

REVIEW

House of Love concocts top pop brew

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JOHN LENNON ONCE CALLED the blues a chair, a reference to, among other things, the required simplicity that makes originality elusive.

The House of Love makes guitar pop, a genre with rules only a bit looser than the blues. It's like making a cup of coffee — the recipe is easy, but

truly memorable brews are hard to come by. The band's show at the Marquee Thursday night would have made "Twin Peaks" Special Agent Dale Cooper sigh with satisfaction.

The lineup is traditional — two guitars, bass, drums. On their latest album, "The House of Love" (the first released here), Guy Chadwick and Simon Walker's guitar work sounds pale and overproduced. Stripped down live, however, the band's sound

bloomed. On record, for example song called "Hedonist" is hurried and weak. Live, backed by Peter Eva thunderous drumming and Chadwick's lonely voice, it evoked the slippery power of T. Rex and Iggy Pop.

The House of Love's sound owes virtually everything to the mid-1980s the favored aural garage sale of other new British bands, like the Stone Roses and the Inspiral Carpets. Such an obvious devotion the less generous could call it a ripoff. But Chadwick's best songs, like "Christine" and "Shine On," demonstrate at the very least that that vein of pop hasn't been exhausted.

Nor is the idea that the basic guitar drum outfit can no longer enter without an arsenal of high-tech devices. These guys were no dynamo onstage, but the intimate setting at the Marquee, a new club on W. St., was perfect for an emerging band to connect with an audience.