



When I asked Henry about reissuing **Outside Pleasure**, I knew I was in for trouble: as an LP, it ran maybe forty minutes, a good length considering the guitar terror contained in those grooves, but it's the 90s and Henry likes his CDs long. I suggested adding "The Shadow Line" from **Aloha**, which was probably the single most alarming piece of guitar music I'd heard up to that point, and it still holds that power fifteen years later. That makes sixty minutes. How much does a CD hold? Red Book specs be damned, Henry managed to fit 78 minutes onto the disc. So, what this disc holds is almost all of **Outside Pleasure** and pretty much all of the solo material from **Aloha**: a working title was "Henry Kaiser Solo Guitar 79-80," but...

But, it is true, this disc represents a certain period of Henry's guitar playing that has (very) unfortunately seemed to skitter off to the shadows in light of his endeavors since the mid-80s, which have emphasized interests besides solo guitar. But for me, locked up in my Harwood Heights bedroom, these records changed my life. I was already lucky to have heard Derek Bailey through his "ant music" record (well, that's what I called it) with Dave Holland on ECM (I remember selling my first guitar amp, a Fender Champ, in order to take advantage of the big Warner Bros. cut-out sale of ECM at the Rose Records near school. What was meant to be a big score ended with my being faced by row after row of Epidemics records, the brainstorm meeting of L. Shankar and Steve Vai.) but none of this prepared me for the assault of **Outside Pleasure**. I was afraid to play the album while my parents were home for fear that they would finally find a reason to have me committed. But the biggest shock was "The Shadow Line," the (then for me) epic-length solo that seems more inspired by Michael Snow's **Musics for Piano, Whistling, Microphone and Tape Recorder**: at an early point in the track, Henry's guitar stops dead and holds static, high up in the stratosphere, and for the next ten or fifteen minutes (at that time it seemed an eternity) slowly descends in pitch beyond hearing until just the speaker is rumbling. Rock and roll! The miniatures, such as "The Empty Set," are so filled (title be damned) with information that they resemble those sponge dinosaurs that you put in a glass of water and that takes on, relatively, gargantuan proportions. "Information Mechanics" is more than just a track title; in some ways it should be the title of this record.

One Christmas I gave Henry the "Jesus Plant." Water it and let it die. Water it again, and it rises from the grave.

**Outside Pleasure** originally ran 11, "Punctual as Actual" (not included), 12, 4, 1, 3, 8, and 13. It was recorded August 1979 at Woody Woodman's Finger Palace, Berkeley, and Fort Mason Center, San Francisco. The original order of solo material from **Aloha** was 2, 9, 5, 6, 10, 14, and 7. Recorded by Phil Brown at Warner Brothers Recording Studio, North Hollywood. Cover: Chris Baumgart; additional photos: Craig Denis Street. Notes: JO.

