
*The House of Love, Shadowland
Roxy, June 15*

Anyone whose ears had been tickled by "I Don't Know Why I Love You," the driving candy-pop single by the House of Love, might have had a hard time believing the sonic storm these young Brits stirred up Friday night at the Roxy.

Rather than leaning towards the glossy psychedelia of the Mighty Lemon Drops, these stripped-down guitar rockers aimed for a Jesus and Mary Chain-type approach, ranging from simple dreamy textures to wall-of-sizzling-guitar fests. In a sense, they

provide a link between current-day British guitar-pop and the languorous drone-rock of the Velvet Underground.

In concert, "I Don't Know Why I Love You" lost its cool two-part harmonies, but other songs such as "Never" and "32nd Floor" gained searing coda sections in which the band took moody little songs and stamped an instrumental exclamation point at the end of them.

The House of Love's songwriting covers but a narrow range, and this may limit their progress, but they did demonstrate with this show that they

know how to make the best out of their material.

Openers Shadowland are SoCal transplants from Florida with plenty of energy. They strummed away furiously on their guitars, a Southern band which has heard the Allman Brothers and Tom Petty and is now ready to move another decade ahead. If only their music had something more than energy for which to recommend it.

—Bob Remstein