

album — their first for Fontana — finally appears in late February. The band will be touring the UK again throughout the early part of 1990 and release a new version of their first single 'Shine On' this month. Both records feature now departed guitarist Terry Bickers but the band have recently been playing live with stand-in Simon Walker — and a John Peel session, due for broadcast shortly, does not feature Terry. However, the official word is that Simon is not necessarily a permanent replacement. See our exclusive matter with hunky Terry on page three.

Bickers speaks out

Ex-House Of Love guitarist clears the air



TERRY GETS the studio bug

Greg Freed

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THE HOUSE OF LOVE camp have now officially admitted that guitarist Terry Bickers has left the group — as exclusively revealed in *Sounds*, December 16 1989. And this week Terry broke his silence on both the split and his ongoing projects to give us an exclusive interview.

The news that he had parted company with the band during a 60-date tour — and on the eve of the release of their second album — surprised those who saw him as an essential component in the band's sound. The official version of events leans on those old chestnuts, 'personal differences' and 'mental exhaustion'.

But we found Terry far from mentally exhausted working at a south London recording studio with a group of friends from the same Camberwell scene that spawned The House Of Love.

Acting as producer and general team leader he is cajoling this relatively inexperienced group into a cohesive unit and adding his own guitar parts, displaying some of the blistering technique that enlivened The House Of Love's work.

So what's Terry's reaction to the claim of Love leader Guy Chadwick that "he (Terry) never really connected with the recording process" and that Guy himself recorded most of the guitars in the studio?

"No, that's not true — it's just a cover, isn't it? But that's alright. Or, no — it's not alright really."

So did Guy think up the guitar lines and just let you put your sound to it?
"He thought up lots of guitar lines," Terry smiles. "But I had the sound and the fortunate task of gigging it around for two or three years. In The House Of Love we would share the work and (laughs) the galaxy."

So is there any bitterness?
"It doesn't really matter. What's happening now is happening now. The House Of Love are still happening and they're using Simon Walker and if the combination clicks, it will be brilliant, yeah? And I'm doing what I'm doing, I'm happy. I want to make music, I want to make good records for a while and stop touring regularly, just for about a year — have a rest, take it easy."

So there is some truth in the claims that

you had a bout of mental exhaustion because of all the touring?

"No, I was fine, I was enjoying it. Perhaps the problem was that I was enjoying it too much. But there never seemed to be any time to make it special. Things like T-shirts and light shows always seemed to be thrown together at the last minute. Lots of ideas would be thrown around but nothing ever seemed to click — especially the videos, which was another thing. The videos for 'Christine' and 'Destroy The Heart' were really happening for me, then it disappeared."

The House Of Love's new album, to be released shortly, will be Terry's swansong with the band, but he's still passionate about their music.

"Well, yeah, we started off recording 'Safe' with Daniel Miller and that was fantastic and should definitely come out as a single as was originally intended. We could never really perform it live but on the record it was a great song, it just got stuck on the B-side to an inferior track, 'Never'. And then 'I Don't Know Why I Love You' was my least favourite off the album. I like it now but I loathed it for a while. There's a track on there called 'Hannah' and also 'Shake and Crawl' which, for me, are the obvious singles. But the record company are going to put out 'Shine On'."

Using so many expensive producers and recording studios rocketed the cost of the album and has put an onerous burden on the remaining members of the band to recoup the money Phonogram have invested in them — hence the re-release of 'Shine On'.

So was it money well spent?
"No, it just got really confusing. Of course we spent too much money. We scrapped the whole thing with Pat Collier at his studio for a fraction of the cost, like The Wonder Stuff — fine, on the head, we know what we're doing, and we don't need people with cowboy boots and their feet up on the mixing desk telling racist jokes."

Already back at work, Terry is currently putting the finishing touches to an acid dance track, a manic hybrid of pounding rhythm and sampled guitars. It started out as a cover of The Velvet Underground's 'What Goes On' but has been transformed, retaining the original's chord structure but

with no recognisable vocal apart from the occasional adlib. With the official split also citing Terry's newfound fondness for dance music as a reason for the break-up isn't this just another case of bandwagon jumping?

"It's not just dance music, it's the whole attitude of it, which is like, Enjoy yourself. . . a lot, and also open your eyes to good things that are around, as well as bad."

The same week that The House Of Love eagerly waited to see if 'I Don't Know Why I Love You' had hit the Top 40, they were somewhat gazumped by the success of Stone Roses and Happy Mondays, who ended up on *Top Of The Pops* — both contemporaries who had taken the dance aesthetic on board.

"Yeah, that didn't matter though — it's great, it was lively again. . . a vague ghost of punk, in some ways."

Terry's 'What Goes On' should see the light of day sometime around February. The project is for charity and includes contributions from a variety of people including The Irresistible Force, Rolo from The Woodentops, and singer Oscar from Terry's old band Colenso Parade.

Terry is now trying to put a positive attitude back into his work and avoid the business machine that threatens The House Of Love. This may involve producing and playing live with his friends — and there's more reunion with the members of Colenso Parade.

Meanwhile, he's still technically signed to Fontana as a House Of Love member.

"I'm still with the label, which is part of Phonogram of course. We haven't had communication yet but yeah, they're a label. For the moment I'm still working exactly what I want to do, and you know (smiles again) just sowing the seeds of life."

● The House Of Love have announced that Simon Walker, the guitarist who filled in after Terry left, will play on their imminent UK tour, which goes ahead as planned. However, he's still not officially a permanent replacement. Meanwhile, the band's split single 'Shine On', has been put back until January 22. They have John Peel session — recorded without Terry — ready for broadcast so