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Mission Statement: The purpose of An International Journal of Exploratory Meta-Living is to provide a resource for the dissemination of creative works relevant to the subject of meta-living. The journal welcomes both academic and artistic exercises expressed in any medium capable of being transmitted through the physical mechanisms of the journal. Due consideration also will be given to submissions that do not conform to these mechanisms. The journal explicitly forbids the establishment of a regular publication schedule.

Meta-Living: One useful avenue leading toward an understanding of the term meta-living is through analogy, particularly by considering meta-fiction. Wikipedia, the oracle of all contemporary knowledge, defines meta-fiction as “the literary term describing fictional writing that self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artifact in posing questions about the relationship between fiction and reality, usually using irony and self-reflection.”¹ By straight-forward analogy, meta-living is the existential term describing a manner of living that self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artifact in posing questions about the relationship between existence and reality, using irony and self-reflection among other devices. These other devices include, but are not limited to, scientific inquiry, ontology, various theologisms, sophistry, rhetoric, tomfoolery, transcendental perspectivism and, of course, the omnipresent specter of post-existential relativism.

¹<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metafiction>, accessed 2014 April 16.

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A Note on the Font: This font is Dax Compact Regular, designed by the late Hans Reichel, musician, instrument maker and font designer.

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An Hour of Keiji Haino for a Sunny Day

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Abstract: Keiji Haino (b. May 3, 1952) is a Japanese guitarist, vocalist and multi-instrumentalist who performs a music that resides squarely in the cultural margins. Sometimes non-idiomatic, often improvisational (although he is on the record as hating the word 'improvisation') and always experimental, Haino has earned a reputation for the ferocity of his guitar in Fushitsusha, the intensity of his vocals and the haunting soundscapes of Nijiumu. In this document, we root through the more than two hundred officially released recordings that constitute Haino's discography as of January, 2015, and collect one hour of music appropriate for a carefree stroll on a sunny day of spring.

Introduction

A testament to both his longevity and dedication to his craft, the discography of official releases by Keiji Haino has grown to more than 200 recordings as of the time of this writing (February, 2015). Much of this body of work forms the basis upon which Haino's reputation is founded. Tracks of deafening wall-of-sound guitar, some too long to be captured on a single cd, e.g. Fushitsusha's I saw it! That which before I could only sense (Paratactile, PLE1106/07-2, 2000), are well-documented in the discography. Haino is no less recognized for the unique vocal acrobatics that span his career from the voice accompanied by guitar on the seminal solo album, Watashi-dake (Pinakothea, PRL #2, 1981), to the a cappella album, Un autre chemin vers l'Ultime, (Prele Records, prl007, 2011), documenting howls and mutters in a French cave. There are also numerous instances in the discography of music with distinctly ominous overtones, hearkening to soundtracks for abstract horror films, as typified by

Nijiumu's Era of Sad Wings (PSF, PSFD 31, 1993). There can be no arguing that these elements are important and re-occurring threads in Haino's body of work.

Of course, in the life's work of an experimentalist, there will inevitably be evidence of other, entirely different paths, explored to a lesser extent. It is through these diversions that the present article wanders. Even those who appreciate on a regular basis the fury of Haino may find themselves peering out the window as blooms unfold in early spring, with the impulse to take an hour-long stroll in the brisk morning air. Can a play-list for such an activity be constructed from the Haino discography? That is the goal of this document—the assembly of one hour of music, appropriate for a sunny day, composed of songs from the official Haino discography. The remainder of this brief article identifies eight tracks and includes a short discussion providing context and justification for each selection. Enjoy!

