

with accoustical instruments, "someone who will treat our recorded performance like our live performance. We think live we sound much stronger in our direction than when we've recorded so far."

She said the group had thought about doing an "artsy black-and-white video," but CBS told them that it was not allowed. It could be "just a tinge artsy, but it has to be accessible."

Drew said Elektra is the best company in the industry for a new band; the label is artist-oriented and will take chances on accepting new acts. Company management also tends to give new artists more time to prove themselves. Larger companies will often not give an unknown group as much of a chance or will not work as closely with them, he said.

For the next 18 months, the Maniacs will live "everywhere but nowhere," either recording or on tour throughout Europe. Studio dates in England are to begin in early March.

The Maniacs could have gone into recording sooner, but they wanted to wait for producer Joe Boyd — who has made a name for himself working in many phases of the industry, producing early Pink Floyd, and early folk-rock bands such as Fairport Convention, and supervising scores for films such as *A Clockwork Orange*.

Drew said group members loved the records Boyd has produced and, with record company consent, made arrangements to work with him. Boyd insisted on working in British studios, which he feels are of better quality than those in the United States.

While visiting London last September, the group met with DJ John Peel,

ignorant and crude," she said. But they also know of American writers, scientists and scholars.

British music magazines give as much space to the underdog as they do to those who make the hits, she said: "It was the first time we'd been there and we had just as much space as the big bands." New groups are not given this chance on this side of the Atlantic, she said.

The British were surprised that an American band dealt with responsible topics. Too many groups from the United States tend to write carelessly about the same themes, over and over again, she said.

Audiences were very courteous and were very intrigued, asking for copies of their record. "They begin at a different level," from their American counterparts, Miss Merchant said.

They understand that a new group does not have to be a punk rock band. "They just too us as we were... They just looked at us as six individuals making music that is real and interesting to listen to."

Being used to seeing bands from New York City, the British were curious as to how an American group could come from a little town, she said.

Miss Merchant said she has friends in New York-based bands who are suffering financially because there are so many bands competing for dates "you have to beg the clubs to let you play."

They must rent a place in which to practice — "You have to guard your equipment with your life" — and because the clubs often do not pay well, they must get side jobs to pay for their apartments because the rents are so high. "And it just goes on," she said.

Miss Merchant said that the feeling

A date for an American release has not been set, he said.

Only a few current songs are to be recorded for the new album, and may only be included on the American release. This is because their first two independent releases, *Human Conflict Number Five* and *The Secrets of the I Ching*, sold far better in Europe.

One night on the London tour, a map from West Germany showed them magazines in which their record had been rated number one for about two months.

In Europe, a band can "try something different and be respected," Miss Merchant said. The band gets played only in isolated spots in the United States, she said; she said that she received compliments from a woman from Alaska.

The Maniacs also get letters from overseas. A young man in Poland wrote: "I listen to this record at times