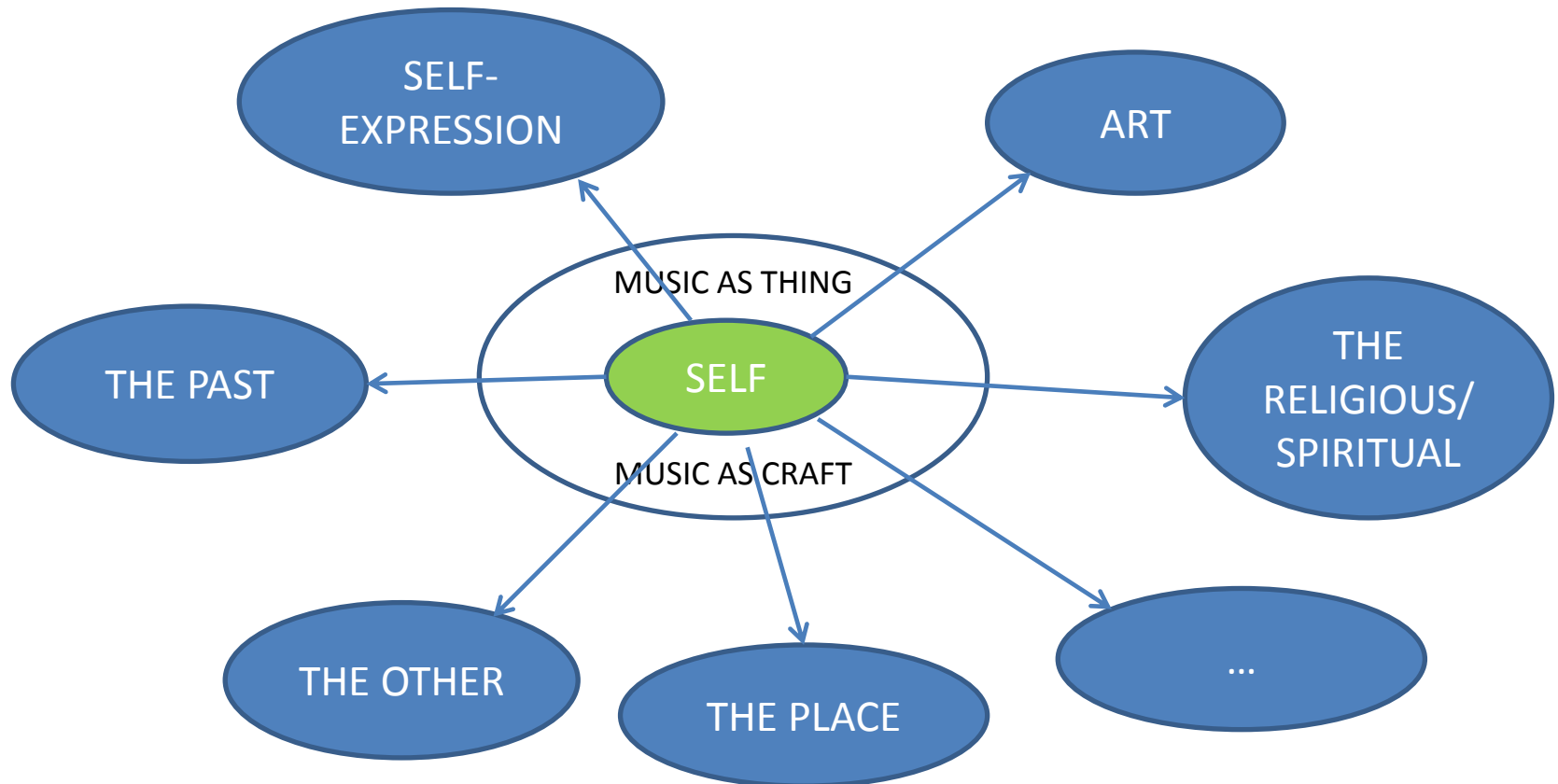
The common understanding of everyday life in the conservatoire

(cf. Kingsbury 1988, Nettle 1995, Perkins 2012)

