

The Payolas new sound

by David Lutes

Taken on its own, the Payola\$'s latest effort *Hammer on a Drum* can be seen as an interesting effort from a new wave-style pop band. It is when you take into consideration the band's earlier work that the new record begins to show changes, and perhaps to some fans, weaknesses. The songwriting team of Paul Hyde and Bob Rock have, in the past, produced some exciting stuff. Their abilities culminated in last year's *No Stranger To Danger*, an excellent record with dangerous edges all round. It earned them a Top Five hit (their first) with "Eyes of a Stranger" and some critical and commercial success.

In *Hammer on a Drum* the dangerous edges have been dulled. Gone are the powerful bass lines and pumping drums. Instead, the new record shows calculated direction in place of the tough energy of the early work. Also gone is most of the punk and reggae influence which appeared in many of the old pieces. Bob Rock's guitar is now sharing more time with newcomer Chris Livingston's keyboards. Solid playing from all the band, Paul Hyde's improved vocals and the return of Mick Ronson in the producer's seat all help make for a more muted, pop sound. This new sound is mixed with lyrics that show an

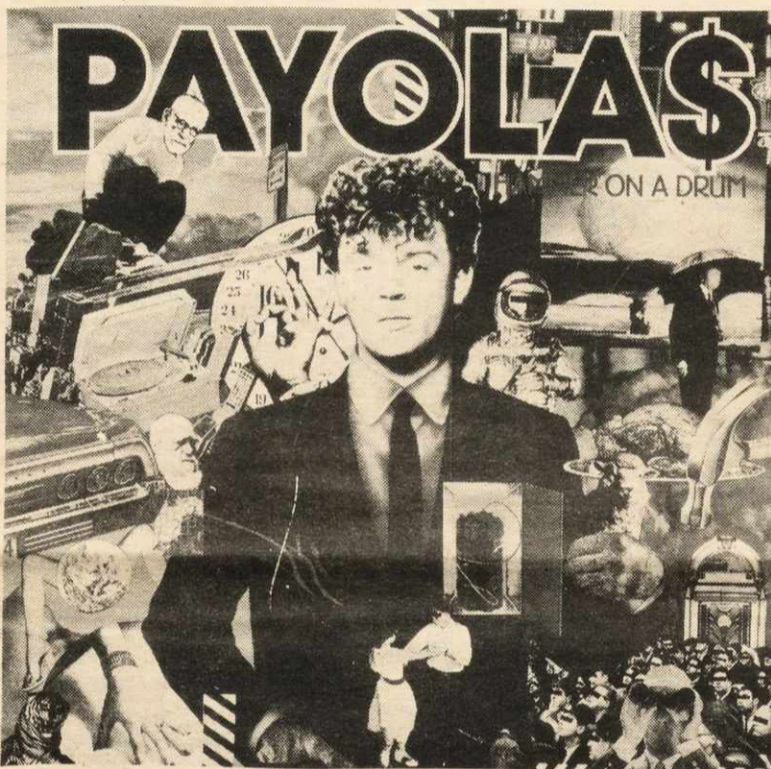
understanding of social and political issues that were only hinted at before.

There are a couple of cuts which still have the same guitar and guts sound of old. "Wild West" is a reggae beat rocker ridiculing the image of the shit-kicking good ole boy. The other cut is "I am a City." This one opens with a synthesizer line straight out of the *Warriors* and then heads right into a frightening portrayal of a city and its violent street life.

The Payola\$ have always had a certain social awareness, but on *Hammer on a Drum* the commentary takes on a political edge. Two cuts in particular stand out. The chant-like "Perhaps Some Day" praises the optimism and hope of the disarmament movement. "No Prisoners" is an intelligent, scary song set to a haunting melody. It deals with the effect of a nuclear holocaust on the millions of innocents caught up in something they don't understand.