Chiru-Ha (4m 20s)



Vajra
PSF, PSFM 1001, 1995
compact disc single, 2 tracks, 9m 48s
Keiji Haino (guitar)
Kan Mikami (voice, guitar)
Toshiaki Ishizuka (percussion)
Masato Nagahata (piano)

We begin our stroll with a pop song, featuring Kan Mikami on voice and guitar. (In this document, all names are provided in the Western convention with given names first, followed by surnames.) Haino

has stated that Kan Mikami is the only vocalist he trusts to sing in his place. This little gem of a song enjoyed some commercial popularity in Japan after its release in 1995. In it, Haino provides a cascading tremolo of electric guitar as a back drop to the simple melody of Mikami's guitar and voice. The drumming of Ishizuka is subdued and there is also piano. Haino's contribution can be easily identified by ear, though the sweeping guitar only hints at similar treatments revealed with greater energy and deafening volume in other settings.

Umi e (12m 31s)



from the compilation *Ikiru*
Ear Disk, EAR-008, 2002
compact disc, 17 tracks, 74m 41s
This compilation contains two Haino tracks.
Keiji Haino (guitar)
Keiichi Sokabe, Bonstar & Tomonao (voice,
turntables, guitar)

Not much is known about two compilations that were simultaneously released by Ear Disk of Japan in 2002. Both feature two tracks with Haino. On each, one of the tracks possesses a style that is best described as mellow hip hop with laid back vocals mixed over a steady beat. The instrumentation includes a very simple melody repeated for the duration of the track on guitar, accompanied by

electronic incursions. Haino appears on electric guitar, gradually arising in the background, playing short notes in rhythm with the established melody. About four minutes in, the guitar threatens to explode into a roar, but unexpectedly subsides, returning to an accompanying role. The explosion is not to be fully contained. As the song progresses, Haino's roar eventually re-emerges and becomes a dominating feature of the music, framed by the same mellow hip hop beats. The track is quite lovely in a hypnotic way. Therefore, given the choice between a four and a half minute version on one of the compilations, Boku no te ni tsukamtte (Ear Disk, EAR-007, 2002), I opted for the twelve and a half minute version on the other, Ikiru.

Koko (31m 20s)



Keiji Haino
Koko (Here)
PSF, PSFD-00, 2003
compact disc, 1 track, 31m 26s
Keiji Haino (voice, guitar)

Koko is a long time staple of the Haino repertoire, reappearing in live performances over decades. Here we opt for a version that runs over half an hour. While it may seem unreasonable to devote over half of our hour-long stroll to a single song, this particular song deserves such attention. From

2002 to 2004 there existed in Nishi-Waseda, Tokyo a small venue called Jerry Jeff, before being eventually shut down due to noise complaints. There Haino played more than half a dozen shows, primarily featuring voice and electric guitar. The shows often consisted of a several long songs spanning over two hours in total. There was a distinct quality to the Haino performances in Jerry Jeff. The venue seemed to put him in a contemplative and melodious frame of mind. This version of Koko captures the Jerry Jeff performance perfectly. Although there is no official indication of the origin of this recording, based on my own listening, I believe that this song is the last song played at a solo concert by Keiji Haino on September 21, 2003 at Jerry Jeff.

History aside, the song contains a seventeen minute introduction composed of a floating angelic vocal exercise of Haino over an equally buoyant, shimmering guitar before beginning the song proper. The song ends with a seven minute denouement, structurally matching the introduction.

To provide an additional perspective for the song, we reproduce below the English translation (by Alan Cummings) of the lyrics to Koko (Here). These are taken from the merely 18m 32s version that appears on Keeping on Breathing (Tokuma Japan Communications, TKCF 77016, 1997).

*Now departs just once
That one who longed for the light
That one who thought he had understood everything
Although he will return here
Offering up dreams in the darkness
is all he can fulfill only one method
An overflowing scarlet scarlet thing that flowed
Sometime will change to real gold
Because you have wings, you wish to say, "again"
Because you have a head, you think
Because you have hands, you want to love
Even saying there is nothing is a lie
Only saying that everything "is"
is permitted is permitted
I am here
Before here, where were you?
A better place than here, that guiding light
It was you?*

We now tentatively approach an unfortunate aspect of this playlist, namely the difficulty in obtaining some of the tracks. This disc was only available from PSF Records between December 24, 2003 and January 31, 2004 as part of their Keiji Haino promotional fair. It was produced in a limited edition of 300. Despite the constraints on its availability, it remains a key constituent of Haino's music for a sunny day. Hopefully this article serves as a call for a label to secure the rights from Haino to release a Jerry Jeff show in full, for there exist various audience recordings approaching professional quality.

