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Title

Open Voices – Music for Manhatta (1921) by Charles Sheeler and Paul Strand

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2020

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Open Voices

Music for *Manhatta* (1921)
a silent film by
Charles Sheeler and Paul Strand



Scored for
Violin, Violoncello, and Piano

Submitted to the Faculty of the Division of Music
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for Bachelor of Arts in Music



Columbia University in the City of New York

About This Music

In 1920, the painter Charles Sheeler and the photographer Paul Strand collaborated on what is considered by many to be the first American avant-garde film: *Manhatta*. Inspired by the Walt Whitman poem “Mannahatta,” the 10.5-minute film features shots of factories, ships, workers, and pedestrians in New York City interspersed with placards featuring descriptive selections from Whitman’s *Leaves of Grass*. The film was premiered at the Rialto Theater in New York in 1921 as an entrée to the main feature film, serving as light introductory entertainment – a common practice at this time.

The film’s lack of narrative means that the music is especially important to characterizing the images onscreen. Indeed, the various scores written for the film illustrate how music can change its tone. In composing *Open Voices*, I sought to bring *Manhatta* into 2018, using an amalgamation of musical languages to raise questions about the similarities – and differences – between 1920 and the present day. This opens the film to a variety of interpretations – about the mechanization of labor, the benefits of industrialization and its pitfalls, the immigrant’s experience coming to America – all questions relevant then and now.

The music is roughly divided into four parts. It starts energetically, accompanying the scenes of human activity that populate the film’s opening minutes. As the images turn to industry and construction, the music slows down, becoming more tonally ambiguous. The energy picks up again with images of the Port of New York and large steamships, increasing in anxiety and darkly doubling the music of the opening. Finally, as a dramatic shot of the Brooklyn Bridge fills the screen, the seemingly-perpetual motion finally comes to a screeching halt and returns to a calm, if troubled acceptance of a dissonant and yet simultaneously hopeful reality.

Open Voices was written for and recorded by the Longleash Trio with the generous financial aid of the Columbia University Department of Music. My thanks goes to all of those involved, especially my faculty advisor, Zosha Di Castri, whose compositional aesthetic and pedagogy I greatly admire, and whose assistance and advice was invaluable throughout this process.

- Thomas Nielsen, New York, NY, April, 2018

Instrumentation and Approximate Duration

Violin, Violoncello, and Piano; c. 10'48"

Performance Notes

1. Due to the number of musical devices which align with action onscreen, live performances of *Open Voices* should be conducted with the aid of a click track, provided by the composer. There are two moments of free *ritardando* in the score. In these cases, the following cue and its hit point are notated for the convenience of the performers.
2. Accidentals last the duration of the measure in which they appear. The score does not contain courtesy accidentals.
3. The movie's timecode is provided in the upper left hand side of each system. Measure numbers are placed above every measure for reference.
4. Pedal markings in the piano part are mainly meant to show crucial points of *lifting* the sustain, and are thus often last much longer than might be necessary to create the appropriate resonance. It is up to the performer to use his or her judgement in pedaling, keeping in mind the pedal changes noted, but feeling free to pedal more frequently.
5. For strings, the score differentiates between *glissandi* and *portamenti*. For *glissandi*, the performer should slide for the entire duration of the note. *Portamenti* should be rendered more quickly, towards the end of the note's metrical value.
6. The strings are occasionally asked to play *sul tasto* or *sul ponticello*. In both situations, the sound should never be ugly, but the textural change towards a more ghostly or pale sound should be discernible to the listener.
7. The strings parts employ a limited number of extended techniques:
 - *Jeté*: The pitches and rhythms themselves are less important than a percussive, bounced sound between the hair of the bow and the strings/fingerboard. The effect should be one of ricochet, and should be calibrated dynamically to not stand out from the surrounding musical material.
 - *Natural Harmonic Glissandi*: The pitches, again, are less important than a metallic, disquieting effect. Like the moments of *jeté*, the natural harmonic *glissandi* should be calibrated to not stand out from the material surrounding them, but rather accompany them, giving the music an otherworldly effect. The string on which the *glissandi* should be played is given in the score, notated "sul G," for example. In one case, the so-called "seagull" effect is desired; this is notated as such in the score.

