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

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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.

Open Voices

for Violin, Violoncello, and Piano

Thomas Erik Nielsen (b. 1995)

Violin **Energetic; Sprightly** $\text{♩} = 100$ ② ③

Violoncello

Piano **Energetic; Sprightly** $\text{♩} = 100$ *p* *Ped.*

00:00:07:04

Vln. ④ ⑤

Vc.

Pno. * *Ped.*

00:00:12:00

Vln. *mp* ⑥ ⑦

Vc. *mp*

Pno.

00:00:16:19

5

Musical score for measures 8 and 9. The score is for Violin (Vln.), Viola (Vc.), and Piano (Pno.).

- Vln.:** Treble clef, playing a melodic line with eighth notes. Measure 8 is circled with a circled 8. Measure 9 is circled with a circled 9. A box labeled 'A' is placed above the staff between measures 8 and 9.
- Vc.:** Bass clef, playing a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes. Dynamic marking *mf* is present.
- Pno.:** Grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The right hand plays chords, and the left hand plays a melodic line. Dynamic marking *mp* is present. A box labeled 'A' is placed above the staff between measures 8 and 9. The bottom of the piano part has a *Red.* marking with asterisks.



00:00:21:14

Musical score for measures 10 and 11. The score is for Violin (Vln.), Viola (Vc.), and Piano (Pno.).

- Vln.:** Treble clef, playing a melodic line with eighth notes. Measure 10 is circled with a circled 10. Measure 11 is circled with a circled 11. Dynamic marking *mf* is present.
- Vc.:** Bass clef, playing a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes.
- Pno.:** Grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The right hand plays chords, and the left hand plays a melodic line. Dynamic marking *Red.* is present.



00:00:26:09

Musical score for measures 12 and 13. The score is for Violin (Vln.), Viola (Vc.), and Piano (Pno.).

- Vln.:** Treble clef, playing a melodic line with eighth notes. Measure 12 is circled with a circled 12. Measure 13 is circled with a circled 13. Dynamic marking *frenetic* is present.
- Vc.:** Bass clef, playing a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes.
- Pno.:** Grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The right hand plays chords, and the left hand plays a melodic line.

14 15

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

16 17

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

B

f

expansively

f

sfz

** Ped.*

18 19

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

sfz

** Ped.*

00:00:45:14

C

20

21

7

Vln.

Vc.

C

Pno.

00:00:50:09

22

23

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

* Red.

00:00:55:04

24

25

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

mf

*

8 00:01:00:00

Vln. **D** **mf** (26) (27)

Vc. **mf**

Pno. **D** **sfz**

Red.

00:01:04:19

Vln. (28) (29) **mp**

Vc. **mp**

Pno. **mp**

* Red. *

00:01:09:14

Vln. (30) (31)

Vc.

Pno. continue bringing out the top "melody" line **f**

Red.

00:01:14:09

32 33

Vln. *mf*

Vc. *f*

Pno.

00:01:19:04

34 35

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

f

00:01:24:00

E

36 37

Vln. *mp*

Vc. *mp*

Pno. *p*

Red.

10 00:01:28:19

(38) (39)

Vln. *mf*

Vc. *mf*

Pno. *f*

00:01:33:14

(40) (41)

Vln. *mp*

Vc. *mp*

Pno.

00:01:38:09

(42) (43)

Vln.

Vc. *f*

Pno. *f*

Ped.

00:01:43:04

F

44

45

11

Vln. *f*

Vc.

Pno. *f*

Red.

sfz

00:01:48:00

46

47

Vln. *ff*

Vc.

Pno.

00:01:52:19

48

49

Vln.

Vc.

Pno. *sfz*

* *Red.*

12 00:01:57:14

Vln. (50) (51)

Vc.

Pno.

sfz

* Led.

00:02:02:09

Vln. (52) (53)

Vc.

Pno.

fp

G

fp

G

fp

* Led.

00:02:07:04

Vln. (54) (55)

Vc.

Pno.

fp

* Led.

00:02:12:00

56 57 58 59

Vln. *gliss.*

Vc. *pizz* *mf* *arco* *p*

Pno.

