

# ±Standard Deviation Mixes New with the Old



## DISCourse

with Bill Polonsky

One more reason for you to be proud of the Yukon may be this band.

Bands like ±Standard Deviation restore equilibrium, a counterweight if you will, to the county/folk/acoustical types that permeate the music scene up here.

Don't get me wrong, I'm a fool for a great tune with whatever sauce is served.

The themes on this album, ...Breach the Gate and Secure the Bridges, are pure punk ethic: the government, the supernatural, environmental sustainability mixed with love and death.

All heady stuff, yes, but in the hands of ±Standard Deviation there is no greasy aftertaste, no clogged pores, just simple clean songs with interesting and intuitive production.

Yukon Terror Story with its backbeat, blasts open this album with a dire tale and ever-lengthening list of all things awful in the wilds of the Yukon.

Here's the short list:

**Mosquitoes:** will eat you.

**Wolverines and bears:** will kill you.

**Forest fires:** drive tourists away.

**The smoke:** suppresses the groove.

**Endless summer drinking:** may harm your liver.

**Lions and tigers and bears:** oh my. It all makes for hilarious punk

polka.

The included lyric sheet is a welcomed exception to the many CDs I've written about.

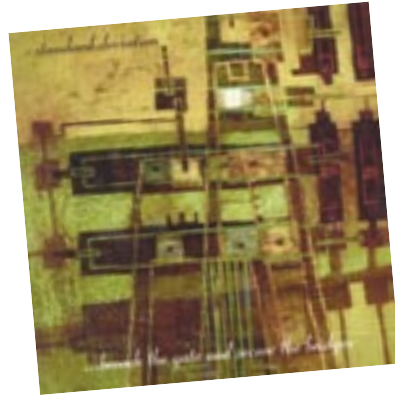
Vocals often get rolled out like a carpet to cover the remaining spaces between the monster drum and bass riffing on punk albums. This is valid: subtle points are just that and punk has never been accused of subtlety.

The theme of *Evil Seed* is a cross fertilization of Rosemary's Baby and new techniques in paternal responsibility. The whole song is arranged like a murder ballad with a toe tapping banjo riff kicking the song along.

At its best ±Standard Deviation gives us a banquet of possibilities. The band really has a handle on the old cabaret style of performing. I can hear why this band has had rave reviews locally for its live performance.

The undercurrent of surf influences rises from the background as a solo here and a theme there. Surf music in the 60s mutated as it headed toward the 21st century. Bands like The Stooges and Canada's DOA took surf's basic components, added time changes and bridges, cranked the knobs to 11 and created their own sound with an audible lineage.

The boys in ±Standard Deviation have a flavour of that in their music. Dark melodic with a twang: sounds like dark beer.



**±Standard Deviation often gets rave reviews for its stage show. It deserves rave reviews for its new CD, ...Breach the Gate and Secure the Bridges for the way it re-conceptualises classic musical themes.**

Crossroads evokes a deal with the devil, traditional blues theme heightened with the old Pink Floyd trick of driving a single fig-

ure through a simple progression to an orgasmic conclusion.

Aspects of progressive rock permeate the songs; addition of

these musical elements to what is essentially a rocking teenage combo draws the listener in to quieter passages and bridges. The listener thus lulled into more subtle passages has the full frying pan in the back of the head effect when the volume and tempo kicks back in.

To this end, rather than one brilliant monotone and therefore monotonous series of song slabs, ±Standard Deviation moves forward to realize its own future.

...Breach the Gate and Secure the Bridges is available at Triple Js.

Questions? Comments? Got a CD that you would like to see reviewed in this paper? Email Bill Polonsky at [strangethingsdone@hotmail.com](mailto:strangethingsdone@hotmail.com).

## 'Family' is a Big Word



### Yukon RAINBOW

with Vanessa Willett

In appreciation of Family Week, this column is all about family in its many forms.

"Family" seems to be the new buzzword for very different groups trying to promote very different agendas.

"Family values" is a term used by the people opposed to granting marriage rights to same-sex couples. Their interpretation of family is that it should consist of one man and

one woman living in the same household.

Contrarily, the gay community has adopted the term "family" to denote being a member of the community. Those rainbow stickers that you see occasionally on vehicles with the words "Family Truck" or "Family Jeep" or "Family Car" means the owner is letting others in the gay community know they are in the community as well.

It is like there is a war over who has more right to the term. The ironic thing is according to Webster's New World Dictionary everyone is right.

If a cross section of society were polled to see what their definition of family was there would probably be very diverse answers to the question.

Family should ultimately mean those people in your life whom you have a special bond with. The term shouldn't be used to alienate certain groups or people but should really be an inclusive term.

Vanessa Willett is a freelance writer and member of the Gay and Lesbian Alliance. Contact her at [vanessa@klondiker.com](mailto:vanessa@klondiker.com).

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