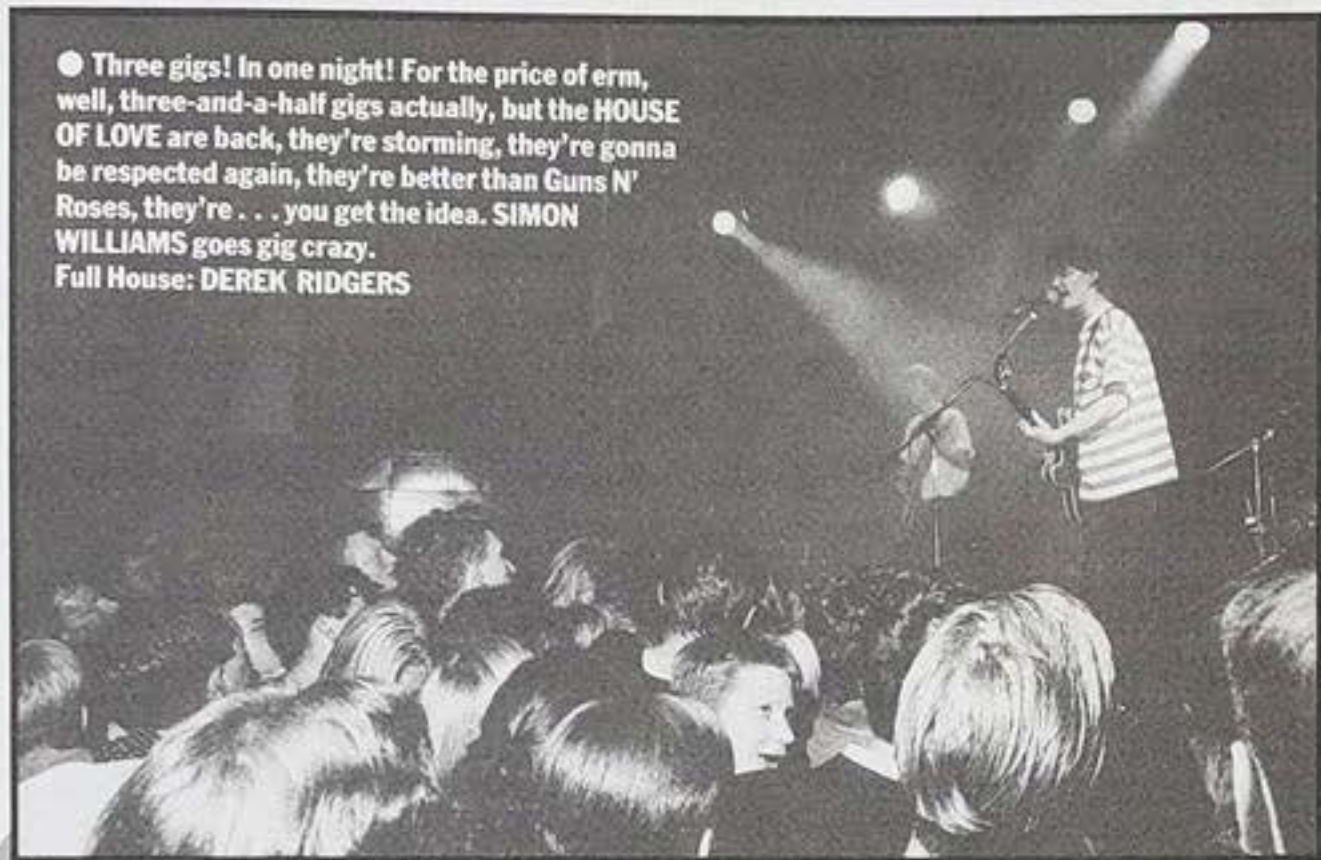


MEMORIES OF A THREE FESTIVAL

● Three gigs! In one night! For the price of erm, well, three-and-a-half gigs actually, but the HOUSE OF LOVE are back, they're storming, they're gonna be respected again, they're better than Guns N' Roses, they're... you get the idea. SIMON WILLIAMS goes gig crazy. Full House: DEREK RIDGERS



Chadders charms the season ticket holders on the ULU leg of HOL's London gigs-can-fly experience

It's mad. It's bonkers. It's the kind of event Levitation would attempt to stage. In outer space. And it's better than going to see Guns N' Roses at Wembley.

The House Of Love are preparing to play three pop concerts within the space of six hours in three different London venues after a year and a half away from the public eye. All one can ask is why, Guy Chadwick, why? "It wasn't our idea, actually. It was our agent's," beams the singer. "But we were looking for something different to do. We've always been into doing things differently, like six nights at the ICA, it's exactly the same, and that was absolute madness, just complete and utter chaos." The concept of multi-gig events is old hat, nay ancient headgear, by

now. Being young and innocent I can recall a Pathé newsreel devoted to The Police playing a 'seminal' brace of shows at the Odeon and Palais in Hammersmith - and travelling by Chieftain tank from one to the other. Snapper Ridgers reveals that The Grateful Dead are capable of touring for an entire month without ever playing the same song twice. While House Of Love guitarist Simon Walker has even less savoury memories to recount.

"What about all those be-bop musicians?" he demands, wildly. "They played four sets a night five nights a week! Why do you think they died so f---ing young!"

This is starting to look promising. A death in the band - or even one individual's collapse from nervous exhaustion - would make damn colourful copy. IT'S 4 REAL! BAND FALL OVER, TOTALLY KNACKERED!! Whatever the (hopefully painful) outcome, and the logistics of shunting an entire stage backline from gig one to gig

three, proceedings kick off in a thoroughly strange manner.