Full Score

Open Voices
for Violin, Violoncello, and Piano

Thomas Erik Nielsen (b. 1995)

Energetic; Sprightly $\text{♩} = 100$

Violin ② ③

Violoncello

Piano ④ ⑤

Vln. *
Vc.

Pno. *
* Ped.

00:00:07:04

Vln. ⑥ ⑦

Vc. v. v. v. v. v. v. v.

Pno.

00:00:16:19

5

(8) **A** (9)

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

00:00:21:14

(10) (11)

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

00:00:26:09

(12) (13)

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

6 00:00:31:04

Vln. (14) Vc.

Pno.

00:00:36:00

Vln. (16) B (17)

Vc.

Pno. *expansively*

00:00:40:19

Vln. (18) Vc. * Led.

Pno. (19) sfz

sfz

* Led.

00:00:45:14

C

(20) (21)

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

00:00:50:09

(22) (23)

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

*Ped.

00:00:55:04

(24) (25)

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

mf

*

00:01:00:00

8

Vln. **D**

Vc.

Pno.

D

(26) **(27)**

00:01:04:19

Vln. **(28)**

Vc.

Pno. **mp**

(29)

* Ped.

00:01:09:14

Vln. **(30)**

Vc.

Pno. **mp**

(31)

continue bringing out the top "melody" line

Pno. **f**

Ped.

00:01:14:09

(32)

Vln.

Vc.

mf

Pno.

f

(33)

9

00:01:19:04

(34)

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

f

(35)

*

00:01:24:00

E

(36)

Vln.

Vc.

mp

E

(37)

Pno.

p

Ped.

10 00:01:28:19

Vln. Vc. Pno.

(38) (39)

Pno. f

00:01:33:14

Vln. Vc. Pno.

(40) (41)

Pno. *

00:01:38:09

Vln. Vc. Pno.

(42) (43)

Pno. Ped. f f *

00:01:43:04

F

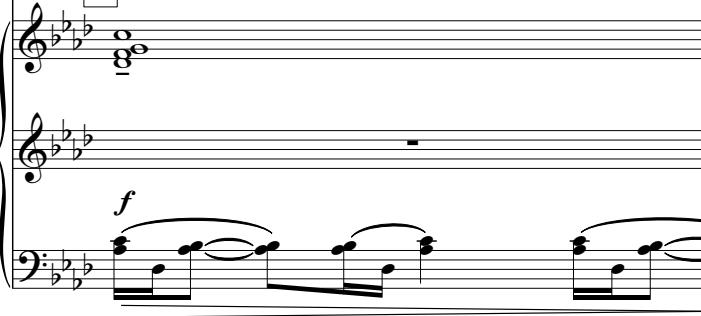
(44)

Vln. 

Vc. 

11

F

Pno. 

Ped.



sfz

00:01:48:00

(46)

Vln. 

Vc. 

Pno. 

(47)

00:01:52:19

(48)

Vln. 

Vc. 

Pno. 

** Ped.*

(49)

12 00:01:57:14

Vln. (50) Vc.

Pno. *sffz* * Ped.

**

00:02:02:09

G Vln. (52) Vc. (53)

Pno. fp G fp Vc. fp * Ped.

00:02:07:04

Vln. (54) Vc. (55)

Pno. Vc. Pno. * Ped.

00:02:12:00

H

(56)

Vln. gliss. (57) 58 59

Vc. pizz. *mf* arco *p*

Pno.

** Ped.* ** Ped.*

00:02:21:14

(60)

sul pont.

(61)

norm.

