

## **Paul STEENHUISEN - PROGRAM NOTES**

PIECE: Copralite Culture & Analysis #1-20

Michael Finnissy: "The reality that we, as living composers, are forced to accept - as natural - that the music of the past is unquestionably so much better than anything we might write and is going to be played so much more than ours is, is just *bizarre*. ...it began to happen in the nineteenth century, a facet of bourgeois culture, that the *good old days* are better than the *here and now*. The past is more secure, more comfortable, you can tell more lies about it."

from the book *Sonic Mosaics: Conversations with Composers*. 2009, University of Alberta Press. by Paul Steenhuisen

*Copralite Culture and Analysis Results #1-20* is a rare voyage into "commentary" work by composer Paul Steenhuisen. Louis Andriessen said that all music is about other music, and by extension, Steenhuisen suggests that what varies is the degree to which it addresses other music. In the case of *Copralite Culture*, Steenhuisen explores the hegemony of the musical past, and wonders what Mozart would be doing if he were alive today. In part, the answer may be Cirque de Soleil in Las Vegas, but Steenhuisen considers this question by taking the musical materials of K. 550 and pushing them through techniques and aesthetics that have developed subsequently. Copralites are fossilized pieces of dung. Trace fossils, which give evidence for the animal's behaviour, rather than morphology.

First performed by Claire Edwards and Zubin Kanga at the ISCM World Music Days in Sydney, Australia. Commissioned by the Kovalis Duo (Roger Admiral and Phillip Hornsey) with the support of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts.