

## **Paul STEENHUISEN - PROGRAM NOTES**

PIECE: Like a Pathway in Autumn

The points of departure for “*like a pathway in autumn*” come from György Kurtág’s *Kafka Fragments* (1985-86), a large-scale work consisting of forty highly concentrated musical units. While “*like a pathway in autumn*” (named after the second song of Kurtág’s piece) can be viewed as a companion piece to his, more accurately it focusses and elaborates on just a few of the many themes introduced in *Kafka Fragments*, such as loneliness and wandering in the season of decay. Through this lens, Kurtág’s work also points to Schubert’s *Winterreise* (*A Winter’s Journey*). Kurtág uses only brief texts by Kafka, while “*like a pathway in autumn*” takes the primary thematic resources and brings in other authors, drawing on their complementary ideas and sentiments. In addition to texts selected from the *Kafka Fragments* (Part I, Fragment 2 (*Wie Eing Weg Im Herbst*), Fragment 16 (*Keine Rückkehr*), Part II (*Der Wahre Weg*), and Part III, Fragment 7 (*Ziel, Weg, Zügern*)), “*like a pathway in autumn*” employs texts extracted from poems by Octavio Paz (1914-1998), Friedrich Hölderlin (1770-1843), Paul Celan (1920-1970), Jalāl ad-Dīn Rūmī (1207-1273), and Wilhelm Müller (poet of the *Winterreise* texts (1794-1827)), universalizing and weaving them together into more continuous musical textures that paraphrase gestures taken from small sections of Kurtág’s piece. Like the texts, the borrowed musical materials are juxtaposed and superimposed quite differently from their initial context, and are treated to broadly proliferate while resonating with their distant origins. “*like a pathway in autumn*” was commissioned but not performed by Stacie Dunlop with the support of the Canada Council for the Arts and the Edmonton Arts Council.