



HOUSE OF LOVE

Once in a while the indie scene throws up a band to which will flock the legions of the disaffected: the lost, the lonely, the misplaced and the misunderstood. The latest to give shelter to the huddled masses is The House of Love (playing at Glasgow Technical College on Saturday 15), led by 27-year-old frontman and songwriter Guy Chadwick, who in the last year has found his lyrics memorised and analysed by people who a year or two earlier might have been writing long letters to Morrissey, telling him that he'd touched their heart in a way no other could, and all with their own uniquely personal interpretations of his songs.

Cynics may have sneered at 'Christine', the song that seemed to follow the blueprint of the perfect pop single, as laid down by The Jesus and Mary Chain (The House of Love belong to the same label that discovered the Mary Chain, Creation, a company seemingly dedicated to reviving and updating the founder Alan McGhee's favourite aspects of the Sixties, and getting up as many people's noses as possible), but the thin shoulders of Guy Chadwick had to bear the weight of distinctions like 'the new messiah... of guitar rock', and Chadwick had to face correspondingly searching and personal interviews.

In actual fact, the singles and eponymous debut album are grounded firmly in the classic foundations of

indie guitar rock, roughly comparable to that of labelmates Felt; that is, clearly indebted to Sixties guitar bands, but not chained to that era. If anything, they conform rather too closely to current expectations. The sound of The House of Love slides into place easily in the wake of Echo and The Bunnymen, The Smiths, Mary Chain, The Wedding Present, The Mighty Lemon Drops, even The Sisters of Mercy, who still live on in the indies, despite their graduation to the 'real' chart. The historical markers thrown out by their songs (Doors, Velvets), are so well-known that they've become as standard, in their smaller way, as The Beatles or The Rolling Stones.

I was a fan of Echo and The Bunnymen at around the age a great number of The House of Love's fans are now, but the appeal gradually faded as each successive release showed just how stifling their style was. The Mighty Lemon Drops' mistake was in appropriating their idiom wholesale, and then failing grandly and publicly to find anywhere to take it.

The attention accorded The House of Love is a sign of the conservative indie buyer, but that shouldn't be held up to belittle Guy Chadwick who, through penning some evocative and memorable lyrics in a dead-end musical style, has imbued his band with enough individuality and intrigue to keep them ahead of the pack, for the moment. The merely curious will be welcome at the Glasgow Tech gig. (Mab)