

**NEW MUSIC:  
NEW AUDIENCES**

**How do young people engage  
with music?**

**Heather Maitland**

# Why is music important?

- Young people use music as a badge of identity:
  - to belong to a group (eg a sub-culture, a team or a peer group)
  - to be different from everyone not in that group

Schwartz, K.D. and Fouts, T.F. (2003), 'Music preferences, personality style, and developmental issues of adolescents', *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 32(3), 205

# What makes Youth Culture different?

- Young people use culture to define differences and communicate with others
- Youth culture is defined by language, music, style, visual aesthetic
- Young people have ritual activities that define differences
- They look for their own places – online and offline
- They are pleasure seeking
- But also idealistic

Interarts, *Access of Young People to Culture*, 2009

# What stops young people engaging

- There is a big gap between top-down organised activities and self-generated youth cultures:
  - They don't think that top-down culture is relevant to them
  - So they feel excluded from 'official culture'
  - They are not attracted by what's on offer
- Barriers:
  - They feel short of time
  - In some countries eg Lithuania, Slovenia, Finland, Germany and the UK, they feel short of money

# But is money really an issue?

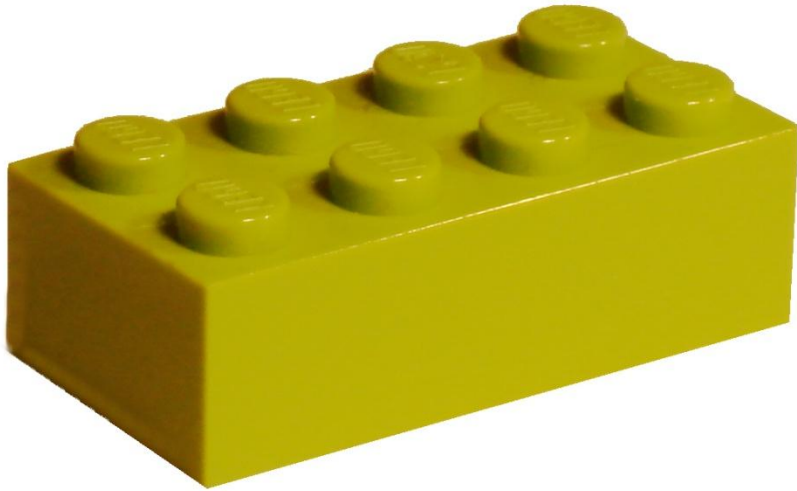
- Young people in the UK told the Interarts researchers that money was a barrier to engagement with the arts
- But two much bigger UK research projects showed it was not.
- The ticket price itself is not the main barrier to the arts for young people. Instead they feel the arts are bad value for money.
- That's because they don't think the arts are relevant to their lives.

University of Sheffield and Sheffield Hallam University, How Much?, 2002  
Arts Council England's A Night Less Ordinary project evaluation 2011 downloadable at <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/browse-advice-and-guidance/night-less-ordinary-evaluation>

A huge research project into youth culture was commissioned by some European mobile phone companies. Here are some of the findings about what is relevant to young people.

Graham Brown, '100 Trends That Define Youth Culture in 2012', Mobile Youth, 2012

# SO, WHAT MAKES AN EVENT RELEVANT?



It's like when you buy Lego – you are not buying plastic bricks, you buy the potential for creativity

**YOUNG PEOPLE DON'T BUY STUFF -  
THEY BUY WHAT STUFF DOES FOR  
THEM**





Young people look for things that will give them social currency. They ask brands:

How will you help me belong?  
How will you help me be significant?

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# Getting Bigger Audiences for Jazz

Music is all about social currency. For 19 to 35 year olds:

- Gigs are a social experience. The worst kind of gig is where there is no interaction between audience members or between the musicians and the audience.
- Sitting quietly without being able to comment to each other on the music and musicians is an alien experience

Maitland, H., *The Jazz Services Guide to Getting Bigger Audiences for Jazz*, Jazz Services, 2011

So, how can your  
organisation  
provide social  
experiences?



#4

## 3 Key Pain Points

Young people hate isolation, risk and loss of control

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How can your  
organisation  
reduce the risk of  
the unknown?





#3

## 3 Key Change Agents

10% of youth influence the rest.

They adapt products and services to enable their social lives.

They are change agents – focus on them

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flickr: austinanomic

This applies to music too:

“I really like live music, I like going to gigs. I really like Marley and Josh’s band. I like all of Josh’s music because he’s really cool. I like being around musical people.”

Maitland, H., *The Jazz Services Guide to Getting Bigger Audiences for Jazz*, Jazz Services, 2011

The background of the slide features silhouettes of several people on a beach at sunset. The sky is a bright, warm yellow, and the silhouettes are dark against it. On the left, a person is holding a circular sign with the number 7. In the center, two people are sitting on the beach. On the right, two more people are standing and talking. The overall mood is serene and contemplative.

#7

## Age of Discovery

Change agents don't want to be told.  
They discover their own meaning by discovering  
the social currency in stuff.

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flickr sahrizvi



Remember, they ask  
brands:

How will you help me belong?  
How will you help me be significant?

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Research into young consumers of music shows that change agents are important. In this research, the Revolutionists and Preachers both search out new music but Revolutionist keep their discoveries to themselves and Preachers want to share with as many people as possible. Preachers are change agents!

