

of those things and more: he won our hearts. We signalled his victory with standing ovations; he paid us back generously, with three encores. Everyone—star, band, listeners—left with a glow.

Thirty years a Canadian and never a fan of Leonard Cohen's? I am one now. □

Alex Varty

NOV 4 / 88 *Georgia STRAIGHT*

Michael Brecker Band/Lunar Adventures

**Review: Commodore,
Tuesday, November 1**

*Time Flies series soars
right from the start*

Vancouver's Lunar Adventures and New York City. Michael Brecker Band kicked off the Time Flies mini-festival with two very unlike but equally fine sets of jazz, last Tuesday night. Oddly enough, each band chose to open with a Celtic-influenced original, but from there any similarities were outweighed by a world of differences.

Cramped together on a small corner of the Commodore stage, and still unaccustomed to performing for audiences of more than a few score, Lunar Adventures played to each other, producing a warm and unified sound that made up in interplay what it might have lacked in charisma. All four Adventurers are much concerned with texture, and the band used small percussion devices, unconventional instrumental techniques and electronics to good effect, colouring a set of strong, vital melodies that are crying out to be burnished up in the recording studio and set loose on the marketplace.

Brecker, of course, has been a visible commodity for a couple of decades now, and it shows: he plays a sort of bebop squared, not just in terms of speed—though he's fast—but also in terms of how the rounded edges of the jazz idiom have been pared from his music, leaving a rather hard, geometrical, almost cubistically faceted core. The difference between his sound and Lunar's tones is that between a sparkling diamond and a mossy encrusted geode: some people will love the fine-cut stone while others will be intrigued by the organic exterior and the mysterious interior dimensions of the wild rock.

It's not hard to guess where my sympathies lie, but I was impressed by the strength of Brecker's band. A more muscular yet controlled set of electric jazz would be hard to imagine. It's clear that Brecker himself can do

almost anything on his horn. Now if only he could find a way to put more warmth into his playing he would fully deserve his poll-winning status.

The Time Flies series continues on at the Vancouver East Cultural Centre with piano virtuosos Paul Plimley (solo) and Jean Beaudet (with a hot quartet) on Thursday (November 3). Expressive avant-gardists Unity and the Tom Cora/Hans Reichel duo perform Friday (November 4), and the wonderful pianist Marilyn Crispell closes the series, first alone and then with the 17-piece New Orchestra Workshop ensemble, on Saturday (November 5). □ **Alex Varty**

Sonic Youth

**Preview: Town Pump,
Thursday, November 10**

*Feedback festival arrives,
earplugs are optional*

True fans of the outer edge of guitar sonics are in luck. Two of the finest modern experimental groups are coming to the Town Pump: Screaming Trees and Sonic Youth. Both know how to turn feedback and outrageously sustained chords into the kind of primal music that shoots through you and pins you to the wall with your head twitching in time to the inescapable rhythm.

The Screaming Trees, a band from Washington state, make their local debut at this show. Fans of the sadly defunct Husker Du should like the Trees, because they have a fine sense of how to blend noise and distortion into a focused, practically psychedelic, beam of power.

Sonic Youth is even more experimental, with several different guitars, each set to a different unusual tuning. Despite the artiness behind this quest for unusual variations of music, they really rock, and lately they've managed to construct their innovations into tunes that are somehow identifiable as pop music, in a way that eludes explanation. It almost shouldn't be possible, but they do it very well.

Sonic Youth is also an engrossing live band, fascinating to watch and at times almost poetic to hear. A brief demonstration occurred at the Luv-a-fair more than a year ago, in a show that was cut short by the early closing hours on Sunday nights. That won't happen this time. There will be a full evening of the type of music that either sweeps one up into a headbanging frenzy or drives one away with ringing ears. □ **Dave Watson**