The pop sound of the rest of the material often belies the serious intent of the lyrics. An example is "Never Said I Loved You", a duet with Rough Trade's Carol Pope, currently receiving a lot of airplay. An upbeat dance tune masks lyrics that satirize the non-committal bar-cruising ethic. Another song that has this somewhat confused mix of pop sound and punk lyrics is "Hungry", whose bitter lyrics don't match the almost sentimental mood of the music.

The album closes with "People Who Have Great Lives", a cut that doesn't really fit in with anything else on the record but deserves a mention if only because it is a truly funny piece complete with a little moral dig to boot.



The Crossing

by jayn ritche for ckdu

The Crossing is the debut album for this relatively new band, Big Country. That is not to say that its members are new to the music industry. Big Country is in essence a reforming of the band Skids, a Scottish band who have proven to be popular in England with four successful albums behind them. While Richard Jobson (ex-lead singer of Skids) followed a solo career, releasing a not-too-successful album of poetry readings entitled *The Ballad of Etiquette*, Stuart Adamson (ex-Skid guitarist) formed Big Country, adopting a sound comparable to that of the former band.

they are (as Skids were) preoccupied with images of toil and strife from working the land ("Harvest Home"), the manly ideals of courage and endeavour ("Fields of Fire") and a general attitude of head-held-high pride combined with tender honesty. Sounds like a lot, but Big Country do have a lot to offer. "1000 Stars" also ventures the topic of nuclear holocaust ("In defensive disguise some say protect and survive, I say it's over...") and proves to be slightly chilling, but it never puts a damper on the party.

Among the more memorable songs of the album are "Chance" (although it is a little too long) and my favourite, "The Storm." Both lean more toward the Celtic folksong influence than any of the other tracks, producing adrenalin surges and moments of nostalgia in this listener.

Apart from recommending that you keep your eyes open for the big blue album in your very own record store and actually buying it, there's not much left to be said.

The two singles, "In a Big Country" and "Fields of Fire" have received a fair amount of airplay in this country, I am glad to report. Characteristic of the album, the songs are dramatic, energy-filled and irresistibly sing-alongish. Big Country are BIG SOUND, and the album opens with a yelp of infectious excitement. From beginning to end

Residents shocked

(RNR/CUP)—Residents of San Jose, California, were disturbed recently when an 8-foot cyclone fence rigged with electronic sensors suddenly appeared around an abandoned gas station. But it was the tower and gun turret that really set them off.

It turned out their filling station had been turned into a training camp for South Koreans who were learning how to guard their country's nuclear reactors.

The Stanford Technology Corporation, which is running the program, says it plans to move the training centre next month. But that wasn't fast enough for the city, which slapped them with a building code citation, ruling the gun turret is not a normal commercial neighborhood structure.

8:30 - 11 p.m.
SPECIAL HOURS

NEVER A COVER
WITH YOUR I.D.

DANCE TO ROCK 'N' ROLL NIGHTLY

YOU CAN FEEL AT HOME AT OUR PLACE

then, next door, try

DELICIOUS CHINESE FOOD
CHINA SEA RESTAURANT

Midnight Super Special - 11:30 p.m. to 2 a.m., Thursday - Saturday,
Only \$1.99

Luncheon Special - 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m., Monday - Friday,
\$2.99

1256 HOLLIS ST. - 423-1344

The Futon sofa-bed

... in harmony with nature

Originally from Japan adapted for us, this sofa-bed made of 100% pure cotton assures you a "firm support".

- Simplicity
- Comfort
- Practical
- Economical

also available

- pillows & cushions
- color covers
- folding screens
- fans

7th HEAVEN FUTONS
1578 argyle street
HALIFAX, N.S. 425-6997

RENT A T.V. BY THE WEEK, BY THE MONTH, OR BY THE SCHOOL YEAR
VCR'S and STEREO'S MONTHLY OR BY THE SCHOOL YEAR.

Special Student Rates
On ALL Units
e.g. 20 colour
\$20.00/mo.

RELIABLE TV

6257 QUINPOOL ROAD, HALIFAX
423-1363
7 DAYS A WEEK SERVICE

LARGEST LEASING AND RENTAL COMPANY IN METRO FOR OVER 23 YEARS