Faraway Mountains (3m 32s)



Reiko Kudo
 Chiri o Nameru (Licking Up Dust)
 Hyotan Records, HYOTAN-003, 2008
 compact disc, 7 tracks, 23m 4s
 Reiko Kudo (vocals)
 Tori Kudo (organs, guitar, biwa)
 Keiji Haino (electric guitar, drums, voice)

This album is released under the name Reiko Kudo, who appears on vocals on all tracks. In the late seventies and early eighties, she led a unit called Noise. Since the nineties, she has recorded as a solo artist. On this album, the instruments are performed by her partner, Tori Kudo, of the

Japanese underground music group Maher Shalal Hash Baz. (Tori Kudo also performed with Haino in the late seventies with the ensemble Vibration Society and as the bass player in Fushitsusha in its initial appearances after the death of long-time bassist, Yasushi Ozawa). Haino joins them on this record on three tracks, once on guitar, once on drums and once on vocals. For our sunny day stroll, we have the track, *Faraway Mountains*, that features Haino on guitar.

The song consists of wistful vocals and a fragile melody provided by organ, into which Haino inserts electric guitar riffs that are not entirely at cross purposes with the prevailing melody. The combination of melody and dissonance, a critical element of Haino's music in all of its manifestations, is the central mechanism by which the listener's interest is drawn, although beyond this general philosophical theme, there is not much in the discography of Haino with which this particular work can be compared. Haino does, from time to time, sit in on live performances of pop groups. Those meetings have a texture similar to this work with Reiko Kudo. One meeting that comes to mind is a 2012 show with Tenniscoats, featuring among other songs a Haino-influenced version of *Baibaba Bimba*. In an almost completely peripheral note to the purposes of this article, a wonderful version of this song (sans Haino) recorded by the good folks of La Blogothèque, who bring the world 'A Take Away' Shows is available online.¹ Had a Haino-accompanied version of *Baibaba Bimba* been officially released, it would have surely made the sunny day cut.



Haino & Tenniscoats, Sept. 2, 2012 Tokyo. Photo by Hiromi Kudo.

Magic I (2m 42s)



Fushitsusha
Allegorical Misunderstanding
 Avant, AVAN 008, 1993
 compact disc, 10 tracks, 48m 33s
 Keiji Haino (guitar, voice)
 Yasushi Ozawa (bass)
 Jun Kosugi (drums)

It is notable that this third Fushitsusha album followed the rather monumental live recordings of (PSF 3-4, 1989) and (PSF 15-16, 1991), both of which are more suitable for a stroll along the beach in the gale of hurricane or down a back alley during a night of torrential downpours. The ten tracks of Allegorical Misunderstanding provide a stark contrast. The tracks, titled from *Magic I* to *Magic X*, offer a more nuanced form of nothing less than magic. Those knowledgeable in the ways of magic understand that it can be categorized in many ways—arcane, eldritch, druidic, divine and so forth. The variety of magic presented by Fushitsusha on Allegorical Misunderstanding belongs in a category of subtle magic, not entirely at odds with the laws governing the physics-based reality (PBR) to which we are accustomed but all the same capable of inducing a state of consciousness in which the constraints of the PBR appear to be loosened to such an extent that one often confuses a flexible

interpretation of these laws with their outright surrender. Clearly, this is precisely the sort of music intended to encourage wandering on a sunny spring day.

