

THE STATE OF INDEPENDENCE (ROCK)

THE HOUSE OF LOVE: Real Animal
(*Creation*)

BAND OF SUSANS: Blessing And A
Curse (*Further*)

THE CARETAKER RACE: Somewhere
On Sea (*Roustabout*)

KILL DEVIL HILLS: What Comes After
(*Roustabout*)

Ushered in by deceptively innocent vocal trillings and sha-las. The House Of Love suddenly rip off the mask of Doctor Jeckyll to become Mr Hyde and burst out of the speakers like scrapnel. Currently the only worthwhile band on the crestfallen Creation label, House Of Love manage to weld a strange brew of worldly cynicism and optimism offset by guitars which dash as though they were strung with the laces of Ben Johnson.

Their other big redeeming feature is they most emphatically do not come from the same neck of the sonic woods as The Mary Chain. Though 'Real Animal' lacks the lassoing melody of their debut single, House Of Love will soon find fans in every larder.

Where the guitars of HOL are crystalline in extreme, Band Of Susans operate in the territory of dirt and grit. Hailed – which is better than being stoned, I guess – as the next strike force from America in the tradition of amplified overkill, BOS have yet to really prove their mettle. As their monicker indicates, there are a lot of people called Susan in the group helped out by two males who definitely aren't known as boys named Sue. Their strongest shot, 'Hope Against Hope', features metal rusting into a psychotic drone. A sure platform to build on.

Caretaker Race – groovy tag – on the other hand already have a pedigree to live up to since they are the brainchild of ex-Loft-er, Andy Strickland. Noise annoyance is not something that makes them smile, their forte is carefully crafted songs. It's such a shame then that 'Somewhere On Sea' has the energy of a drowned rat.

Their labelmates Kill Devil Hills, though also believers in the supremacy of the wholesome song format, show a stiffer temperament altogether. As to the question they jangle before our ears, namely 'What Comes After', well it's this: THE END.