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Two Tons of Steel

***Vegas* (Palo Duro)**

Even though Two Tons of Steel has been named San Antonio's Best Country Band for eight years running, they've yet to match that popularity in other parts of the Lone Star State. *Vegas*, their eighth album, just might be the one to change that. Long considered a rockabilly band, Two Tons of Steel takes a couple two steps forward to make a country combo album in the mold of the Derailers or early Mavericks. With the adept hands of Lloyd Maines producing, *Vegas* is laden with energetic twang, sturdy harmonies, and kicking beats. The genial tunes written by frontman Kevin Geil, including the Tex-Mex shading of the title track, smooth and bluesy "Baby You Got Me," and the harbor lights of "Havana Moon" are a big plus. Two Tons' cover choices are more than a little shaky, however; you'll cringe at their attempt at the Ramones' "I Wanna Be Sedated," while rockabilly standard "Red Hot" comes across rote. Overall though, this band of Texans leverage two tons of country promise.