



C'EST LA VIE

THE HOUSE OF LOVE OLYMPIA, PARIS

FINALLY, that secret Paris gig.

As the crowds jostle and push across the street, however, it's not looking like a particularly well kept secret. But at least it's

happening, which is a relief to everyone and probably explains why the mood of the evening is conspicuously more light-hearted than you might ever have expected. Considering the kind of flak he's fielded lately, Guy Chadwick seems positively cheerful. Smiling, he demonstrates his full and comprehensive command of French. "Merci," he grins nervously. "Cet chanson s'appelle..." There's something endearing about coming on so gauche in Paris, and the audience responds with affection.

But despite whole housing estates of love, it takes a little time to sweep from potential into action. The show and the projected backdrop come alive at about the same time with "The Girl With The Loneliest Eyes". Though "Christine" is welcomed like an old friend, tonight's audience warm more emphatically to that other kinder, gentler House Of Love that runs as sweet as honey from "Man To Child" all the way through to "The Beatles And The Stones".

Listening to the lonesome echo of these songs, it sounds like Guy is now, more than ever, seeking out a constituency of the dispossessed. It's hard, however, not to feel that The House Of Love have somehow missed a wave that by now they should have been surfing. Whatever the individual highs of this show, the suspicion remains that something about HOL isn't quite right - there are still perhaps too many unresolved contradictions, too many unrealised aspirations, too many uncomfortable juxtapositions of sound and image. There are still too many crude insights passing themselves off as startling revelations, too many broad strokes instead of the fine detail these songs really need. But then there's the sweetness of their music at its best, Guy's absent-minded nostalgia, the slow chiming guitars that now characterise their most evocative moments and the sense of a latent power twisted back on itself; all these elements are now tenants in the

House of Love.

And when they are all simultaneously deployed, yes, you can almost agree with the much-maligned Chadwick that this time it IS going to happen for The House Of Love.

LUKE CLANCY

M.M 3/2/94