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Job: An Oratorio for Voices and Chamber Ensemble

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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
I: Prologue

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.

Semplice, non rubato \( \frac{q}{=60} \) ** wait for narrator to start

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Duet: God and Satan

II: Have you seen Job?

Con fuoco \( \approx 80 \)

*molto declamatorio, quasi recitative*

God

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

Satan


Violin


Timpani

Con fuoco \( \approx 80 \)


Piano

A blameless and upright man!

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Who fears me, and turns away from God.

More Subdued \( \frac{4}{6} \)

Does Job fear you for no reason? Have you not put a hedge around him and his

More Subdued \( \frac{8}{6} \)
Satan

house? You have blessed the work of his hands and his

Vln.

Vln.

Pno.

Pno.

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

broaden

sessions have increased in the land. Stretch out your hand! Touch all he has! Job will curse you to your

Timp.

Timp.

Timp.

Pno.

Pno.

With grief \( \dot{=} \) 60

face!

Timp.

Pno.

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

**Narrator:** *(Begin with Double Bass)*

In all of this Job did not sin or charge God with wrong.
V: Have You Seen Job? II
Duet: God and Satan

Con fuoco \( j = 72 \)

**ff molto declamatorio**

God

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

Satan

Violin

Piano

Con fuoco \( j = 72 \)

ff molto marcato

Pno.
Who fears me, and turns away from God

Molto Energetico $q = 96$

God

Vln.

Pno.

Molto Energetico $q = 96$

God

Vln.

Pno.

God

Vln.

Timp.

Pno.
Satan

Skin for skin! All that a man has he will give for his life!

accelerating, with increasing frustration

Molto agitato $q=120$

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

Molto agitato $q=120$

With Grief $q=60$

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

With Grief $q=60$

With Grief

attacca
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.

(From previous movement)

**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.

**rit.**

attacca
VII: Curse God and Die!

Duet: Job and his Wife

Agitato e dramatico $\approx 60$

**Job** (Shouting, interrupting her in m. 8, b. 4):
You foolish woman!

Wife

Job

Violin

Double Bass

Timpani

Piano

Quasi Cadenza

**Job** (Shouting, interrupting her in m. 8, b. 4):
You foolish woman!

Wife

Job

Pno.

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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.

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  \( q = 60 \)

Job

Double Bass

Organ

(Foot Pedal (lowest voice))

**grace figures on the beat**

I curse the day I was born!
With deep conviction

**quasi "breathy" with exceeding frustration**

\( f \)
Let thick darkness, seize it! seize it!
Agitato $q=76$ \( \text{rit.} \)

I was born! I curse the day!
Tempo Primo

I curse the day!
Tempo Primo
**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.**

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

Brooding \( \downarrow = 60 \) accel**

Job

Eliphaz

cautiously

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

Bildad

Zophar

(from previous movement)

Double Bass

ppp

Timpani

Piano

Job

Teach me and I will be silent. How have I gone astray? Do you think that you can re-prove words

Bildad

Db.

Db.

Pno.

semplice

pp

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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

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

Zophar

If doubt you are the people Wisdom will die with you!

Eliphaz

Should a wise man answer with knowledge and

Pno.

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

Zophar

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

Eliphaz

Bildad

Db.

Pno.

I have heard many such things. Mis-er-a-ble com-forts!

That he can be right-eous?

Why are we coun- ted as ca-ttle? Why are we stu-pid in your sight?

My spi-rit is bro-ken. My days are ex-tinct. The grave-yard is rea-dy for me!

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

Job

*whispered (pp) to shouting tone (ff)*

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

Pno.

*fff with sharp precision*

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

Job

*whispered intensely suddenly shout*

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

Pno.

*loco*

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

Pno.
37 With Anger \( \textit{f} = 120 \)

Db.

\[ \text{sf} \]

\[ \text{sfp} \]

Timp.

\[ \text{p} \]

\[ \text{molto cresc.} \]

Pno.

\[ \text{molto cresc.} \]

---

39

Eliphaz

\[ \text{Is it any pleasure to the Almighty?} \]

Bildad

\[ \text{Do min-ion and fear are with} \]

Zophar

\[ \text{I hear cen-sure that in sul-tus me} \]

Db.

\[ \text{3} \]

\[ \text{3} \]

\[ \text{3} \]

\[ \text{3} \]

\[ \text{3} \]

Timp.

\[ \text{3} \]

\[ \text{3} \]

Pno.

\[ \text{3} \]

\[ \text{3} \]

\[ \text{3} \]

\[ \text{3} \]

\[ \text{3} \]

---

42

Job

\[ \text{ff} \]

\[ \text{God has made my heart faint!} \]

Eliphaz

\[ \text{ff} \]

\[ \text{Agree with God! Be at peace!} \]

Bildad

\[ \text{ff} \]

\[ \text{God} \]

Zophar

\[ \text{ff} \]

\[ \text{Though ev-il is sweet in his mouth} \]

Db.

\[ \text{3} \]

\[ \text{3} \]

\[ \text{3} \]

\[ \text{3} \]

\[ \text{3} \]

Timp.

\[ \text{3} \]

\[ \text{3} \]

\[ \text{3} \]

Pno.

\[ \text{3} \]
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!

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

Duet

**Narrator:** (begin movement)

Suddenly, God appears to Job in a whirlwind:

**Molto agitato quasi cadenza** \( \sim 88 \)

wait for narrator to finish, then begin

**With Colossal Force** \( \sim 40 \)

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Who are you that dares consult without knowledge?

*molto cresce e agitato*
Agitato appassionato $q=60$

Agitato appassionato $q=60$

L.H.

R.H

Lyrical, with reverence and awe, legatissimo

mp

Db.

$j=60$

Timp.

Pno.

Vln.

Job

Db.

Pno.
God

Job

Vln.

Db.

Pno.

emphatically

Dress for ac-tion like a man!

17

Ky ri - - ee - - - -

19

lei-son e lei - - - - - - son

Make it known to me!

œœœ Œ œ œœ
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= 27
Where were you where were you when I laid the earth?

Shall a finder contend with the
God

-Almighty?

Job

eee-lei-son e

Vln.

Db.

Pno.

Dress for action like a man! Make it known to me!

God

Job

Vln.

Db.

Pno.
Have you an arm like God, can you

emphatically

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

thunder with a voice like his?
God
Job
Vln.
Db.
Timp.
Pno.
Pour
34

out your anger!

God
Job
Vln.
Db.
Timp.
Pno.
Pour
35

rit.
Pour out your anger

very subdued (non. vib.)
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 \( j = 50 \)

\[ \text{Violin} \]

\[ \text{Double Bass} \]

\[ \text{Organ} \]
# Curriculum Vitae

**Name:** Kevin Gibson  

**Post-secondary Education and Degrees:** University of Western Ontario  
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2012-2016 B.Mus. (Music Composition)  

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