(62)

(63)

Vln. gliss. (60) sul pont. (61) norm. (62) gliss. (63)

Vc. pizz. *mp* arco

Pno.

** Ped.*

00:02:31:04

(64)

sul pont.

(65)

3 norm.

Vln. *p* (64) sul pont. (65) 3 norm. (66)

Vc. *mp*

Pno.

pp

13

14 00:02:37:19 (67)

I Pensive $\text{♩} = 54$

Vln. pizz. (68) (69) (70) (71) (72) (73)

Vc. sul C pizz arco gliss. (seagull' gliss, sul A) pizz

Pno. pp mp

Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. *

00:03:01:03 (74) (75) (76) (77) (78) (79) **J** **A little slower** $\text{♩} = 48$

Vln. (74) (75) (76) (77) (78) (79)

Vc. sul G arco gliss. pizz. arco

Pno. mf mf mp p **J** **A little slower** $\text{♩} = 48$ pensive

Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped.

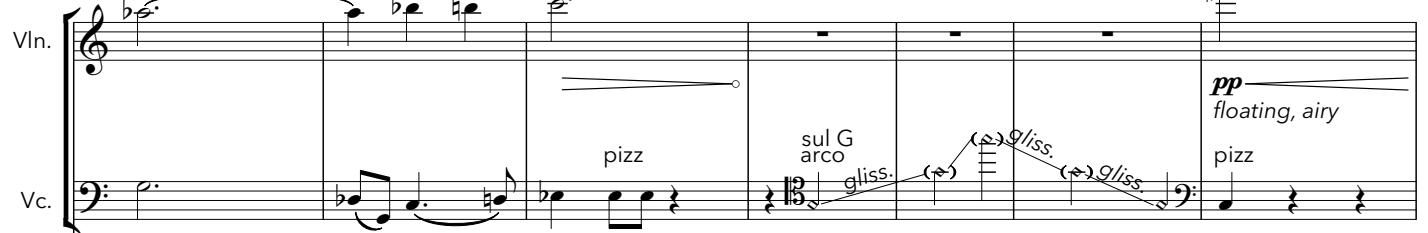
00:03:20:11 (80) (81) (82) (83) (84)

Vln. (80) (81) (82) (83) (84)

Vc. port icy p mf

Pno. (80) (81) (82) (83) (84)

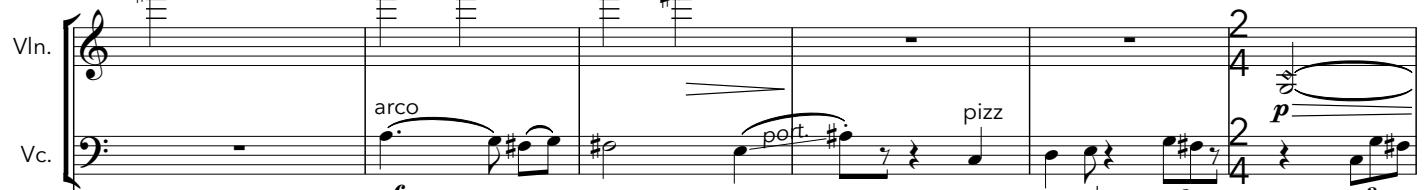
00:03:39:05 (85) (86) (87) (88) (89) (90) K (91) 15

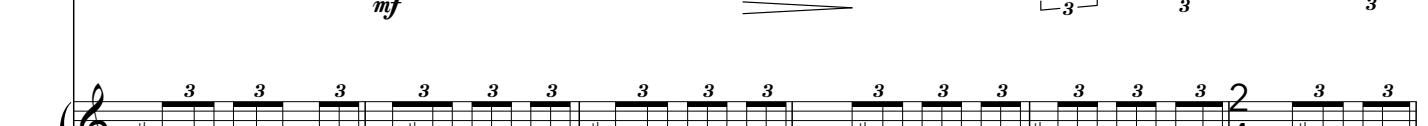
Vln. 

