

THE KITCHEN

VIDEO
MUSIC
PERFORMANCE
DANCE
FILM

New York Times, November 11, 1983

Jazz: On Alto, Earl Howard

EARL HOWARD presented two smooth, dreamlike pieces Tuesday at the Kitchen. "Spangle" was an alto saxophone solo in two movements, and "Lava" was a longer, rhapsodic piece for alto saxophone, piano, percussion and trombone.

Both pieces were largely improvised, and both revealed Mr. Howard's nearly obsessive attachment to flowing, legato phrasing. Each movement of "Spangle" unreeled like an elastic ribbon of sound. Mr. Howard would take a melody, pull it upward and downward, speed it up and then let it subside, and give sustained notes a buzzing, howling edge, then return to a gentler tone.

"Lava" opened and closed with the sound of Gerry Hemingway on steel drum, soon joined by Mr. Howard with a quiet, delicately curling melody. That melody gave way to a string of shifting group timbres. Mr. Howard and the trombonist George Lewis usually shared long tones, in contrast with isolated notes and clusters from Mr. Hemingway and the pianist Anthony Davis. "Lava" rambled slightly, but more often than not came up with evocative sounds.

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HALEAKALA, INC.
59 WOOSTER
NEW YORK,
NEW YORK
10012
(212) 925-3615