THE FIRST stop is ULU, where House Of Love clamber onstage at 7.30pm. It's still daylight outside, the bar is free of students, and concessions to any sort of party atmosphere seem to consist of a backdrop festooned with large white balloons and some bloke waving a yellow spotlight around. Right. At least it's better than being at Guns N' Roses.

Starting from the premise that House Of Love aren't allowed to repeat themselves (belch!) throughout the evening, it's obvious that a few album tracks are going to have to be dragged out and dusted down. Fortunately for the hardcore following, ULU receives the bulk of the band's debut Creation album - a rare treat - and a sterling run through of 'Shine On'.

Taking into account the obligatory crap ULU sound, the brevity of the sub-hour long show and the general impression that the band are conserving their energies for later rockin' rumbles, it's a highly reasonable beginning. Certainly, the majority of the 200-strong contingent who've strapped up all of the 'season ticket' three-gig passes at £20 a throw seem as chuffed as the average pools winner thus far.

On the back of my own pass is scrawled a large 'E'. Fortunately this entitles me to a seat on the fifth coach rather than a free pile of drugs which might encourage me to start loving shit dance music. On the way to the second gig, Tim from Leeds and Patricia from Leicester (roughly 95 per cent of the passes were bought by people called Tim and Patricia living miles away from London) enthuse about the Housies' hairy sound with a passion you wouldn't expect from House Of Love fans.

As the coach posse heads towards Kentish Town people are just getting to know each other when the Town & Country Club looms into sight and the journey is curtailed. Shame. This feels like the 'proper-est' gig of the night, which may have something to do with

Chadwick's cross-stage sprints. Or the 10pm kick-off. Or the slaying of 'Christine' and 'I Don't Know Why I Love You'. Or the retina-tasmagorical laser light show. Or even the batch of belligerent new material. Later, Chadwick shouts about "Feeling f---ing brilliant!" on stage. Hmmm, maybe he had a large 'E' on his pass as well.

The final bash is the much-loved 'secret' gig, which takes

place in the glamorous surroundings of the downstairs bar at the Boston Arms, two minutes up the road in Tufnell Park. After six hours of alcoholic indulgence, it's a bit of a bizarre one. But far better than Guns N' Roses... oh you get the picture. The band claim this one is the best, and they've got a pin-sharp point. Covers of the Velvet Underground and The Stooges' 'I Wanna Be Your Dog' flirt with the morose likes of 'Phone' and an anarchically-ragged 'Destroy The Heart'.

Guy mumbles on about wanting to wear a frock but Simon, bassist Chris and drummer Pete all refused to cross-dress. Surprisingly enough, the band didn't hold a vote on it, although certain members or the road crew are revelling in Top Shop wear. Yeah, it's that kind of evening.

BACKSTAGE, GUY

Chadwick looks sweatily relieved. There's only a twinge of disappointment when I realise his perspiration-ridden condition isn't likely to be terminal. As people stumble up to the singer brandishing cans of Stella and shouting 'Hi!' or 'See you for badminton next week!' Chadders gets his weary mind around a music scene devoid of the House Of Love for over a year.

To hurl things into perspective, they were the supreme love gods on Creation in 1988. But for them and My Bloody Valentine, the label would have been a disaster area of old lags, no hope youngsters and self-indulgent projects. The ironic thing was that after the departure of the Housies to Fontana, the arrival of Ride at the close of '89 revitalised the label. And the upstart quartet from Oxford freely admitted the influence of HOL as they bowled Chadders' lads off the indie pedestal. Guy - outrageously honest at the quietest of times - is vividly aware of musical developments.

"We had nearly two years between our first and second albums and it's just incredible how things passed so quickly," he frowns, fending off more socialites.

"We broke in '88 and in '89, while we were agonising about whether the snare was loud enough in the studio, Happy Mondays and The

Stone Roses appeared and showed everyone how to do it.

"It's funny, 'cos I bought a Chapterhouse record recently and I thought I could hear some House Of Love in there. I think we stopped people being so fussy about playing longer versions of songs and when everyone else was doing jangly pop songs we weren't - we were just enjoying ourselves!"

Having watched an entirely new generation of bands come through, does he think House Of Love have become a soft alternative?

"We've never seen it in those terms. We've always seen ourselves as a band trying to do something different within the idiom we work within. We've never seen ourselves as an 'indie' band - we're a rock band. There's no kind of rhetoric - we just believe in what we're doing."

Yet after returning with such an intense live event, the next single, 'Girl With The Loneliest Eyes' (C&W, kids!) is an extremely gentle comeback.

"I just think it's a brilliant song," shrugs Guy. "It's quite an original idea in the way that it's done."

In what way?

"I dunno, it's just... It doesn't sound like us particularly. Alan McGee was saying a few months ago, 'You've gotta do 'Destroy The Heart', but what's the point of doing that again? The next album is gonna be the most powerful album you've ever heard; it's gonna be very big and very 'up' and it just seemed natural to get this single out of the way and then we can concentrate on the more powerful stuff."

With that, the irrepressible one wanders off to have his head crushed by The Orb's all-night disco upstairs. But not before one final kick at the critics.

"I don't care about credibility, I think that's a complete load of rubbish. I thought it was important for a while when we first came through, but I'll show you how stupid that notion is because we will be credible again next year. It'll be as if all those acidic and spiteful comments that have been going round for the past year never existed. We will be name-dropped and we will be respected again."

Yeah, gigs can fly.



Guy feeling "f---ing brilliant" onstage at the T & C

"The next album is gonna be the most powerful album ever. It'll be as if all the spiteful comments of the past year never existed. We will be name-dropped and we will be respected again."



Tired but happy after the final show at the Bull & Gate, Guy opts for a night on the tiles