Vc. 

Pno. 

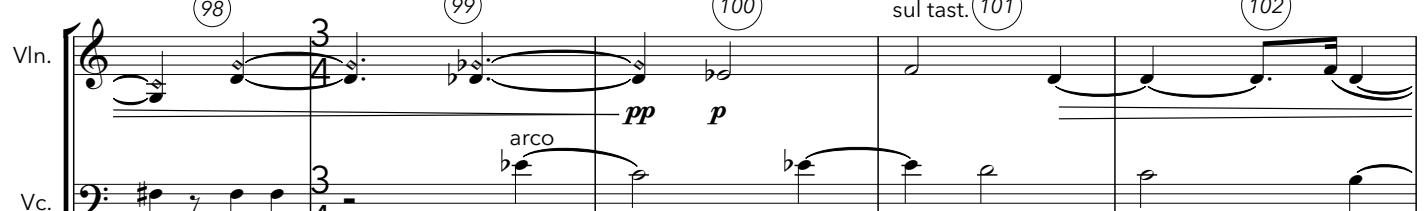
00:04:05:11 (92) (93) (94) (95) (96) (97)

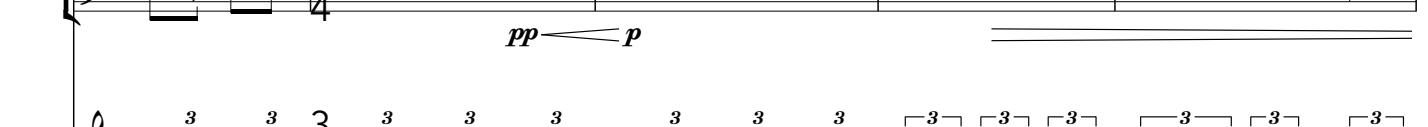
Vln. 

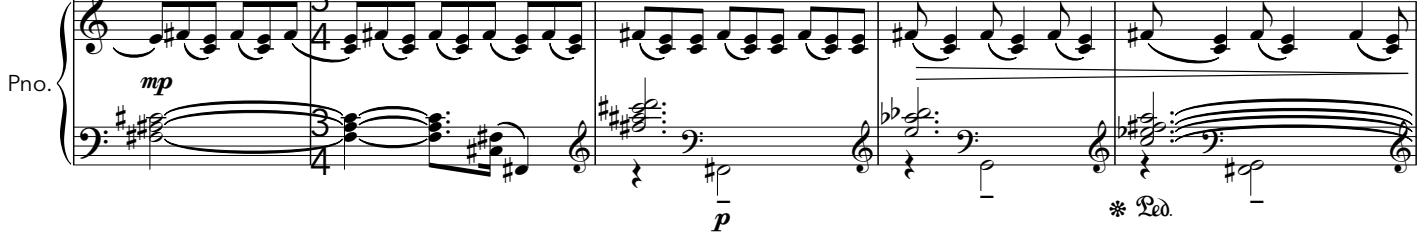
Vc. 

Pno. 

00:04:26:17 (98) (99) (100) sul tast. (101) (102)

Vln. 

Vc. 

Pno. 

16 00:04:44:05

Vln. (103) pizz norm.
Vc. pizz
Pno. *p*

(104) L 105 106
arco jeté pizz arco jeté pizz arco jeté

00:05:04:05

Vln. (107) sul tast. arco
Vc. jeté pizz
Pno. *pp* sul tast. arco
pp

00:05:14:05

Vln. (109) rit. (110) (111)
Vc. norm. jeté jeté
Pno. *p* *pp*

rit.

