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"Grandpa and nephew"
Korg

[Electro/ambient Legend Martin Bowes \(Attrition\) About How Physical Gear Differs From VST](#)

Come to the dark side! We have Korg!

It's quite obvious that each kind of music has started somewhere, sometime, and has its pioneers. Martin Bowes is the founder of Electro/Ambient early band Attrition. More than 25 years of history lay behind Attrition and its name is synonym to both musical darkness and innovative sound design. Having replaced the guitar with synth since the early days, there has been quite a lot of work to be done in search of the right tones... needless to say that those tones and way much more has been made by means of the synth. Recently, as the latest Attrition album was released and just prior to a world tour in Europe-Australia-USA-Europe-USA, Martin Bowes spoke briefly on the classical Korg MS20 synthesizer. Martin Bowes described the MS20 in warm words as it was actually one of the first synths in Attrition whatsoever. Asked in an interview by Patrick Ogle (Gearwire) about what makes it special, Martin replied that despite its very serious age (21 years), it can do a lot more than other similar pieces of gear while not occupying an entire room. Another exceptional feature was the immense amount of "experimentality" the old Korg MS20 delivers: "I still find new things coming out of it now all this time later. It's my synth for improvising sounds with." Martin said. Despite this, Attrition is by no means a band trapped in the past: they warmly welcomed the digital technology as it allowed to easily store and reproduce the most complex sounds any time, in any place or conditions; such a thing was completely impossible with the full-analog gear back in the 80's which subjected the player to write down the setup and just live with the fact that the exactly identical combination would never be reached again. Martin Bowes also went on as to express his content for still having this old synth: he declared that while touring in the US and played other MS20's borrowed from local friends he noticed that the sounds were a bit different. Even though he was never able to find the cause for such behavior he just assumed the Korg MS20 is truly a real instrument, much like a vintage Gibson guitar or a Stradivarius violin: instruments with a sound of their own, a sound that never changes and is easily recognized by the pros. And speaking of the pros (Martin is definitely one of the synth professionals, by the way) he reminded that Korg had made a digital emulation of the MS20, a VST instrument which was supposed to offer the same features and the same flexibility as the physical piece of gear. After laying hands on the VST plugin, Martin replicated the exact setup from a patch on the actual MS20 and compared the sounds. Need I say that they were not identical? In the end, Martin Bowes also added that some of the synthesizers (maybe with less personality) have been replicated in exceptional conditions in the VST-realm, much to obtain sound extremely close to what they actually used to produce "in real-life"; yet he thinks that there is a category of old synths whose sound and capabilities to manipulate the "streams of electrical current" will not be replicated soon, not even with all the advanced digital modelling technology available nowadays. So, more or less, a word of advice for those who are already bowing to the VST god... isn't it?