

Ar Log in the Sherman Theatre

Celebration of a decade

By IFAN PAYNE

AR LOG is important in the history of Welsh music since it was the first professional group to bring traditional Welsh music to a popular audience on an international level.

In celebration of its 10th anniversary, Ar Log brought back the whole crew of past and present members to the Sherman Theatre on Sunday and throughout the evening kaleidoscopic permutations of personnel and instruments presented an invigorating concert of foot tapping vibrancy.

REVIEWS

When the group first started it performed straight folk music in attractive arrangements for acoustic instruments.

And here we were again with the original quartet as they recreated their hits of 1976.

But it was with the full line up which centred on two violins, two guitars, two harps and accordion or flute that the performance took wing. In this combination the group played with an even greater elan and a vigour

than is to be heard on their recordings.

Only in the slower melodies did Ar Log fall into a tendency to lose its grip as with the metronomic and dull playing of one of the great songs of longing *Yn Iach Ithi Gymur*. Here one really needed the push and pull of rubato of the period Victorian Ballad.

For the second set Ar Log was joined by its best known alumnus Dafydd Iwan who performed his deeply felt ballads, both solo and with the group.

For collectors of musical exotica, there was also fascination in being able

to compare Ar Log's version of *Y Ddafad Gorniog* (which here was played faster and more vigorously than on their album *Meillionen*) with that of the Indiano Celtic Group in *Trystan and Eryllt* (which incidentally can be seen again in St David's Hall on May 1).

Ar Log presents a humorous (the notion of the ex-patriot coming back to die in Fairwater had the audience giggling long after the punchline), fast flowing production full of the sort of joy that makes one look forward eagerly to the next 10 years.