

## A GUY CALLED GUY

As we sit in those weirdly-textured office chairs that make embarrassing noises when you shift your legs, Guy Chadwick, singer/guitarist of The House Of Love, looks like a war-worn soldier. Chadwick has been scrambling around New York for press engagements with a bit of a head cold and confides that he finds New Yorkers "to be the rudest people" he's ever come across. He adds placatively, "But I really like rude people. I find them funny." And therein lies Chadwick's weathered, worldly view of circumstance; a propensity that has helped him look up and beyond his band's chaotic twist of highs and lows that began one day in Camberwell, South London, 1986.

HOL welled up in the eyes of the British press after their debut single "Shine On" in 1987, on the well-known independent label Creation. You know how it goes, fireworks and devoted fans appear, the band is towed in by big boy Phonogram and everyone is feeling groovy. But then the band takes a wrong turn somewhere. In 1989 another single, "Never", is released and it doesn't have the same sparkle as the ones preceding it — "Real Animal" and Chadwick's favorite, "Christine".

"When we became a bit successful in 1988, everything started shaking. We had had this attitude that it was the four of us against the world, and then it all went wrong," muses Chadwick, seemingly still perplexed by this particularly dark moment in the band's career. About this time, the original line-up of Terry Bickers (guitar), Chris Groothuizen (bass), and Pete Evans (drums) was wrenched apart by Bickers' notoriously bleak and oppressive tendencies. He was cast out and replaced by their current guitarist, Simon Walker.

"We've been really lucky," remarks Chadwick about his new guitarist. "The group sounds better on most levels than it ever did. Terry was a real downer on the group for the last 18 months. It was a problem to where it made life unbearable. But Simon's got this energy. And we've got it all back again."

And apparently they have.

Their album *House Of Love*, released on Polygram here includes "Shine On", "Never" and the newest single, "I Don't Know Why I Love You". The 14 tracks offer an infectious brew of amorous vocal pleading and guitars that soar above the self-indulgent meanderings that is forever being peddled by the big music press. Chadwick mentions The Velvet Underground and The Rolling Stones as being largely responsible for HOL's guitar-based sound. But what about those sensitive and moody vocals that beckon images of drifting fall leaves and salty ocean shores, Guy?

"I'm really into '60s artists," he admits softly. "I really love The Mamas and the Papas, Dylan, and Simon and Garfunkel. Just the kinds of things that have a sound to them. You know, like a real sort of sound that came from a guitar and a voice as opposed to a production."

The new album interestingly enough offers a song called "Beatles And Stones". And while most would perceive this as '60s retrospection (Lord knows we've seen a lot of that lately), Chadwick describes it as his own personal introspection, having nothing to do with those bands' musical contributions.

"That song is very personal to me," he explains a bit hesitantly. "It was actually written at a point where I'd stopped playing in bands and I didn't want to carry on anymore. I was just writing these verses. The sentiment was that they'd done this great music and I just thought, 'Why should I bother, I'll never be *that*.' It was a resigned sentiment."

All this coming from a man who has been on the cover of countless British music publications, who is forever being riled-up by the press and is adamantly "cheeky" (his own word) in the face of the more critical critics. Chadwick's press persona is indeed a bit limited. Does he feel at all uncomfortable with his spokesperson role?

"Well," he begins a bit defensively, "The reason why I'm the spokesperson is because I write the songs and whenever the group does an interview I get

asked all the questions anyway. And it is a bit annoying, but the band's gotten used to it. I mean, I think I've got the greatest rock drummer in England — the greatest discovery of all time, and only occasionally do people pick up on *that* subject."

Chadwick speaks glowingly of each and every one of the band members. To him, the band is more than just a musical endeavor. "To us the group is a very spiritual, supportive thing. It's what makes our lives valid," he points out, confirming that the tightly knit, superbly flowing melodies on the new album are sown from personal *and* artistic components. The band is reaping rewards from the new album as well.

Does Chadwick think it will be received as warmly in the States as it is in England? "Don't know," he quips (and believe me, he quips fairly often), "I love New York though" he adds rather cryptically, thus ending *that* topic.

HOL is scheduled to tour Europe, Australia, Japan and then America. This sits quite well with Chadwick, who reveals "I love traveling. It's an essential education."

This then opens an interesting passage way for Chadwick's impression of the English: "I think the English people are a terrible race." This is getting interesting. "Really snobbish, elitist, self-righteous — kind of like Americans," he deduces suddenly. We quickly veer to less insulting commentary and one of Chadwick's anecdotal "war" stories:

"My lyrics are always being misquoted," he confides. "I once did a radio interview with someone who said, 'I just love this chorus' and then proceeded to misquote the entire thing. And then he asked me to sing it and at the end said, 'Wow, I was completely wrong.' And I said, 'Well, yes.' It was really fascinating." This topic is particularly foreboding, so I bail out.

Are there any other words of wisdom you'd like to part with, Guy? Any nifty adage or family secret?

"No, he smiles, "I'd like to go have a smoke though."