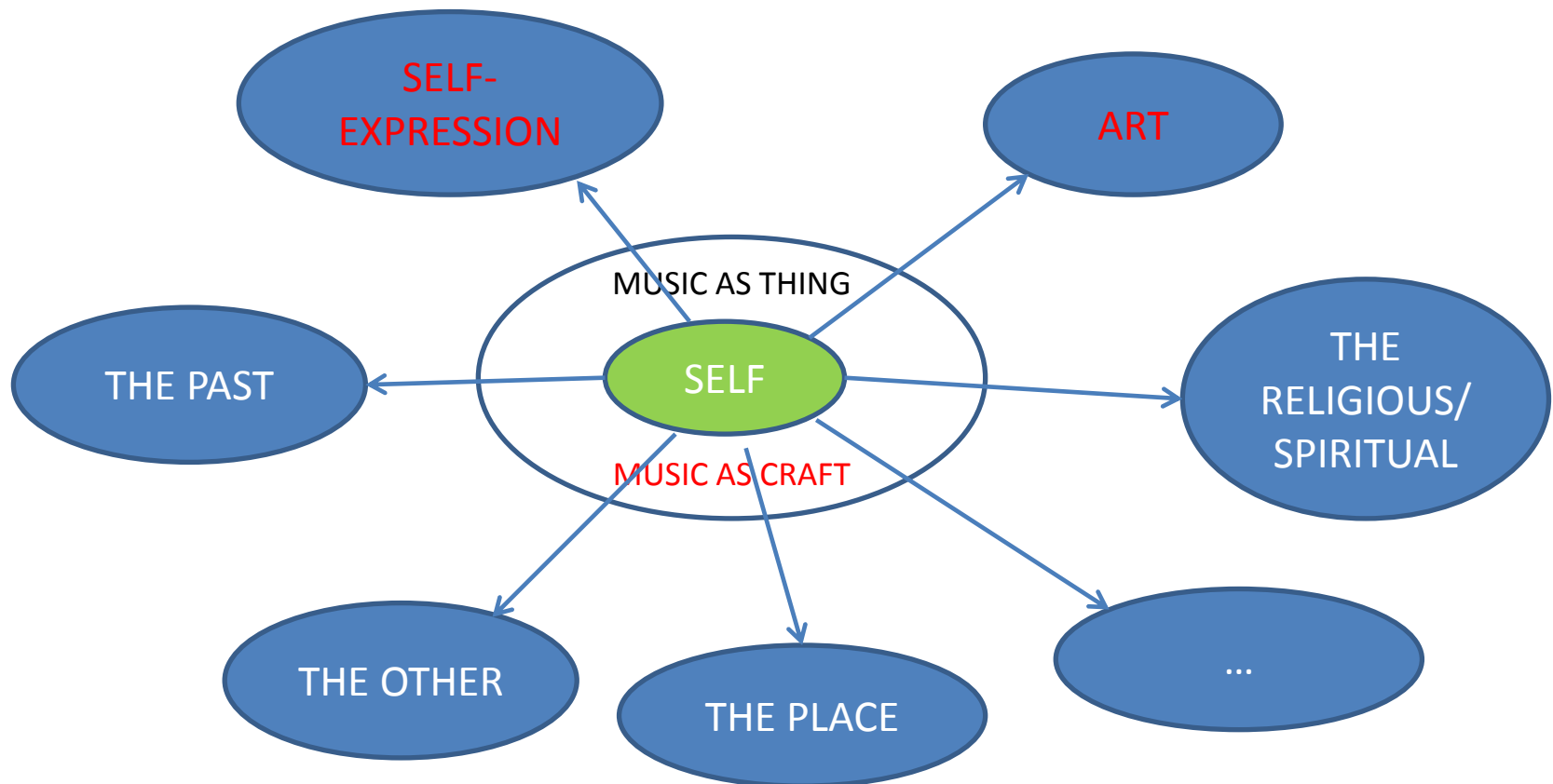


II. A broader picture of what music really 'is' for individuals in Western society

A sketch of the 'essence of music in everyday life'-model



A sketch of the 'essence of music in everyday life'-model: Craftsmanship & artistry?



Musicianship or 'musickership'?

- Performing as 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'
- Craftsmanship is one side of the coin of 'handling music'
- By handling music, it 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 (making the self socially available cf. Mead 1934)
- But music functions in many other ways: connecting to the divine, to the social (to others), to the past...
- There is no strict relation between functions and genres

In words – contd.