00:05:30:12

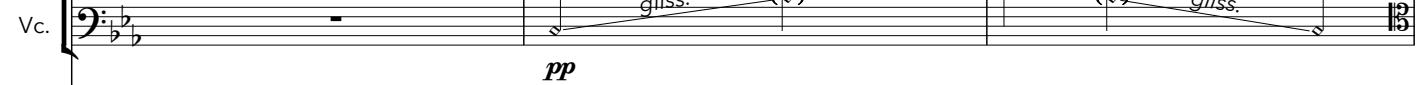
17

M

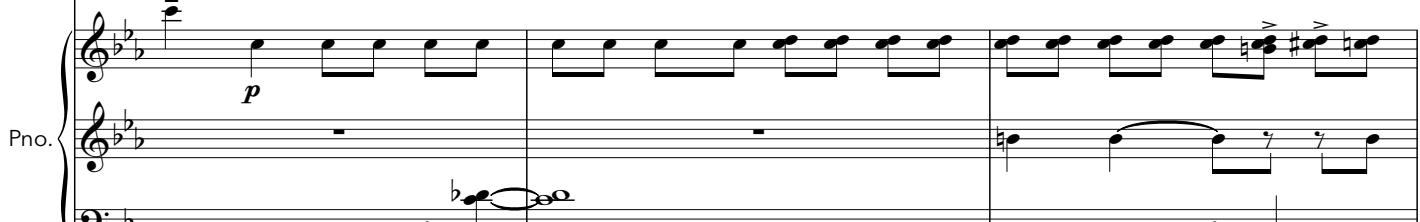
112

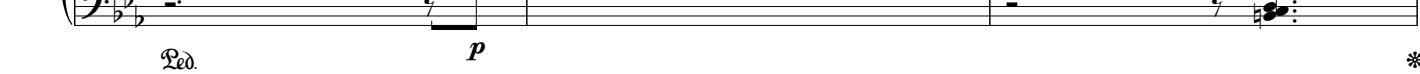
Tempo I ♩=95 norm.

Vln. 

Vc. 

M**Tempo I** ♩=95

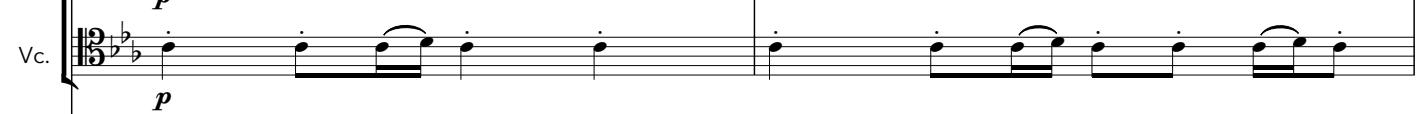
Pno. 

Ped. 

Align with cue: "City of hurried
and sparkling waters"

00:05:38:02

Vln. 

Vc. 

Pno. 

Ped.

00:05:43:03

117

118

arco

Vln. 

Vc. 

Pno. 

* *Ped.*

00:05:48:05

18

Vln. **N**

Vc.

Pno. **N**
agitated

continue to bring out the top "melody" line

00:05:53:06

Vln. 121 3

Vc.

Pno.

00:05:58:07

Vln. 123 3

Vc.

Pno.

00:06:03:08

gliss.

125

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

f

126

19

00:06:08:10

127

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

f

*Ped.

128

mf

00:06:13:11

129

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

sfz

130

gliss.

f

20 00:06:18:12

Vln. Vc. Pno.

(131) (132)

* Ped.

00:06:23:13 (133) (134) gliss.

Vln. Vc. Pno.

port. * Ped. sfz * Ped.

00:06:28:15 (135) (136)

Vln. Vc. Pno.

p o p o (135) (136)

mp * Ped. *

00:06:33:16

Vln. (137) Vc. port.

Pno. * Ped.

(138) 3 -

* Ped. *

00:06:38:17

Vln. (139) Vc. port. mf

Pno. * Ped. mf

(140)

* Ped. *

00:06:43:19

Vln. (141) Vc. port.

Pno. * Ped.

