

Brit rockers

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House of Love lead singer Guy Chadwick doesn't like to get his hopes up — he really loathes disappointment — but even this acknowledged pessimist can't help but feel at least a twinge of excitement about the band's first U.S. tour, which hits the Chestnut Cabaret tonight.

"I don't know if a lot of people have many expectations of us," Chadwick said earlier this week, "but I'm not feeling a lot of pressure. We're quite a popular band in England and we'd like to be the same in America. It's more or less like starting over again, and I'm just allowing myself to be a little bit optimistic about it all."

House of Love arrives in the United States riding a popular wave of acclaim that has greeted the band and fellow English acts Stone Roses and Happy Mondays. Dubbed the best U.K. guitar band since the Smiths, HOL is touring to support its second record, a self-titled release on the Fontana/PolyGram label.

That the still-developing quartet is still around — let alone enjoying critical success — is something of a minor rock 'n' roll miracle.

Formed back in 1986, HOL debuted in England with an independent single ("Shine On") that landed the band a major-label contract and an adoring following of critics and fans. The first album was a smash, and Chadwick and his mates were the newest overnight stars on the scene, revered for their ability to blend together a booming guitar



British band House of Love, making its U.S. tour, plays Philadelphia's Chestnut Cabaret tonight.

sound, strong vocals and intelligent, demanding lyrics.

It was downhill from there, however.

Succeeding singles failed to impress and when the band attempted to record its second album, all hell broke loose. Chadwick — who admits to being quite overbearing creatively — felt his vision for House of Love wasn't being fulfilled and arguments ensued. Drug use had its impact. The recordings were scrapped and the band started over. The album was completed but not without a casualty; guitarist Terry Bickers was tossed out of the group, replaced

by Simon Ser.

Rather than shrinking from the chaos, Chad has thrived on the confusion and emotional stress; he ends creative tension.

"There has always been a tension (with the band), and it's still there," says Chadwick. "I'm a very difficult person to communicate with; I keep a lot of things to myself. But there's a good vibe in the band right now. We've had loads of ups and downs but it hasn't cracked us yet."

HOL's album cracked Billboard's album charts and the band last night in Washington, D.C. called them to do appropriate shows in seven weeks. Chadwick prefers recording in the studio over the stage, a sort of narcissistic

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