** Ped.*

00:02:21:14

60 61 62 63

Vln. *gliss.* *sul pont.* *norm.* *gliss.*

Vc. *pizz* *mp* *arco* *mp*

Pno.

** Ped.*

00:02:31:04

64 65 66

Vln. *p* *sul pont.* *norm.*

Vc. *mp*

Pno. *p* *pp*

** Ped.*

14 00:02:37:19 (67)

Pensive ♩=54

Vln. pizz

Vc. sul C pizz arco gliss. (68) (69) (70) (71) (72) (73)

arco ('seagull' gliss, sul A)

pp mp

Pno. pp

Red. * Red. * Red. * Red. * Red. * Red. * Red. *

00:03:01:03 (74) (75) (76) (77) (78) (79)

A little slower ♩=48

Vln. (79)

Vc. sul G arco gliss. pizz arco

mf mp p

Pno. mf

Red. * Red. * Red. * Red. * Red.

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

Vln. arco

Vc. icy port p mf

Pno. mp

00:03:39:05

85 86 87 88 89 90 **K** 91

15

Vln. *pp* floating, airy

Vc. pizz *pp* sul G arco gliss. *pp* gliss. *pp* pizz

Pno. *pp* *p* 3 floating, airy

* Led. *

00:04:05:11

92 93 94 95 96 97

Vln. *mf* arco *p*

Vc. *mf* port. pizz *p*

Pno. *mf*

* Led. *

00:04:26:17

98 99 100 sul tast. 101 102

Vln. *pp* *p* sul tast.

Vc. arco *pp* *p*

Pno. *mp* *p* * Led. *

16 00:04:44:05

103 pizz norm.

Vln. **pp**

Vc. **pp**

Pno. **p**

104

105

106

arco jeté pizz arco jeté pizz arco jeté

L

L

Red.

00:05:04:05

107

108

Vln. **pp**

Vc. **pp**

Pno. **mp**

jeté pizz sul tast. arco sul tast. arco

Red.

00:05:14:05

109

110

111

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

Vc. **pp**

Pno. **rit.**

norm. jeté jeté

00:05:30:12

M

112

113

114

Tempo I ♩=95 norm.

Vln. *pp*

Vc. *pp* sul C gliss. gliss. gliss.

M

Tempo I ♩=95

Pno. *p*

Red. *p*

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

00:05:38:02

pizz

115

116

Vln. *p*

Vc. *p*

Pno. *Red.*

00:05:43:03

117

118

Vln. arco *mf*

Vc. *mf*

Pno. *mf*

** Red.*

00:05:48:05

18

N

119

120

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

N

agitated

continue to bring out the top "melody" line

00:05:53:06

121

122

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

f

f

3

00:05:58:07

123

124

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

f

f

3

00:06:03:08

Musical score for measures 125 and 126. The score is for Violin (Vln.), Viola (Vc.), and Piano (Pno.).

- Measure 125:** Vln. part starts with a *gliss.* (glissando) over a whole note chord. Vc. and Pno. parts feature a continuous eighth-note accompaniment. Dynamics include *f* (forte).
- Measure 126:** Vln. part has a whole note chord. Vc. and Pno. parts continue with the eighth-note accompaniment. Dynamics include *f* and ** Ped.* (pedal point).

00:06:08:10

Musical score for measures 127 and 128. The score is for Violin (Vln.), Viola (Vc.), and Piano (Pno.).

- Measure 127:** Vln. part is silent. Vc. and Pno. parts continue with the eighth-note accompaniment. Dynamics include *f* and ** Ped.*
- Measure 128:** Vln. part has a whole note chord. Vc. and Pno. parts continue with the eighth-note accompaniment. Dynamics include *mf* (mezzo-forte) and ** Ped.*

00:06:13:11

Musical score for measures 129 and 130. The score is for Violin (Vln.), Viola (Vc.), and Piano (Pno.).

