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GUITARIST REMLER'S DIVERSITY DELIGHTFUL

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Anyone planning to hear guitarist Emily Remler tonight at the Dakota Bar and Grill in St. Paul - and she shouldn't be missed - had better be prepared to listen carefully. Remler's playing demands it.

In her opening set Monday night, Remler refused to play anything perfunctorily. Instead, she probed deeply into just about every piece in her generous hour and 45-minute program.

Remler's playing - with and without a plectrum - was full of variety, mixing long legato lines with short staccato phrases and a host of other devices. Yet she was not guilty of sheer technical displays; instead, her considerable technique nearly always was used creatively and tastefully. Her interpretations almost always were thoughtful, exploratory.

Her repertoire was diverse and included some of her originals ("Blues for Herb," "Mocha Spice" and "Mozambique"), tunes by other jazz musicians (pianist Bill Evans' "Funkallero" and guitarist George Benson's "My Latin Brother"), a bit of bossa nova (Antonio Carlos Jobim's "How Insensitive"), jazz classics (Bobby Timmons' "Moanin").

She also offered extraordinary interpretations of a couple of unlikely pop songs - the 1953 Academy Award-winning "Secret Love" (sung by Doris Day in the movie "Calamity Jane") and "Snowfall," a lovely melody written in 1941 by Claude Thornhill as the theme for his orchestra.

On a night full of inventive playing, Remler's reading of "Snowfall" stood above the rest. It was eloquent and stunning. Concentrating on dynamics and mood, she employed a minor two-note vamp as she slowly and deliberately played the melody. Then in an unaccompanied section, she played in a flamenco style and provided some beautiful tones by lightly touching the fret board. Kelly Roberty, upright bass, and Brad Edwards, drums, supported her very well, and in solos,

sustained the song's enthralling pastoral mood.

Remler also delivered illuminating interpretations of "Secret Love" and "My Latin Brother." On "Love," she again showed her fondness for vamps - those repeated short phrases - and used the device to give the song a decidedly bluesy feeling.

"Brother" seemed to be equal parts mambo, cha-cha and samba, with Remler subtly building from a quiet beginning to some red-hot passages. And Roberty and Edwards did a good job establishing an irresistible groove. Similar vamps and grooves also helped make the closer, Remler's own Afro-Cuban-flavored "Mozambique," a truly intoxicating listening experience.

Remler's best jazz playing probably came on "Blues for Herb" and "Funkallero." On "Blues," her tribute to friend, teacher and illustrious jazz guitarist Herb Ellis, Remler told her rhythm mates in an aside, "All right, blindingly fast." It was taken uptempo all right, but Remler and cohorts didn't play any real burners Monday, which was about the only thing missing from their otherwise complete and highly satisfying program.

On "Blues," Remler created terrific energy and drive with repeated short phrases, and she showed off her finger work on some fast ascending and descending octaves. When there was a little hitch in her otherwise clean execution, her grunts and smiles of satisfaction were replaced by a mild expletive. Edwards offered some exciting cymbal work here. On "Funkallero," Remler offered some of her most intense and harmonically adventuresome playing.

Remler and group conclude their three-night stay at the Dakota with shows at 7 and 9 tonight. For reservations, call 642-1442.

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