

Islwyn Folk Festival

Groups create international musical style

By IFAN PAYNE

THE eighth Islwyn Folk Festival is being held in Risca Leisure Centre over this bank holiday and it nicely illustrates the current crisis of identity in the world of folk music.

As groups from all the Celtic countries play amplified acoustic instruments, many of which are not native to their countries, there has developed an homogenized international folk style which is made up of a basic Anglo-Celtic-European sound with Appalatiens fiddle and blue grass influences around the edges.

There are three principle ways of rising above this interchangeable electro acoustic style. The first is to join the heavily-electronic rock folk set. The second is to have that uniqueness of style and ability that rises you above the norm — Dave Grisman, De Danaan and

La Ciapa Rusa are examples of the diversity possible here.

I will continue with the third category in my report of Monday's concert at the festival but meanwhile each of the groups which played on Sunday: Amos and Rocks; Pedwar Yn Y Bar and After Hours had something to offer.

With Amos and Rocks it was their easy going Scottishness.

From Pedwar Yn Y Bar we heard perhaps the high point of the concert, the very lovely and haunting Porth Gwyfan composed by the group's fiddler Huw Roberts.

And it was the fiddle player Harry Sears who stood out in After Hours for his pleasant fiddle work. The group also performed an intriguing double jig on a pair of pipes with accompaniment by a tonally ambiguous guitar obligato.