

Philosophy Department

Musical Expressiveness, Psychology & the Contour Theory

Dr. James Young, Professor of Philosophy, University of Victoria

***Wednesday, October 19 3:30 – 5:00
Building 200 Theatre 203***

Philosophers, musicologists and others have long asked how music can be expressive of emotion.

According to the "contour theory," music is expressive of emotion by resembling the contours of human vocal or non-vocal expressive behaviour. While some have found this theory persuasive, others have rejected it.

Fortunately, the contour theory is an empirical theory. Drawing upon recent psychological research, Dr. Young defends the contour theory against its opponents.

*Dr. Young is Professor of Philosophy at the University of Victoria. He is the author of *Global Anti-realism* (1995), *Art and Knowledge* (2001) and *Cultural Appropriation and the Arts* (2008) as well as more than forty refereed articles on philosophy of language, aesthetics and other topics. He has contributed to journals devoted to archaeology, psychology and musicology as well as to philosophy journals. He is currently writing a book on philosophy of music and is undertaking research on the semantics of aesthetic judgments, a project that unites his interest in philosophy of language and philosophy of music. Dr. Young has also been the Artistic Director of the Early Music Society of the Islands (www.earlymusicsocietyoftheislands.ca) for many years.*

