

Remler warms cold night for crowd

By Don Adair
Correspondent

Sunday night at The Met, Emily Remler warmed up the first true winter night of the season with a sensational display of the style that ranks her among the top jazz guitarists of her generation.

Remler played with bassist Kelly Roberty and drummer Brad Edwards, two-thirds of the trio which backed her in August at the Coeur d'Alene Jazz Festival. Remler, Roberty and Edwards are in the middle of a 61-date club tour and though road fatigue showed on Remler's visage Sunday, it never appeared to affect her playing.

Indeed, Remler is tireless in her pursuit of musical surprises; she's in constant disequilibrium, finding and exploring unexpected routes across her richly textured musical landscape. She discovers an outrageously complex harmonic for what otherwise would simply be another comp figure behind a bass solo, pushes ahead of the beat in a flurry of notes rich with internal tension or drags behind with

CONCERT REVIEW

a figure which begs for resolution and defies it at once.

Whatever Remler does in the moment, it appears always to be exactly the *right* thing — the irrevocably ideal note, harmonic or solo — and any other would have fallen short. She often plays in magnificent machine-gun bursts, but never plays more than she should, never bends too many notes or overuses a good idea. She's dynamic but tasteful.

Dressed in an orange top and bright-print pants, she opened Sunday with the Bobby Timmins' chestnut, "Moanin,'" and followed with George Benson's "My Latin Brother." This pairing of a bop classic with a light, Latin piece pointed the way for the balance of the concert; Remler handily mixed standards and originals and floated easily among styles — from her own atmospheric and wildly intense "Petals," which concluded the first set, to a

warm Antonio Carlos Jobim bossa nova, to the Oscar Pettiford guitar-and-bass tour de force, "Bohemia After Dark."

Remler, Roberty and Edwards have played together enough since August to form a reasonably tight trio. Occasionally, a tricky section put them into momentary disarray — most notably at the beginning of her own "Mocha Spice" — but by and large, the ensemble playing was effective enough. Not so, unfortunately, for Roberty's soloing. A solid, sensitive ensemble player, his solos tended to sail off on tangents, and failed to acknowledge the theme, content or context of the piece. Brad Edwards, on the other hand, turned in some stunning solo work, both subtle and pyrotechnical.

Remler was magnificent and the show rewarding; by the end of the evening, only one question remained: With only about 100 people in attendance at a performance of this quality, just where is Spokane's jazz audience, anyway?