

TRADEMARK OF QUALITY

THE REV. KEITH A. GORDON STUMBLES MINDLESSLY THROUGH THE SORDID FLOTSAM AND JETSAM OF ALTERNATIVE CULTURE TO FIND SUBJECTS TO WRITE ABOUT THAT POSSESS THE ELUSIVE "TRADEMARK OF QUALITY." MP3 FILES ARE POSTED HERE STRICTLY FOR THE PURPOSE OF MUSIC CRITICISM AND THEREFORE FALL UNDER THE "FAIR USE" GUIDELINES OF U.S. COPYRIGHT LAW.

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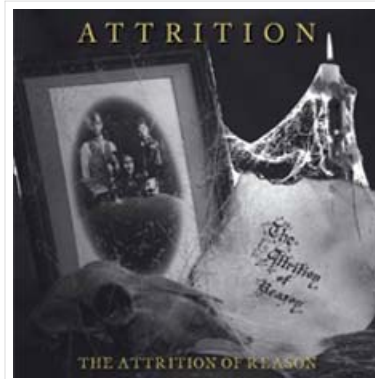
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 27, 2007

The Dark Sound of Attraction

Back during the early-80s, MTV ruled pop culture, "new wave" was the musical flavor du jour, and American audiences were wondering exactly what a "Kajagoogoo" was. In the U.K., however, musician Martin Bowes was looking at things a little differently than many of

the pop-oriented bands that comprised the second British Invasion. Influenced by the punk aesthetic as well as more indefinable art-rock bands like Throbbing Gristle, Bowes formed **Attrition** in 1980 with Julia Waller. At first, Attrition was a part of the thriving British industrial music scene alongside bands like Coil and Test Department. As time wore on, however, and that scene devolved, Attrition began delving deeper into the possibilities of electronic music, and added a dark-hued Goth tinge to its work.

Attrition's first gigs were performed in and around the band's Coventry, England home in late-1980 as a traditional guitar/bass/drums line-up with vocals by Bowes and Waller. Attrition would soon add Waller's brother, Ashley Niblock, on keyboards, but when their drummer missed an important show, he was replaced by a drum machine that better suited the band's constantly-changing sound. By the time that Attrition recorded its 1984 debut album, ***The Attrition Of Reason***, for indie Third Mind Records, the trio had gigged constantly for a couple of years, opening for bands like Coil, Artery and the Legendary Pink Dots.



Trademark Of Quality is primarily an "audioblog" featuring criticism and



history of music in the rock, punk, metal, progressive and blues genres, along with samples in mp3 format. Music files are posted for a brief time and then the links will be removed. If you are an artist or label and you want your music sampled by thousands of curious readers, send your CDs, press kits and other booty to **Conspiracy M.E.D.I.A., 35 Montclair Avenue, Batavia NY 14020**. We make no promises about reviewing your material.

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TMQ REVIEW INDEX

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Although ***The Attrition Of Reason*** is the band's first proper album, they had already released several cassette compilation tracks, a tape of "early experiments with electronics *and hallucinogens*" (emphasis by Attrition), and even a musical collaboration created by mail with the American band Audio Leter. Nothing could prepare British music fans, however, for the far-reaching and ambitious electronic compositions of ***The Attrition Of Reason***. Forgoing any sort of post-punk sound or structure in favor of an experimental hash of somber rhythms, dark melodies, sparse vocals and cascades of electronic funk-and-flash, Attrition wrote the handbook for much of what would follow in the darkwave movement.

In truth, to call ***The Attrition Of Reason*** a "Goth" album may be a misnomer, insofar as the band's morose, melancholy lyrics owe as much to poets such as Artaud, Rimbaud or Baudelaire as they do to Bauhaus or Joy Division. Musically, this ain't the Cure, or even Siouxsie and the Banshees, Attrition skewing closer to the ambient soundscapes of Eno and Cluster or the synth-sculptures created by Klaus Schulze. Any guitar work is downplayed in the mix, which is dominated by discordant rhythms, random cacophonous percussion and, of course, the omnipresent battering of Korg synthesizers and Roland sequencers. Bowes' rough, otherworldly vocals often hit the ears like a blast of ice-cold water, while Waller's siren-like howls and ethereal purring are simply mesmerizing, luring the listener towards an ever-shifting shoreline created by the crashing waves of electronic white noise.

As such, ***The Attrition Of Reason*** is a musical adventure, a difficult and, at times, harsh collection of remarkable majesty. Songs like the nightmarish "Prayer For The Head," the spry synthpop rhythms of "Take A Walk," or the cold, psychedelic-drenched "The Day I Was Born" showcase a talented trio of musicians attempting to re-write what they saw as an outdated musical vocabulary and exploring the possibilities created by the ever-broadening reach of technology. This CD reissue of ***The Attrition Of Reason*** by Voiceprint Records/MVD Audio includes the band's four-song ***The Voice Of God*** EP, also from 1984, which features more of the same, including the vaguely exotic "The Outer Edge" and the up-tempo, almost danceable "Across The Divide."

Cleverly combining shadows and light in a manner unlike any artist before or since, Attrition's ***The Attrition Of Reason*** is a heady album, and one that may not translate easily for fans of the band's later, classically-oriented ambient Goth-pop. Still going strong after 25 years, Bowes and crew continue to challenge convention and create vital, interesting music. Attrition may not be a libation to satisfy just any music lover's taste, but if you're a fan of like-minded artists like Lycia, Black Tape For A Blue Girl

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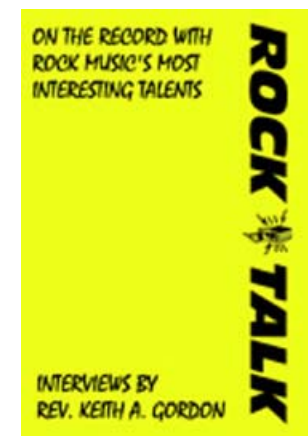
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or other Projekt label bands, you may want to check out Attrition. ([Voiceprint Records/MVD Audio](#))


(Click on the CD cover to buy **The Attrition Of Reason** from [Amazon.com](#))

MP3s:

[Attrition - "Day I Was Born"](#)

[Attrition - "Prayer For The Head"](#)

Labels: Attrition, darkwave

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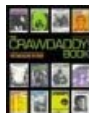
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