

JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER LIBRARY — BLUE ENGINE RECORDS

# BEARDEN (THE BLOCK)

FROM LIVE IN CUBA (2015)

Christopher Crenshaw  
**Full Score**

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JAZZ  LINCOLN CENTER

## BEARDEN (THE BLOCK) • INSTRUMENTATION

Reed 1 – Alto Sax

Reed 2 – Alto Sax

Reed 3 – Tenor Sax

Reed 4 – Tenor Sax

Reed 5 – Baritone Sax

Trumpet 1

Trumpet 2

Trumpet 3

Trumpet 4

Trombone 1

Trombone 2

Trombone 3

Piano

Bass

Drums/Tambourine

## ORIGINAL RECORDING INFORMATION

**Composer** • Christopher Crenshaw

**Recorded** • October 5, 2010 at Teatro Mella, Havana, Cuba

**Original issue** • Blue Engine Records BE0001

**Currently available as CD, LP & digital download**

**Personnel** • Sherman Irby, Ted Nash (alto sax), Victor Goines, Walter Blanding (tenor sax), Joe Temperley (baritone sax), Ryan Kisor, Kenny Rampton, Marcus Printup, Wynton Marsalis (trumpet), Vincent Gardner, Chris Crenshaw, Elliot Mason (trombone), Dan Nimmer (piano), Carlos Henriquez (bass), Ali Jackson (drums)

**Soloists** • Dan Nimmer (piano), Victor Goines (tenor sax)

This arrangement of “Bearden (The Block)” can also be found on Blue Engine Records BE0018 *Jazz and Art* released on August 2, 2019.

“Bearden (*The Block*)” was commissioned by Jazz at Lincoln Center and first performed at Rose Theater at Frederick P. Rose Hall on February 4, 2010.

## NOTES

I took the sounds of the South and tried to integrate them with Northern sounds, particularly because Bearden was born in North Carolina but became known in Harlem during the Renaissance. I tried to combine all of the ideas of his paintings and it ended up turning into a mini suite. I was thinking about Bearden’s collages “Three Guitarists,” “The Block,” “The Block II,” “Reclining Nude,” “Conjuring Woman,” and “The Piano Lesson” when I composed this piece. The whole thing moves from a Southern church sound into different tonal centers that are more urban.

—Christopher Crenshaw, from *Live in Cuba* liner notes

## GENERAL PERFORMANCE GUIDELINES

**1. Rhythm Section and Balance** • The rhythm section determines the style, groove, and feel of each piece. It is the section that can comfortably play alone, and regularly does. In a typical 3-piece rhythm section, there is one string instrument (bass), and two percussion instruments (piano and drums); in a 4-piece section (with the addition of guitar), there are two string and two percussion instruments. In order for the rhythm section to achieve a swinging balance, it is crucial that the string instruments are clearly audible. The voices of these instruments must be respected by the two percussionists.

The drummer acts as the ‘President’ of the group, with the quick power to make dramatic and definitive changes to every aspect of the music.

The bass is the ‘Judiciary,’ holding the responsibility of constraining the volume and power of the drums. Their second responsibility is to play the mobile, lower melody that defines the integrity of the rhythm/harmony progression.

The piano is the ‘Congress,’ and has the ability to function as drummer, bassist, soloist, and accompanist; weaving in, out, and in between all of these roles to represent the widest range of voices and possibilities.

In a 4-piece section, the guitar acts as the ‘conscience’ or integrity of the rhythm and volume of the entire ensemble. They prevent the drummer and bassist from rushing or dragging and forces them to play softer and listen more closely.

The members of the rhythm section should know exactly what the names of grooves mean: *boogaloo*, *12/8 shuffle*, *bossa nova*, *2/3 clave*, etc. Every groove has a detailed function and definition. The top and bottom parts of the groove (drums and bass) must work together; at the same time, the interlocking rhythms of the piano and guitar must cooperate, honoring the context of the groove while also not interfering with each other.

When improvising with the rest of the band, the rhythm section should create a clear, basic, and danceable groove. They should also feel a sense of accomplishment from swinging with consistency and emotion.

When accompanying, the rhythm section should not feel compelled to have a constant stream of dialogue with the band; just like a friendly conversation, the dynamic should feel natural, with give and take. The goal is not to create constant “chatter.” Be proud of accompanying and swinging—they remain essential elements to any successful performance.

Members of the rhythm section must remain conscious of constraining power. For balance to be maintained, one must give up their desire to play louder than the other members of the section. As in any relationship, it is the constraint of power that creates the equilibrium within the section.

On the bandstand, each musician should be aware of balance at all times. This requires constant adjustment. The most important relationship is the drums and bass. If they are out of balance, the band does not sound or feel good. Do not let the PA system become your default ‘balance’ position.

Like a good democracy, the big band functions best when adhering to a system of checks and balances. Ultimately, the band should balance to the dynamic of the bass (as the softest acoustic instrument). Each section in the big band should both follow and play under their respective lead player.

**2. Improvisation** • A solo is an opportunity to express your personality and to exert tremendous influence on the success of a performance.