Nuttal et al, 'Understanding music consumption through a tribal lens', Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services, 18 (2011) pp 152-159

# HOW DO CHANGE AGENTS RELATE TO MUSIC?

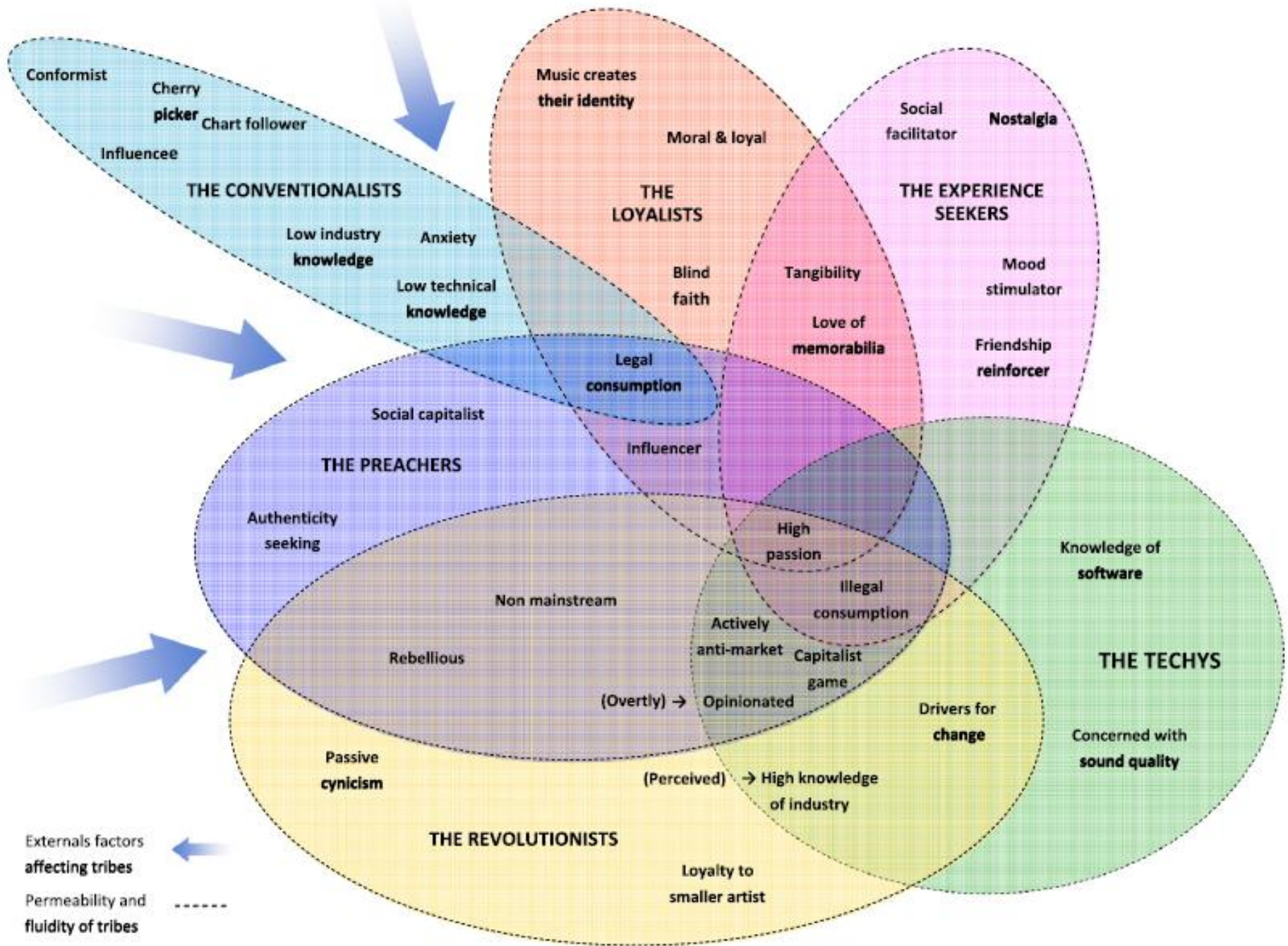


Fig. 2. Tribalisation of the teenage music market.

# Revolutionists

- Mainly interested in non-mainstream music
- Think of themselves as knowledgeable
- Lack deep insight
- Highly opinionated
- Think of themselves as rebels

# Preachers

- Love non-mainstream, relatively obscure music
- Highly opinionated
- Consider themselves influential in discovering new music
- Use music as a form of social currency - they want to share it



#13

## Belonging

Belonging is most important to teens and young adults, fading in young adulthood.

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How can your  
organisation help  
young people be  
significant?

#10

## Attention Economy

Youth won't pay attention to you unless you earn it.

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flickr: Andrew Stawarz



# Many young people seek out the new

- Young people place huge store on originality, listening out for improvisation and material written by the musicians rather than what they see as 'cover versions'

Maitland, H., The Jazz Services Guide to Getting Bigger Audiences for Jazz,  
Jazz Services, 2011

#17

## Brand Democracy

When they look at your marketing, they ask 'where am I in this story?'. So make them part of the story

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How can your  
organisation  
make youth part  
of the story?





#12

## Beachheads

Build your fans a home where they can talk to each other to create social currency. And stand back.

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How can we build  
them somewhere  
to talk to each  
other?