Has evolution specifically shaped our brains to support music processing? Many researchers believe that evolution has shaped our brains to support language processing, but regard literacy as a purely cultural invention which builds on brain circuits that evolved for other reasons. Is music like language or like literacy in terms of its evolutionary status? In this talk I will discuss why many researchers believe language is an evolved capacity, and use this as a springboard for discussing a new approach to studying the evolutionary status of music, synthesizing research from neuroscience, cross-species studies, and genetics.

Place: The Faculty House  
64 Morningside Drive  
Columbia University

Time: 4:00 PM

For directions to the Faculty House, please refer to the map at this URL:

RSVP: If you will attend the meeting on January 31, please send a note to:
Grace Tsang, Rapporteur  
gjt2105@tc.columbia.edu

If you will join Professor Patel for dinner at the Faculty House after the meeting, please indicate this to the Rapporteur in your rsvp.

Professor Patel also requests a brief reply to two questions in advance of our meeting:

1) What is the best evidence that humans evolved neural specializations for language?

2) Alternatively, which evidence warrants a conclusion that language is not a consequence of biological evolution?

The Chair (remez@columbia.edu) kindly requests your reply (signed or anonymous) by January 24.