- Individuals always combine different functions in different ratios, varying over time and place
- '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)
- 'Craftsmanship & Artistry' sometimes play an important role in the musical life of individuals, but often a marginal role or no role at all
- Music is nevertheless a powerful force in the lives of many

III. What's wrong with school music today?

The former pupils speak

I6: 'You had to sing a song every now and then and those were... yes, it was not pop music, it was not classical, it were those, yes, silly songs. It made zero impression. (...) Then you had to sing with the girls one verse and with the boys, that was also a sort of screaming. No, I don't know. I can't even remember really what we did, so little impression it made. When I could drop the subject I simply dropped it.'

The former pupils speak 2

I20: 'I have to admit honestly that I did not find it great to play with one wooden stick three notes on a xylophone, as it were. The teacher wanted to make it into a harmonic whole but – yes I thought that rather simple. I rather listened and that she would tell about music, I thought that much more interesting, she played beautiful cello and piano herself, so yes I could enjoy that. But all the music making in the classroom was not really something serious, it was not complicated or, yes not really of a high musical level as it were. Maybe I am rather single-minded about that, but that's me. Because I love good music as it were, people mastering their instrument reasonably well, I value that.'

The former pupils speak 3

I16: 'He also had a school orchestra, that man [the music teacher – EBB], and I thought that really crap. I thought it was really bad, and I thought he was bad, I did not like it at all, I did not like him [laughs], I thought it completely nothing.'

I17: 'The French teacher took it [the music lesson – EBB] over for some time, he took care that I went to the school orchestra, he was actively engaged in that. (...)

EBB: And did you get saxophone lessons at school?

I17: No, that was at the municipal music school. (...) For my musical upbringing I have found that really nice, that that opportunity existed, that you could do that. Not that I went to great heights on my instrument, but ...'

The former pupils speak 4

I11: 'That music lesson, how that was done at school, it was of no use to me. (...) And what I say, in that school band, it was nothing really. No. I played in it but I did not like it. There you are. It was a nice experience maybe, for a moment, but for the music – it was not my music.'

I16: 'Classical music was given us a lot. And also normal pop, but that was more based on how the music teacher saw it. Toto, Lonely Heart, I remember that, he was completely mad about that (...). So every time I hear that song now [laughs] I think about that teacher completely busy with his bass guitar in the classroom and that we had to listen to that.'

Cavicchi's bifurcation thesis

Daniel Cavicchi – MayDayGroup

www.maydaygroup.org

'Idio-culture' – 'unique understanding of how to be musical in this world'



vs

the insitutionalised school music culture – the work; the performance; staff notation; craftsmanship (Cavicchi 2009)

Your Music – My Music

IV. Summing up - idiosyncratic musickership in the classroom

1. Decentering 'artistry and craftsmanship'

- 'Artistry & Craftsmanship' as instance of the artistic/expressive/craftsmanship definition of music: possible, not universal
- Many definitions of what music essentially is plays a role in individuals' lives – Cavicchi's 'idio-cultures'
- The artistic/expressive/craftsmanship definition of music: 'hegemonic tendencies' (Reckwitz 2006)
- The classroom result: the unimportance of school music - 'your music, my music'

2. Idio-cultural music education

- Mono – bi – multi – inter – trans → idio
- Towards a form of music education that radically **starts from** the definition of the individuals that make up the classroom in front of you; 'introducing music lessons in the (...) music classroom that frame musicality as an issue rather than a given'. (Cavicchi 2009)
- Towards a form of music education that radically **aims at** mutually understanding and if possible extending the force music plays in the life of all those individuals.
- Teacher training: students (re)connecting to themselves not as future musical art/craft/expression professionals but as 'musicking' human beings.

3. Towards idio-cultural music education

'Few of us are in a position to wholly challenge the bifurcated musicality created by institutions; but with one class at a time we can plant the seeds of change. (...)

[A]ll I know is that this sort of approach, one that doesn't dictate but encourages exploration and one that does not isolate but truly embraces the varieties of musical experience, creates more student initiative and excitement than I typically see as a teacher. Comments like "I've never thought about music like this before" or "I've never learned so much" are common. (...)

[T]he revelation that institutions can seriously address everyday musicking is a start toward change. To students who ask "This counts?" I just say, "It ought to" and hope they spread the message.' (Cavicchi 2009)

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