(142) port. #

* Ped. *

00:06:48:20

22

Vln. **P**

(143)

Vc.

mp
start small and grow

Pno.

P

sfz

mf
start small and grow

Ped.

sfz

00:06:53:21

Vln.

(145)

Vc.

Pno.

Ped.

00:06:58:22

Vln. **f**

(147)

Vc. **f**

Pno.

f

**Ped.*

(148)

00:07:04:00

(149)

gliss.

23

Vln. 

Vc. 

Pno. 

≡

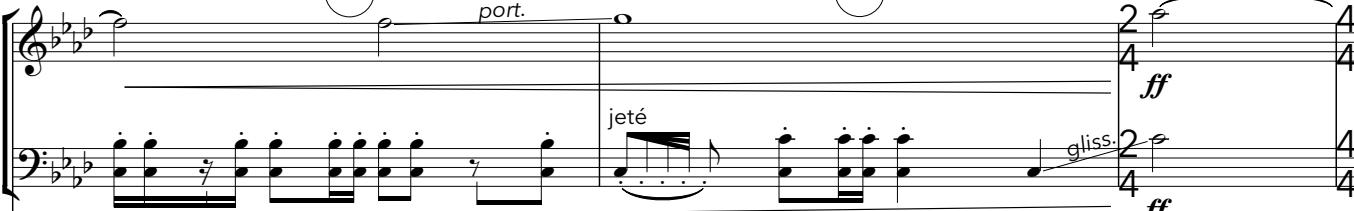
00:07:09:01

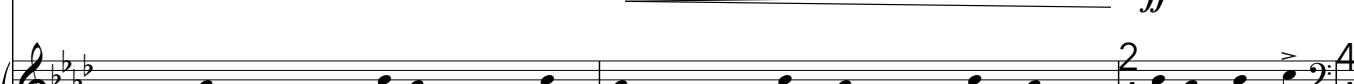
(151) *port.*

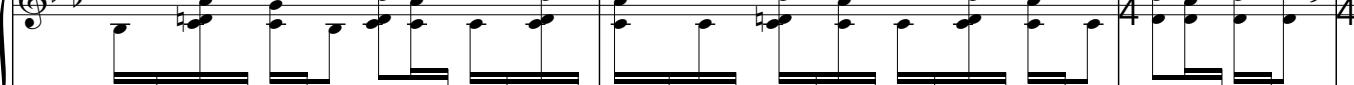
(152) *jeté*

* *Rédo.*

(153) *ff*

Vln. 

Vc. 

Pno. 

≡

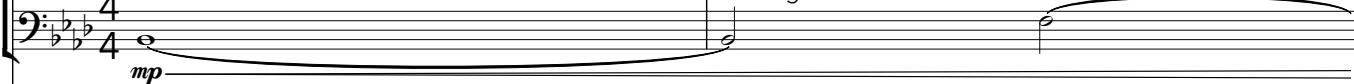
00:07:15:08

(154)

(155) *more agitated this time*

* *Rédo.* *

Vln. 

Vc. 

Pno. 

≡

(154) *more agitated this time*

(155) *more agitated this time*

fp *more agitated this time*

Rédo.

sfz

00:07:20:10

24

Vln. (Violin) Vc. (Cello)

Pno. (Piano)

(156) (157)

00:07:25:11

Vln. (Violin) Vc. (Cello)

Pno. (Piano)

(158) (159)

* Led.

00:07:30:12 jeté

Vln. (Violin) Vc. (Cello)

Pno. (Piano)

(160) (161)

jeté

* Led.

00:07:35:13

162

jeté

163

gliss.

ff

164

Vln.

Vc.

port.

ff

ff

25

00:07:42:12

R

Vln. 4 4

Vc. 4 4

Pno. 4 4

165

166

clangorous

Ped.

