Job: An Oratorio for Voices and Chamber Ensemble

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Music degree in Music

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Abstract

*Job* is a dramatic oratorio consisting of twelve individual movements, with an approximate duration of twenty minutes. It is a summarization of the plot and prose contained in the biblical book of Job (English Standard Version). The events of the oratorio depict Job, a devoted and prosperous man, being tested to the limits of his faith by acts of God, who was incited first by Satan. Throughout the oratorio, the philosophical and theological elements of humanity versus divinity are represented musically by intervallic relationships. *Job* is written for seven principle vocalists and a narrator, accompanied by an instrumental ensemble consisting of a violin, double bass, percussion (two timpani, cymbals), piano and electronic organ.

Keywords

Music, oratorio, chamber music, vocal music, Canadian music, composition, Bible, Job, interval, theology
Acknowledgments

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To my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.
Performing Forces and Performance Notes

Performing Forces:

Narrator
Job (Tenor)
God (Tenor)
Satan (Bass)
Eliphaz (Baritone)
Bildad (Baritone)
Zophar (Baritone)
Job’s Wife (Soprano)
Violin
Double Bass
Percussion
  - Two 28-inch timpani (F#, C)
  - Crash cymbals (movement III)
  - Medium suspended cymbal (movement XI)
Piano
Electronic Organ

Due to the nature and length of the work, the utilization of a conductor is highly recommended.

Performance Notes:

All movements are to be performed continuously without a break.

All accidentals are to be carried throughout their respective measures.

Ideally, singers proceed to center stage only during movements in which they perform. As soon as they finish, they should exit offstage, until they are needed in the performance again. The only exception to this is the narrator, who should remain onstage throughout the entire performance, sitting off to the side.

In the event there is only one keyboardist, the electronic organ must be situated in very close proximity to the piano onstage to allow for ease of switching instruments during the performance.

After movement VII, the percussionist should re-tune the C timpani down to B-natural for the remainder of the performance.
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Job
An Oratorio for Voices and Chamber Ensemble

Kevin Gibson
Narrator: **(Spoken freely at the entrance of the double bass solo, and should aim to finish text before the end of the movement)

There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job. He was blameless and upright, one who feared God and turned away from evil. He, a wealthy man, had many livestock and servants, and was richly blessed with ten children.

A council takes place in the heavenly realms. Satan, satisfied with the wickedness of the earth, is startled to learn that God still has one more faithful servant.

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I: Prologue

Kevin Gibson

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Duet: God and Satan

Con fuoco $q=80$

*molto declamatorio, quasi recitative*

God

Have you seen my servant Job? -

There is none like him on the earth.

A blameless and upright man!

Satan

Violin

Timpani

Piano

Con fuoco $q=80$

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Who fears me, and turns away from

Does Job fear you for no reason? Have you not put a hedge around him and his
You have blessed the work of his hands and his possessions have increased in the land. Stretch out your hand! Touch all he has! Job will curse you to your face!

With grief = 60

Satan

Molto agitato = 120

broden

sessions have increased in the land.
Narrator (begin with piano at m. 24):

Tragedy strikes the household of Job's eldest son, where all of the children are feasting. A great whirlwind hits the house, causing it to collapse and kill everyone inside:
III: Tragedy Strikes
Piano Cadenza

Molto tempestuoso e agitato \( \dot{=}120 \)

**Narrator** (wait for piano cluster to resolve to chord in last measure):
In addition, three servants rush in from the fields to report that all of Job's livestock has been scoured by rebels and burned up from a great fire.

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Narrator: *(Begin with Double Bass)*

After hearing this, Job tears his robe in anguish and falls to the ground.

Meditatively \( \approx 50 \)

(Job)

\( (\text{Begin with narrator}) \)

\( \text{non. vibrato} \)

Double Bass

\( PP \)

\( \text{(wait for narrator to finish)} \)

Job

\( \text{molto vibrato} \)

Db.

\( \text{Very freely} \)

Narrator: *(wait for Job to finish)*

In all of this Job did not sin or charge God with wrong.

\( \text{attacca} \)
V: Have You Seen Job? II
Duet: God and Satan

Con fuoco \( \dot{\jmath} = 72 \)

\textit{ff molto declamatorio}

Have you seen my servant Job? - There is none like him on the earth!

\textit{Con fuoco \( \dot{\jmath} = 72 \)}

A blameless and upright man!
Who fears me, and turns away from evil. He still holds fast his integrity although you incited me against him to destroy him without just cause!

Molto Energetico $q=96$

Gainst him to de-stroy him with-out just cause!
Skin for skin! All that a man has he will give for his life!

accelerating, with increasing frustration

Stretch out your hand! Touch his bone and flesh! Surely Job will curse you to your face!

With Grief \( q = 60 \)

Be hold, Job is in your hand. But you must spare his life!

With Grief \( q = 60 \)
VI: Job's Illness
Violin Cadenza

Narrator:
At that moment, Job is struck *(wait for violin pizz in m.3 before continuing)*...

...with loathsome sores from head to toe.

Narrator *(wait for violin to finish glissando in m.4-5 before continuing)*:
They are so painful that he takes a piece of broken pottery to scrape himself for comfort.

Narrator *(wait for violin pizz in m.7 before continuing)*:
And Job's wife said:

**Defiantly**

**Presto possibile**
*quasi gliss.*

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VII: Curse God and Die!

Duet: Job and his Wife

Agitato e dramatico \( \approx 60 \)

\[ \text{declamatory, over-annunciate consonants} \]

\[ \text{molto} \]

Wife

Job! Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and...  

