

THE HOUSE OF LOVE

The Spy In The House Of Love

FONTANA 846978/MC/CD

SINCE THE word go, The House Of Love have been filling the B-sides of their singles with uncannily conceived, lysergically constructed curios – some raging successes, others not – and generally putting all that vinyl to good use. An idea so rare now, it's almost obsolete.

'The Spy In The House Of Love', a mid-price 14-song stop-gap, rounds up ten of the blighters and adds four previously unreleased tracks – three from the band's second album sessions – for good measure.

Of these, you will need to hear 'D Song '89' pronto for its majestic guitar troilism and typically delicious switches, and 'Ray', a kind of sister song to their debut single, 'Shine On'. 'Baby Teen', occurring soon into the heavily acoustic second side, is soft-edged like, say, 'Man To Child', although Guy Chadwick's

oblique lyric just plain baffles. Finally, 'No Fire' is an arranged marriage of Status Quo's boogie rhythm and HOL-patented whale-noise guitars.

Now, when Phonogram started bombarding House Of Love fans last year with multi-format singles – seven for the remixed 'Shine On', *ten* for 'The Beatles And The Stones' – some songs couldn't help but get lost in the *melée*. Resurrected here are some great tracks ('Safe', 'Phone', 'Soft As Fire') and one beaut, 'Marble', along with parts two to five in the on-going 'Love' series.

All show The House Of Love's skill in piecing tiny guitar figures together to make a thrilling collage of swoops, squeals and spangles.

While their fans will get off on at least half of 'The Spy In The House Of Love', the band, fresh from a 200-date world tour, have some crucial breathing space before their official third album. A nation awaits.

■■■□□ DAVID CAVANAGH