First, Let's Remove the Color (1m 57s)



Keiji Haino
Mazu wa iro o nakusouka!!
 (First, let's remove the color)
 PSF Records, PSFD-8014, 2002
 compact disc, 8 tracks, 67m 29s
 Keiji Haino (voice, guitar)

We next include a two-minute snippet from one of our favorite Haino solo guitar albums. With so many Haino guitar albums, there are bound to be similarities between some of them. Mazu wa iro o nakusouka!!, however had no precedent or like-minded neighbor. It is at the same time contemplative while possessing a lightness and agility. The guitar is quiet; sometimes harp-like, free of distortion, feedback, and reverb. The voice too is in keeping with the guitar. There is no genre of music within which this album can easily be placed and referenced. In the seventies and eighties, Han Reichel (May 10, 1949 – November 22, 2011) released a series of lps on the German label, FMP. While Reichel did not sing and focused on playing guitars he had structurally modified or

built, the music that was generated on albums such as The Death of the Rare Bird Ymir (FMP, 0640, 1979), bears some stylistic similarities to this album of Haino's. Both albums feature beautiful, non-idiomatic but melodic guitar playing. Both albums promote an optimistic and light-hearted atmosphere—Reichel more so than Haino, but this album of Haino's more so than any other before it. In short, both albums are guaranteed to make your day better. Run—don't walk—to your nearest purveyor of German and Japanese music (that could most likely be the internet) and order one of each.

untitled (track 1) (1m 18s)

untitled (track 2) (2m 14s)



Keiji Haino and Derek Bailey
Drawing Close, Attuning --The Respective Signs of
 Order and Chaos
 Tokuma Japan Communications, TKCF 77017, 1997
 compact disc, 7 tracks - 75m 25s
 Keiji Haino (guitar)
 Derek Bailey (guitar)

We close our walk with a couple short guitar duets pairing Haino with the British non-idiomatic improvisational guitarist, Derek Bailey (January 29, 1930 – December 25, 2005). These duets are not as melodic as any of the other entries on this playlist but they likewise promote much the same sense of

well-being. In this duet, one finds two masters of their trade, each content in their own role, investigating in the moment the nature of the other. The tracks are light-hearted but not superficially so. It may take repeated listenings from an uninitiated ear to move beyond the unfamiliar obstacle presented by the absence of melody into the substance of these pieces where the raw, creative impulse is exposed. This impulse triggers in listeners, in the words of the trombonist and scholar, George Lewis, “a sense of empathy that allows them to respond to the creativity of other people by feeling their own creativity.”²

I originally thought to include only one track from this Haino/Bailey guitar/guitar duet and one track from the Haino/Bailey vocal/guitar duet, Songs (Incus, CD 40, 2000). While it is true that some have found a light-hearted element in the songs of that collaboration,³ the unpredictability of Haino's vocals seemed out of step with our easy strolling objective.

We close with another thought that reinforces these last two pieces as appropriate to this playlist. This is Haino's poem, titled ‘a prayer for the repose of the soul of Derek Bailey’.⁴

*That, which while enfolding this now and present
 perfume,
 speaks, 'I will use to the fullest this form bestowed
 upon me'
 and blurs into the firmament—
 ah, where and in what form will it next be devised*

Conclusion

There you have it. The playlist of eight tracks runs almost an hour, 59 minutes and 54 seconds to be precise. If you don't have these records, hunt them down. Then cue up the tracks on your favorite mp3 player, take a deep breath, listen and allow the sounds to build and travel unfamiliar neural connections in your brain. The prognosis is good that you will think sunny thoughts the rest of the day.

Acknowledgments

Thanks are due first and foremost to Haino-san and the collaborating musicians who have dedicated their lives to experimental music making. Thanks also to the many folks who have offered support and encouragement over the past two decades with regard to the maintenance and upkeep of “An Unofficial Keiji Haino Website”. Thanks in particular to Alan Cummings, Hiromi Kudo and Phil Snider.

About An Unofficial Keiji Haino Website

As a university student, David J. Keffer taught himself HTML by creating “An Unofficial Keiji Haino Website”.⁵ Since 1995 he has maintained it. Although the site has no official endorsement from Haino, it nevertheless serves in an informal capacity as an English language portal to the music of Haino.

