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**THE HOUSE OF LOVE**  
The House Of Love 7880  
PolyGram (842 293-4)

Back in their native U.K., the House Of Love were lauded by an adoring music press for a debut that was never released on these shores. This, their U.S. label

debut, at least gives the listener an idea of what the fuss was all about. Further, singer/guitarist Guy Chadwick won't settle for mere cult status — he expects nothing less than “million-selling albums” and ever so humbly terms the current LP “brilliant.” Such self-assurance isn't irksome considering what Chadwick and company have come up with.

Chadwick often sounds earnest singing amidst an echoey barrage of guitars and bright, surging choruses. It's white guitar pop at its finest — the sort of songs that have drawn comparisons to Echo and the Bunnymen back home. There are a number of standout

tunes here, among them the galloping pace of “In A Room,” a remix of “Shine On,” an infectious number that launched the band in the U.K., and “Hanah” with its hypnotic guitar/synth combination.

Chadwick offers a wistful tribute in “Beatles And Stones” (“Put the “V” in Vietnam . . . Made it good to be alone”), but his deadpan delivery is far better suited to a song like “I Don't Know Why I Love You,” where the singer is riddled with ambivalence (“I work just to treat you right”). Throughout, Chadwick remains too self-absorbed to radiate any sense of genuine exuberance, but that's O.K. The music manages to do that quite nicely.

Tierney Smith