

# NEEDLEDROP

(2020 revision)

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Russell Scarbrough

Originally commissioned by the Hilton High School Jazz Ensemble  
Jared Streiff, director

## **Instrumentation:**

Alto Saxophone 1  
Alto Saxophone 2  
Tenor Saxophone 1  
Tenor Saxophone 2  
Baritone Saxophone

Trumpet 1  
Trumpet 2  
Trumpet 3  
Trumpet 4  
Trumpet 5

Trombone 1  
Trombone 2  
Trombone 3  
Bass Trombone

Vibraphone  
Guitar (*opt. substitute for vibes*)  
Piano  
Acoustic Bass  
Drum Set

## Notes on **NEEDLEDROP**:

This is a peculiar opportunity to perform a short, through-composed piece with very little improvisation. I think of a “needle drop” as a kind of excerpt, something brief and picked up mid-stream, or perhaps a mood, or only a taste of something bigger. Digging deeper into that thought, perhaps it is something incomplete, or where the key to the thing is obscured or hidden, in a different track, or on the other side. **NEEDLEDROP** has a mysterious quality: it’s not telling the whole story.

The challenge in performing this chart lies in bringing out the logic in the form of the piece, and crafting each moment into something meaningful. The piano and vibraphone\* carry the main theme of the piece, beginning at bar 13; both parts should be clearly audible there and at the recap at 105. The two instruments need to be evenly balanced with each other. Careful mic’ing may be required to achieve this, especially with the vibes, and that player may need to experiment with mallets to get a good sound that projects.

Much should be made of contrasts wherever possible. For example, the solo trumpet has a few short written-out solos. These should be played as warmly and soulfully as possible, in contrast to the other melodic elements of the chart which are generally cool and precise. The player is given a few chord changes in case they are comfortable embellishing the lines, but they should not stray far from the written material, as it contains important thematic content that help develop the piece.

Originally this chart had an elaborate ensemble introduction; for this 2020 revision, that introduction was rejected by the composer as unsatisfactory. In its place is a short, atmospheric moment for a solo instrument (could be the same trumpet soloist that plays the later harmon muted parts, or anyone else in the ensemble—on the studio recording, the composer plays it on trombone with electronic effects). This series of short phrases should be played as written with regard to the rhythms and pitches, though it may be stretched in terms of time and pacing, and phrases may be repeated. The idea is to project distance, coolness (or coldness), and isolation, so that the arrival of bar 13 sounds like warmth and light.

Once again, much gratitude is due to Jared Strieff and the Hilton High School Jazz Ensemble for supporting the creation of this chart.

RS

*\*If no vibes are available, an optional guitar part is included to play in its place. The two parts should not be played at the same time. If the guitar part is used, adjustments should be made to give the instrument a “bell-like” quality, mimicking the attack and tone of the vibraphone as closely as possible, and balanced with the piano, of course.*

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## 2020 Revision

Rubato

Even 8ths ♩=88

ALTO SAXOPHONE 1

ALTO SAXOPHONE 2

TENOR SAXOPHONE 1

TENOR SAXOPHONE 2

BARITONE SAXOPHONE

Prelude solo may be played by any instrument - feel free to use electronic effects, etc.

TRUMPET 1

TRUMPET 2

TRUMPET 3

TRUMPET 4

TRUMPET 5

TRUMPET 5: *Freely, lyrically* (measures 1-8), *Pickups in time* (measures 9-11)

TRUMPONE 1

TRUMPONE 2

TRUMPONE 3

BASS TRUMPONE

VIBES

GIHITARE

PIANO

BASS

DRUM SET

13

21

ALTO 1

ALTO 2

TENOR 1

TENOR 2

BARI SAX

TRP. 1

TRP. 2

TRP. 3

TRP. 4

TRP. 5

TEN. 1

TEN. 2

TEN. 3

BASS SOLO

VIOLA

GR.

PNO.

BASS

C. S.

Play into stand

To Open

SOLO (Harmon)

TIME

+ H.H. Ped. on 2 & 4