

Jonestown Concert At Palace

In Review

Buck, whose loopy, ethereal guitar effects seemed to swoop and swoon all over the auditorium. Buck's haunting string work — he also plays mandolin on several numbers — is the focal point for each song's melody, and despite the intricacy of those melodies he seldom missed a note.

Bassist Steven Gustafson and keyboard-player Dennis Drew also gave fine performances to round out the mix. About the only criticism I have of the sound was that guitarist J. C. Lombardo became lost everytime he switched from an acoustic guitar to an electric.

But the real star was Natalie Merchant, whose onstage behavior was

something of a cross between a gypsy and a matador. Dressed in a grey jacket and a black skirt, Miss Merchant whirled about the stage, spinning frantically and throwing her arms about in a gesture that suggested a cat trying to catch its own tail.

For some odd reason her actions didn't come across as pompous or just down right silly, however, maybe because of the ingratiating grin she wore through most of the show. She was having fun, and the audience of about 650 really caught on to it, as many rushed up to the stage at the beginning of the show and danced throughout.

The band ran through all the songs on its new album as well as most of the

material from its independent recordings. "Maddox Table," "Can't Ignore the Train," "Scorpio Rising," and "Lily Dale" were the highlights from that album.

The real show stopper, however, was an earlier song, "Planned Obsolescence," which the band pulled out during the second encore of a 90-minute show. The Maniacs adrenalized this sleepy reggae-ish cut from the *Human Conflict Number Five* E.P. into a no-holds-barred dance tune, as Buck's slide-guitar riff got everybody's feet jumping.

All in all, the Maniacs' act was about as perfect as a rock concert can get, and Jamestown really should be proud.

Take it from a guy who has listened to a lot of new groups in the past 10 years; if the Maniacs came from the Big Apple, the only band they would have to look up to would be the Talking Heads.