Job

Violin

Timpani

Piano

Quasi Cadenza

Wife

die!!  

Curse! God!

**Job (Shouting, interrupting her in m. 8, b. 4):**

You foolish woman!

Job

Shall we receive good from God? and not evil?

Pno.

to organ

attacca

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VIII: One Week of Silence
Interlude

Organ Presets
Foot Pedal Stop Out
Lower Manual: Ensemble
Upper Manual: Full Organ

Narrator (begin with organ):

Job’s three friends hear the tragic news and come from afar to comfort him. They too tear their robes in anguish and sprinkle dust on their heads towards heaven.

Solemnly \( \ddot{=} 60 \)

Narrator (wait for organ to finish before continuing):

Nobody speaks a word for a whole week.

Narrator (wait for organ to start):

For they see that his suffering is far too great for words.
IX: I Curse the Day

Solo

With deep conviction \( \dot{=} 60 \)

**grace figures on the beat**

I curse the day I was born!

**quasi "breathy" with exceeding frustration**

(15)
X: The Argument
Quartet: (Job, Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar)

**Performance note: poco a poco accel throughout until m. 23. Use M.M. in brackets merely as guides for the acceleration, not as a strict tempo changes.**

**Brooding \( \text{\textbar} = 60 \) accel**

Job

If one ventures a word with you will you be impatient?

Eliphaz

Caution

Bildad

(from previous movement)

Zophar

Double Bass

Timpani

Piano

---

Eliphaz

Can mortal man be right before God?

Can a man be pure before his Maker?

Db.

---

Job

Teach me and I will be silent. How have I gone astray?

Do you think that you can reprove words

Bildad

Db.

---

Pno.

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when the speech of man is wind?

long will you say these things and your words be a great wind? If you will seek God for mercy

Though I am right I can not answer God. Mercy must be my judge.

Surely then he will restore you.

There is no arbitrator between us. Who might lay his hand on us both.

But a stupid man will get his understanding when a wild donkey’s colt is born a man!
Job Zophar

If you stretch out your hand towards God, your life will be brighter than the noon-day.

Eliphaz

Should a wise man answer with knowledge and

Zophar

But I would speak to the Almighty. I desire to argue my case with God!

Eliphaz

fill his belly with the east wind? What is man, that he can be pure?
Job

Eliphaz

I have heard many such things. Miserable comforters!

Bildad

That he can be righteous?

Db.

My spirit is broken. My days are extinct. The graveyard is ready for me!

Pno.

In deed, the light of the wicked is put out. The flame of his fire does not shine!
Passionately, quasi recitative

Job

28

How long will you torment me? And break me into pieces with your words?

Pno.

30

Have mercy on me my friends! For the hand of God has touched me!

Job

32

Bear with me, and I will speak. After I have spoken, mock on!

Pno.

Job

34

Be hold I know your thoughts and your schemes to wrong me!

Pno.
Job 42:1, 2

God has made my heart faint!

Eliphaz 41:22

Agree with God! Be at peace!

Bildad 42:1

ff

Zophar 41:21

Though evil is sweet in his mouth

Db.

Timp.

Pno.
Job: (shouted, freely)
With whose help have you uttered words, and whose breath has come out of you? Far be it from me to say that you are right; until I die I will not put my integrity from me!

Job: Oh, that I had one to hear me!

Job: (interrupted)
XI: God and Job
Duet

Narrator: (begin movement)

Suddenly, God appears to Job in a whirlwind:

Molto agitato quasi cadenza \( \sim \)88

\text{wait for narrator to finish, then begin}

With Colossal Force \( \sim \)40

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Who are you that darkens counsel without knowledge?

molto cresc e agitato

molto precipitando
God

Job

Vln.

Db.

Pno.

Dress emphatically for action—like a man!

17

Ky ri - e e - - -

19

lei - e lei - - - - -

Make it known to me!

God

Job

Vln.

Db.

Pno.
Where were you where were you where were you when I laid the earth?

Shall a fault finder contend with the
25. Almighty?

Dress as a man! Make it known to me!

27.
Have you an arm like God, can you

thunder with a voice like his?
Have you an arm like God, can you

thunder with a voice like his?
34
God
Job
Vln.
Db.
Timp.
Pno.
Pour
oti- son e lei - - -
35
out your an- ger!

R.H.
L.H.
Pour out your anger

Chri-st-e Chri-st-e e-lei-son e lei-son

very subdued (non. vib.)

Chri-st-e Chri-st-e
I know that you can do all things. No purpose of yours can be thwarted.

I have uttered what I did not understand. Things too wonderful of me, which I did not know.

I had heard of you by the hearing of my ear. But now my eye sees you.

Therefore, I despise myself. And repent in the dust and ashes.
Narrator: (with violinist, aim to finish passage before the end of m. 4)

Job repents to God, and God accepts his prayer. He is then blessed with ten more children, and restored all of his previous possessions twofold. Job goes on to live a full life of faith, rich in blessings and days.

Meditatively \( j = 50 \)

Vln.

Db.

Org.

Molto Lento \( \approx 40 \)

Vln.

Db.

Org.
# Curriculum Vitae

**Name:** Kevin Gibson

**Post-secondary Education and Degrees:**

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<th>Institution</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Field</th>
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<td>B.Mus. (Music Composition)</td>
<td>The University of Western Ontario</td>
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<td>2012-2016</td>
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<tr>
<td>M.Mus. (Music Composition)</td>
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<td>2016-2018</td>
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**Related Work Experience:**

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<tr>
<td>Teaching Assistant</td>
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