

HOUSE OF LOVE

Spy In The House Of Love

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After the tribulations of the last few years — the loss of guitarist Terry Bickers, the scrapping of an entire album of tracks — it would seem that House Of Love have rediscovered their former confidence. After their second album, Fontana, established them as more than merely jangly-guitar stalwarts of the indie charts, it seems songwriter and vocalist Guy Chadwick and his merry band have had another listen to some old numbers and deigned them worthy of an album to themselves. Thus four of the tracks here — Marble, Ray, Babyteen and No Fire — hail from the ill-fated first crack at what was to become Fontana and, though at the time “it seemed a disaster and put us on a total downer”, a second hearing proved that they were not as disappointing as they seemed in the middle of last year. Indeed, they and the other 10 tracks here sound like anything but outtakes. Culled from sessions stretching back to mid-1988, though on occasion heavily remixed, they all illustrate Chadwick’s enormous talent with words, his preoccupations with the darker side of human relationships, and the band’s confidence in their own style. *Spy In The House Of Love* may hardly constitute a giant leap

forward for the band, but it does firmly establish — almost deliberately, it seems — that they know where they’re going and that they believe in themselves. ★★★

Philip Thomas