FONTANA FAST FACTS

A BRIEF HISTORY OF

THE HOUSE OF LOVE

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1. **List of Gigs**

   See attached

2. **Discography**

   'Shine On' (12" only)

   'Real Animal' (12" only)

   'Christine' (7" & 12")

   'Destroy The Heart' (7" & 12")

   'The House of Love' (LP/CD/MC)

   Compilation LP/CD - German release only

   'Never' (7", 12", CD single, MC single)

   'I dont know why I love you' (7", 12", CD single, MC single)

   'Shine On' (7", 12", CD single, MC single)

The House Of Love

Every so often a band emerges that is spectacularly and emphatically just right for its time. A band that inspires and reveals. A band that transcends cheap categorisation to claim a special place in the affections of a diverse and devoted audience. **The House Of Love** are fast becoming such a band.

Formed three years ago in Camberwell, South London, their name taken from an erotic novel by avant-garde feminist author Anais Nin, **The House Of Love** are now Britain's most exciting and imaginative guitar group. They are perhaps the final flourish in a distinguished six-stringed line that began with Echo And The Bunnymen and Teardrop Explodes and continued through The Smiths to The Jesus And Mary Chain. A truly special rock band.

With diamonds in their eyes and a shimmer in their step, they first took to a stage in the shambling summer of 1986, playing private parties, public parks and even breaking into a disused Odeon to host a series of impromptu Saturday night concerts.

The group were originally a five-piece with the current line-up of singer-guitarist Guy Chadwick, lead guitarist Terry Bickers, bassist Chris Groothuizen and drummer Pete Evans augmented by German-born guitarist and backing vocalist Andrea Heukamp. Unable to settle in Britain, however, Andrea ultimately returned to her homeland, leaving the band a more compact quartet. In their earliest days, **The House Of Love** harked back to the inspiration of the Stones, Velvets, Byrds and Television, although any homage to these former gods of guitar rock was also infused with an energy and toughness that belonged unquestionably to the present.

Regular gigging on the capital's independent pub and club circuit enhanced the band's reputation through '86, attracting the attention of Creation Records who released their debut single "Shine On" in 1987. A towering edifice of reverberating guitars and resonant vocals, the record made single of the week in NME where it was vividly described as "a shiny, momentous beast!" For an opening shot, "Shine On" was simply awesome.

The follow-up "Real Animal", a raw and energetic anti-fascist diatribe, was disappointingly received in media quarters, but the band were now starting to build up a substantial live following. In addition to playing "every toilet in England" under their own steam, they also landed prestigious support slots with the Bunnymen, Triffids and Mighty Lemon Drops. A mini-album featuring their first two singles along with B-sides and two extra tracks was released in Europe. The word was spreading.

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It was their third single in April '88, however, that provided the most significant breakthrough. "Christine" was the translucent pearl that gave **The House Of Love** their first independent number one. The debut album, produced by the band and mixed by the stalwart Pat Collier, followed in May. "The House Of Love" sold 40,000 copies in Britain alone, confirming the arrival of an extraordinary new rock act.

The music on the record was rooted in the driving guitars of Guy and Terry. It was an encapsulating, sensual sound that hovered serenely above the shuffle and hum of the rhythm section, veering from monstrous walls of cascading chords to more deft and subtle sonic shadings. Guy Chadwick described the uniqueness of the sound at the time: "For us, it's got to be this shimmering throb. It's got to go on and on. There has to be things coming out of it at every angle."

The ten songs on the album brimmed with big, bold metaphors. Soul-stirring images of God and religion jostled with those of love and sex to shed some light on the dark, obscure corners of a bedroom boy's introspection. Far from being gloomy or indulgent, however, this intense and often angst-ridden lyricism possessed a wonderful vitality that few bands, independent or otherwise, could match.

The music papers certainly seemed to agree. With the release of their fourth single "Destroy The Heart" in July '88, **The House Of Love** appeared on the front covers of NME and Melody Maker in the same week - a feat achieved in recent times only by the likes of U2 and The Sugarcubes. The single itself was their most subline yet, a hypnotic rush of meticulously layered guitars that again achieved pole position in the independent chart and was later voted number one in John Peel's festive fifty on Radio One.

By now most major record companies on both sides of the Atlantic were trying to sign the group. For their part, **The House Of Love** were seeking a label that was in keeping with their style and musical direction. In October they signed a long-term deal with Fontana, through Phonogram, with Creation Records retaining their management.

It was a typically bold and imaginative move, the band joining the likes of Pere Ubu, The Lilac Time, Adult Net and The Fall in moving to the Fontana cast from the independent sector.

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The first fruits of this new liaison came in the shape of the single and EP "Never", produced by Tim Palmer, supplemented by the more melancholy "Soft As Fire" and, as the additional track on the 12 inch, the near legendary 'lost' Creation single "Safe", produced by Daniel Miller.

The band showcased the single with a week at London's prestigious ICA, unleashing the other new material from the in progress LP they had just begun recording.

"Never" came within a mouse's squeak of the Top 40, a fate shared by the subsequent airplay hit "I Don't Know Why I Love You", released in October. "I Don't Know Why I Love You" brought the critics firmly back in line while the live reaction to the initial leg of their sixtysomething date UK tour had critics and fans alike waxing lyrically once again and champing at the bit for the forthcoming LP.

Now finished, the LP is set for release in the spring. Dare we suggest it's the first great rock album of the '90's?
No, We'll let you decide.

The House Of Love, meanwhile, release their third Fontana single on 2nd January, a newly recorded version of their classic first Creation single **"Shine On"**. Long deleted in its original form (it had a Creation pressing of a mere 1500), it changes hands for around £20 among collectors. The new version, produced by Tim Palmer, is the group's first bold step into the '90's. The massive UK tour continues into its third leg around the single's release as the band trek from Hartlepool to Swindon via Slough on a further 23 dates.

Ah! The glamour of rock 'n' roll. Shine On.

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