

Autobiographical notes on Cul-de-sac.

I grew up in a cul-de-sac. A house at the beginning of a short, paved street that ended at a furniture factory. Behind the factory the street became a dirt track and led into the woods. You could step off the track to your right and enter the woods freely. To the left barbed wire kept you out of an area where I suspect they raised pheasants for the hunt. The track ended abruptly at the E40 highway, constructed in the 1940s. Across the highway you could trace the course of the track by the parallel rows of trees.

Apart from a grim looking forester who always seemed to carry a large shotgun, I felt to be the only one who discovered and knew about this small stretch of woodland. It was a free zone that in my imagination connected with the adventure books I read passionately in those years.

It was Karl Van Welden (his father being a garage owner) who suggested the title of this album to me. Only when I started to ponder the cul-de-sac idea, I realized that the piano pieces could indeed have had their compositional origins there, where my bucolic island, squeezed between a factory and a highway, was so brutally besieged. It took a powerful imagination to enjoy a 19th century feeling of nature when the violent noise and smell of progress were forever attacking your senses.

This schizophrenic situation of motionless trees and bushes full of mystery and silent wisdom versus the nauseating passage of flickering steel and sounds of combustion engines apparently left their mark on my artistic sensibilities. My desperate attempts to grasp what the trees and small creeks communicated, this impossibility of an animistic connection, generated a lifelong sadness towards the human presence. My former striving for physical virtuosity now seems to me a partial translation of the imagination I needed to believe myself a part of the natural landscape.

With cars now becoming vehicles of nostalgia, they join the gallery of obsolete tools with pianos, East-Indian ink and vinyl albums. For this album, they have been brought together to form an improbable version of a printing machine. One wheel of the car will drive into ink before imprinting a tire-track on every blank sleeve used for the album cover. Meanwhile I will play the Cul-de-sac pieces on a piano mounted on the back of the car, thus augmenting pressure, making the imprint more clear.