Responsibilities of the soloist:

1. Know the melody.
2. Understand the rhythm in relation to the groove.
3. Understand the harmonic progression.
4. Solo with emotional commitment and try to develop thematic material or musical ideas that relate to some aspect of the song.
5. Understand the function of background or accompanying parts.
6. Create your solo inside, outside, and alongside the arranged parts.
7. Create an ending for your solo that either leads into the next written part, hands off something good for the next soloist to play, or finishes with the right mood.
8. Do your absolute thing!

**3. Follow the Lead** • Within each section, know who has the lead (it isn’t always in the “first” part) and always play under that part. Do not assume that the lead player can tell if you are too loud; constantly re-assess within your section, in relation to other sections, and across sections if you are under the lead. Follow their phrasing, style, articulations, dynamics, and breathing. Lead players: you have a greater responsibility than others—be definitive in your concept, but not dogmatic. You must know the arrangement, including how your part fits into the overall dramatic and thematic objectives of the piece. You have to make musical decisions that help your colleagues follow you.

**4. Personalize Your Parts** • When referring to the performance of parts, clarinetist Jimmy Hamilton once said, “This is Duke Ellington’s music; it’s not written in stone. Duke always told us, ‘Personalize your parts.’” When done tastefully, all of the various vocal expressions that we can muster (i.e. vibrato, bends, swoops, shakes, moans, and vocal effects) will create a warmer and more human performance. Your parts should be played with the feeling and vocal expression of an improvised solo. These elements allow an audience to feel your humanity, and also welcomes them into nuances of your feeling. (You can do this while also following the lead).

**5. Internalize the Form** • Form is your defense against chaos. Every member of the ensemble has a responsibility to understand the architecture of each piece they play. Ask yourself, *Is it a blues? AABA form? An extended form? Where is the coda?* Be aware of entrances, repeats, and endings in relation to the form of the piece. *Is this an interlude or a shout chorus?* Sections often hand off phrases to other sections with an almost psychic level of awareness and nuance. At the very first rehearsal, begin figuring out how the piece is structured to achieve the composer’s goals. Focus on understanding the total architecture and the function of your individual part within the context of the piece. Remember, everyone in the ensemble has the responsibility of understanding and fulfilling both the most complex and most basic requirements of the arrangement.

**6. Have Integrity When Rehearsing** • *Your time is too valuable to waste.* Always be professional. Arrive on time and pay attention to everything—whether it’s a general concept or the most minute details. Take yourself and the music seriously at all times, and you’ll be shocked to see how much better you get just by changing your attitude in rehearsal. Be conscientious about playing better each day, and over time the improvement will be exponential.

**7. Listen to Jazz** • Go to every conceivable performance of jazz possible—whether you like it or not—so that you can develop both a feeling and understanding of the music. There is an almost infinite amount of diverse and high-quality recordings of jazz at your disposal, which create a sonic history of the music that can inform, enlighten, and inspire you. The more music you know, the more you will enjoy.

To listen to the recording from Blue Engine Records, please visit [jazz.org/liveincuba](http://jazz.org/liveincuba).



CONDUCTOR

Jazz at Lincoln Center Library - Blue Engine Records

# BEARDEN (THE BLOCK)

for Romare Bearden

Christopher Crenshaw

Swing ♩ = 150

Reeds 1 Alto Sax  
2 Alto Sax  
3 Tenor Sax  
4 Tenor Sax  
5 Baritone Sax

Trumpets 1  
2  
3  
4

Trombones 1  
2  
3

Piano

Bass

Drums

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

Bearden (The Block)

Musical score for the piece "Bearden (The Block)". The score is arranged in a system with the following parts from top to bottom: Alto, Tenor, Bari, Tpts. 1-4, Tbn. 1-3, Pno., Bs., and Drs.

The vocal parts (Alto, Tenor, Bari) feature melodic lines with accents and dynamic markings of *mf* and *fp*. The trumpet parts (Tpts. 1-4) play a rhythmic pattern with accents. The trombone parts (Tbn. 1-3) provide harmonic support. The piano (Pno.) and bass (Bs.) parts include chord diagrams: D<sup>#</sup>m7, G<sup>#</sup>m7, A<sup>#</sup>7, D<sup>#</sup>7(9), G<sup>Δ</sup>7, E<sup>Δ</sup>7, C<sup>#</sup>m7, A<sup>Δ</sup>7, and C<sup>Δ</sup>9. The drums (Drs.) play a pattern of eighth notes with a dynamic marking of *mf* and a style note "open sock swing".

Measure numbers 9 through 18 are indicated at the bottom of the score.

Bearden (The Block)

A

Musical score for 'Bearden (The Block)' featuring Alto, Tenor, Bari, Tpts. 1-4, Tbn. 1-3, Pno., Bs., and Drs. staves. The score is in 4/4 time with a key signature of two flats (Bb, Eb). The Alto, Tenor, and Bari parts have a melodic line starting in measure 26 with a *mf* dynamic. The Tbn. 1-3 parts also have a melodic line starting in measure 26 with a *mf* dynamic. The Pno. part has a 'Solo B7' section with a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. The Bs. part has a bass line with a 'B7' label. The Drs. part has a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. The score is numbered 19 through 26 at the bottom.