

MONDAY/JUNE 4/1990

## Love group, British press chums again

By Jon Bream/Staff Writer

Pronouncements by the British music press should probably be taken about as seriously as tabloid headlines in U.S. supermarkets. The English critics love discovering and deifying a new band and then denigrating the group as soon as it becomes popular.

Take the case of the House of Love, the British quartet that will make its Twin Cities debut tonight at First Avenue. Two years ago after the release of its first album, the House of Love was England's new rock god, exalted on the covers of *New Musical Express*, *Melody Maker* and other music magazines. Then last year, HOL's single "Never" was called rubbish by the critics and the band fell from favor.

"There was a bit of backlashing last year," said singer-guitarist Guy Chadwick, who built the House of Love. "At the time, it seemed like everything had gone wrong for us. Looking back, it was just a single. It just happened that we hadn't had a record out for about nine months. I don't know what people were expecting. It did OK. It went to No. 41. It was frustrating that it didn't get in the Top 40."

The reviews of HOL's first album, "The House of Love," called HOL "brilliant" and the "next Beatles." "We were perceived as the new rock hopes," Chadwick said, and despite last year's lashing from the critics, he thinks the band has "a really good relationship with the press in England. They like us."

Indeed, the House of Love is back in the good graces of the British press and fans thanks to the new album, also titled "The House of Love." It is the group's first effort for a major label and an irresistible record of modern pop, with a luxuriant guitar sound reminiscent of U2's and vocals from the David Bowie school. It's easy to see why Chadwick has visions of success like that of New Order or the Cure, two British cult bands that recently achieved major stardom in both the United Kingdom and the United States.

Chadwick said the new recording was difficult to make. He wrote 20 to 30 songs, worked with five producers and, in the midst of the project, guitarist Terry Bickers dropped out of the band. The House of Love felt pressure from critics, fans, the record label and mostly themselves.

In a telephone interview last week, Chadwick described the first six months of last year as a time when he lacked confidence. Chadders — as the British press calls him — is not comfortable as a cover-boy pop idol. "There was a period where it (fame) did fascinate me," he admitted. "It doesn't come naturally for me to behave like a star. I don't feel I am a star. There was a time last year when I couldn't cope with it. I couldn't go to gigs, I couldn't handle the idea of being recognized in England. I still don't think I'm different from anyone else just 'cause people buy our records and I'm on

the front cover of a few magazines."

Chadwick, who is in his early 30s, did not get into music until his late teens and he didn't take up performing until he was 22. He was in an assortment of bands including a punk group, Love and Kisses. He signed a record deal with RCA and put out a single under the name the Kingdoms; it went nowhere. He became fascinated with singles after being seduced by U2's "I Will Follow," Public Image Ltd.'s "Public Image" and the Cure's "Forest."

The House of Love became his vehicle. The band took its name from a cult novel, "Spy in the House of Love," by Anais Nin. "She was French, she wrote in New York and I think she died in the late '50s or early '60s," Chadwick said. "I think she might be more famous for being married to (novelist) Henry Miller."

The House of Love's first album

**Opening acts:** Third Eye and the Basics.

**Where:** First Avenue, Minneapolis

**When:** 7 p.m. today

**Tickets:** \$12; 338-8388

became a best-selling import in the States. The new record is beginning to get attention here thanks to the single "I Don't Know Why I Love You." The second album has become a Top 10 item in England and it is taking off in Europe, too.

"Things happen a lot more quickly in Europe," Chadwick said. "It's difficult in America. It's a very different type of place. I haven't got any expectations (for the record here), quite honestly. Each state is like a new country. It's hard work. Lots of groups get ruined by coming to America and getting so defeated. We've got to go back to England feeling positive. The early signs are really good and encouraging."