- Measure 129:** Vln. part is silent. Vc. and Pno. parts continue with the eighth-note accompaniment. Dynamics include *f* and ** Ped.*
- Measure 130:** Vln. part starts with a *gliss.* over a whole note chord. Vc. and Pno. parts continue with the eighth-note accompaniment. Dynamics include *f* and ** Ped.*

20 00:06:18:12

(131) (132)

Vln. *3*

Vc. *v*

Pno. ** Red.*

00:06:23:13

(133) (134) *gliss.*

Vln. *port.* *3*

Vc. *v*

Pno. ** Red.* ** Red.* *sfz*

00:06:28:15

(135) (136)

Vln. *p*

Vc. *p*

Pno. *mp* ** Red.* ***

00:06:33:16

21

137 138

Vln. *v*

Vc. *port.* 3

Pno. *Red.* * *Red.* *

00:06:38:17

139 140

Vln. *mf* *v*

Vc. *mf* *port.*

Pno. *mf* *Red.* * *Red.* *

00:06:43:19

141 142

Vln. *v*

Vc. *port.*

Pno. *Red.* * *Red.* *

00:06:48:20

22

P

143

144

Vln. *mp*
start small and grow

Vc. *mp*
start small and grow

Pno. *sfz*
mf
start small and grow

sfz

Red.

00:06:53:21

145

146

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

Red.

** Red.*

00:06:58:22

147

148

Vln. *f*

Vc. *f*

Pno. *f*

** Red.*

00:07:04:00

149

150

23

Vln. *gliss.*

Vc. *jeté*

Pno.

* Ped.

00:07:09:01

151

152

153

Vln. *port.*

Vc. *jeté* *gliss.* *ff*

Pno. *ff*

* Ped.

00:07:15:08

154

155

Vln. *mp*

Vc. *mp* *more agitated this time*

Pno. *fp* *more agitated this time*

* Ped.

sfz

24 00:07:20:10

(156) (157)

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

* Ped.

00:07:25:11

(158) (159)

Vln. *f*

Vc. *f*

Pno. *f*

* Ped.

00:07:30:12

jeté (160) jeté (161)

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

* Ped.

00:07:35:13

162 jeté 163 gliss. 164 25

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

port.

ff

ff

00:07:42:12

165 166

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

R

R

clangorous

Ped.

00:07:47:13

167 168

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

Ped.

26 00:07:52:15

(169) (170)

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

Red.

00:07:57:16

(171) (172)

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

Red.

00:08:02:17

(173) (174)

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

Red.

00:08:07:19

(175) *gliss.* (176)

Vln. *gliss.*

Vc.

Pno.

Red. * *Red.*

00:08:12:20

(177) *gliss.* (178)

Vln. *gliss.* *mf*

Vc. *mf*

Pno. *mf*

* *Red.*

00:08:17:21

(179) (180)

Vln. **S**

Vc.

Pno. **S**

Red.

28 00:08:22:22

181 182

Vln. 5/4

Vc. 5/4

Pno. 5/4

f

* Ped.

00:08:28:00

183

Vln. 5/4 gliss. *ff*

Vc. 5/4 *ff*

Pno. 5/4 *ff*

* Ped.

00:08:31:03

184 185 186 187 188 189 190 191 192

T Slow ♩=54

Vln. *ffp* *pp* *mf* norm. pizz.

Vc. *ffp* *mp* *p*

Pno. *f* weightless *mf* *mp* *f*

Ped. * Ped. * Ped.

00:08:56:17

193 194 195 pizz 196 197 198 199 200 poco rit. 201 arco 29

00:09:17:00

202 A little slower ♩=48 203 204 205 206 207 sul tast. 208 floating 209 pizz

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 arco p

00:09:57:00

30

218 219 220 221 222 223 224 225 226

Vln. *gliss.*

Vc. *gliss.* *port.*

Pno. *pp*

ped. * *ped.* * *ped.* * *ped.* *

00:10:19:12

227 228 229 230 231

Vln. *pp* *norm.* *p*

Vc. *pp* *pizz* *arco* *jeté* *p* *pizz*

Pno. *pp* *still* *3 p*

* *ped.* * *ped.*

00:10:32:00

232 233 234 235 236 237

Vln. *arco* *jeté* *jeté* *pizz* *rit.* *pizz* *pp* *ppp*

Vc. *arco* *jeté* *jeté* *pizz* *p*

Pno. *3 pp* *ppp*

rit.