About The Poison Pie Publishing House

The Poison Pie Publishing House⁶ is an independent publisher specializing in post-existential fantasy generated through a non-idiomatic improvisational writing process. Additionally, the PPPH hosts “An Unofficial Keiji Haino Website” and “An International Journal of Exploratory Meta-Living”.⁷

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David J. Keffer is a professor at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville, where he teaches, among many other courses, a freshman class titled, “The Golden Age of Non-Idiomatic Improvisation”.⁸ Keffer maintains an active interest in an analogous literature of non-idiomatic improvisation.⁹ His most recent work in this area includes a jointly written novel with Henry E. Gorton, *The Implacable Absence: A Non-Idiomatic Improvisational Duet*.¹⁰

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The Implacable Absence **A Non-Idiomatic Improvisational Duet** **by Henry E. Gorton & David J. Keffer**

The Implacable Absence is a post-existential fantasy in which a mushroom man, a talking bug and a doppelgänger traverse Faerie, Nirvana, and other planes of existence in search of the Deadly Galerina, an ambiguous deity from the Kingdom of Fungi.

The novel is a non-idiomatic improvisational duet because two authors engaged in a genre-defying, spontaneous (improvisational) creative process, rather than a preplanned (compositional) activity.

To add intrigue to the process, one author opted not to commit to paper his passages, contributing instead an imaginative silence. Just as in a musical duet in which one participant decides not to perform, the duet becomes equally defined by the notes one musician plays as by the absence of the notes that the other musician does not play. The active musician still responds to the other, albeit now only to the other's silence. To call this half a novel is a misnomer. It is rather a complete novel, written by two authors, one of whom is expressed in silence.

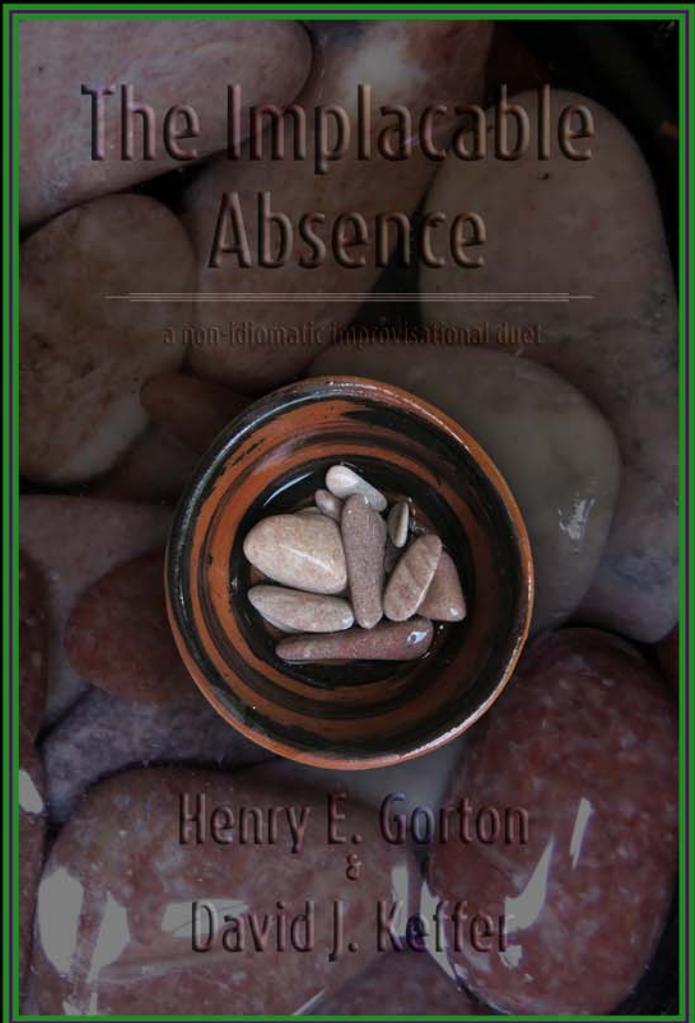


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Henry E. Gorton is currently a student in the public school system of Phoenix, Arizona. He was awarded a first place prize in the Glendale Union High School District poetry contest in the spring of 2014. This is his first novel for the Poison Pie Publishing House.



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