

Jazz Reviews

A Stylish Set by Emily Remler at Vine St. Bar
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Emily Remler, the New York-born guitarist who opened Wednesday and closes Saturday at the Vine St. Bar & Grill, has wracked up credits as a student in Boston, with an R&B band in New Orleans, at many jazz festivals and on a series of Concord albums, most of them leading a quartet. Her lineup at Vine St. is more modest, consisting simply of Luther Hughes on bass and Tootie Heath on drums. The first show Wednesday consisted mainly of a rundown of her latest record, "East to Wes," dedicated to the late Wes Montgomery.

The opener, Clifford Brown's "Daahoud," was outlined in her gentle, almost muted sound, swinging implacably. Next came the title tune, for which she made only slight use of Montgomery's trademark octave style, while Heath kept up a steady undercurrent of 16th notes with the brushes, and Hughes maintained a solid four-beat pulse.

Whether using the pick or playing finger style, Remler deployed a steady flow of ideas in the beguiling Blossom Dearie song "Sweet Georgie Fame" and the mellow "Blues for Herb." During the latter she played alone for five stunning choruses. Her sound opened up on McCoy Tyner's "Latino Suite," but the understated groove returned on "Softly as in a Morning Sunrise."

Only in the concluding number, "Hot House," did her fingers falter a little due to a pace that would have defied Willie Shoemaker.

Remler at 31 has entered a plectrum pantheon that numbers only a few of her most talented elders: Joe Pass, Jim Hall, Kenny Burrell. Her selection of songs was as intelligent as her choice of sidemen in this felicitous celebration of rhythmic and melodic elegance. All this having been granted, she still deserves a traveling quartet of her own. Byline: LEONARD FEATHER