This musical score page shows two systems of music. The top system features two staves: Violin (Vln.) and Cello (Vc.). Both staves have four measures, each ending with a fermata. The bottom system features a piano (Pno.) staff with four measures. The first measure of the piano staff includes a dynamic instruction 'clangorous'. The page includes rehearsal marks 'R', '165', and '166', and performance instructions 'Ped.' and a dynamic symbol 'v'.

A musical score page showing two measures of music. The top half features two staves: Violin (Vln.) and Cello (Vc.). The bottom half features a single staff for Piano (Pno.). The score is in common time, with a key signature of one flat. Measure 167 begins with a dynamic of $\frac{1}{2}$ and ends with a dynamic of $\frac{1}{2}$. Measure 168 begins with a dynamic of $\frac{1}{2}$ and ends with a dynamic of $\frac{1}{2}$. The piano part includes a pedal marking (Ped.) at the bottom.

26 00:07:52:15

(169)

Vln. Vc.

Pno.

Ped.

(170)

*

00:07:57:16

(171)

Vln. Vc.

Pno.

Ped.

(172)

*

00:08:02:17

(173)

Vln. Vc.

Pno.

Ped.

(174)

*

27

00:08:07:19

(175) *gliss.*

Vln. Vc. Pno. Ped.

(176)

00:08:12:20

(177) *gliss.*

Vln. Vc. Pno. Ped.

(178) *mf*

00:08:17:21

S (179) *v.*

Vln. Vc. Pno. **S**

(180) *v.*

Pno. Ped.

28 00:08:22:22

Vln. Vc. Pno.

(181) (182)

5
4

f * Led.

00:08:28:00

Vln. Vc. Pno.

(183) 5
4 *ff* *gliss.*
3
4

5
4 *ff* 3
4 *
3
4

00:08:31:03

T **Slow** $\text{J}=54$

Vln. Vc. Pno.

(184) (185) (186) (187) (188) (189) (190) (191) (192)

ff *pp* *sul tast.* *mf* *norm. pizz.*

ff *pp* *mp* *p*

Slow $\text{J}=54$

f *weightless* *mf* *mp* *f* * *Led.* * *Led.*

00:08:56:17

Vln. (193) (194) (195) pizz (196) (197) (198) (199) (200) (201) 29
sul C arco *gliss.* *gliss.* *gliss.* *pizz* *poco rit.* *arco*

Vc. *mp* *poco rit.*

Pno. *mf* *mp* *p*
pp *** *ped.* *** *ped.* ***

00:09:17:00

U (202) (203) (204) (205) (206) (207) (208) (209)
A little slower $\text{♩} = 48$
sul G arco *gliss.* *gliss.* *gliss.* *gliss.* *gliss.* *floating* *pizz*

Vln. *p* *pp*
ped. *** *ped.* *** *ped.* *** *ped.* ***

U **A little slower** $\text{♩} = 48$
dolce *mp*
ped. *** *ped.* *** *ped.* *** *ped.* ***

Align with cue: "Where the city's
ceaseless crowd moves on, the live
long day"

00:09:37:00 (210) (211) (212) (213) (214) (215) (216) (217)

Vln. *p* *arco*

Vc. *ped.* *** *ped.* *** *ped.* *** *ped.* ***

Pno. *ped.* *** *ped.* *** *ped.* *** *ped.* ***

00:09:57:00

30

Vln. (218) (219) (220) (221) (222) (223) (224) (225) (226)

Vc. gliss.

Pno. *ped.* * *ped.* * *ped.* * *ped.* * *ped.* * *ped.*

V

00:10:19:12 (227) (228) (229) (230) (231)

Vln. *pp* pizz norm. *p* arco jeté *pizz*

Vc. *pp* **V** *pp* still *p* *3p*

Pno. * *ped.* * *ped.*

00:10:32:00 (232) (233) (234) (235) rit. *pizz* (236) (237)

Vln. arco jeté *pizz* *pp* *ppp*

Vc. *p*

Pno. *3p* rit. *ppp*

00:10:48:11 *