

■ THE HOUSE OF LOVE The House of Love

While the summer of '89 rocked to end-of-decade madness in the B-52s' "Love Shack," this year's sunny season sways to a mellower beat from the House of Love. The British quartet made its second album into the perfect rock sound track for a slowpoke, lazy vacation. Propelled by the gentle rhythm of pulsing guitars, the music rarely becomes intrusive enough to interrupt the average backyard barbecue. Yet undercurrents of restrained energy keep the songs from sinking into the lifeless soft-rock genre. Several tunes resemble the gentler numbers by Pink Floyd; they also revive the hip, laid-back mood, though not the sound, of vintage Roxy Music.

Don't bother listening for lyrics. Lead singer Guy Chadwick succeeds more at striking a distant, serious attitude than at putting across an intelligible message. Anyhow, the catchiest songs have simple choruses, easy to hum while dangling in a hammock or lying on the dock. Aired by the same breeze that sends sparkled waves across a wilderness lake, the House of Love's a musical edifice where it's easy to relax.
Fontana/Polygram)—*Michael Small*