Job: An Oratorio for Voices and Chamber Ensemble

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

I would like to thank the following as I complete my thesis project:

To my supervisor and mentor Dr. Omar Daniel, thank you for your wisdom and encouraging advice throughout the entirety of this project. What I have learned from you continues to influence and inspire me. Thank you for the enjoyable learning experience.

To the rest of the composition faculty at the University of Western Ontario – Dr. David Myska, Dr. Peter Paul Koprowski, Dr. Paul Frehner, Dr. Troy Ducharme, and Dr. Kevin Mooney – thank you for your instruction. It was a great honour to be your student.

To all of my friends and family, thank you for believing in me and supporting me in all of my musical endeavors. This composition is for you.

To my amazing and lovely wife Angelina, you are the best. I could not fathom completing my master’s program without your wonderful love and support, both in music and in life. Thank you for everything.

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
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.
II: Have you seen Job?
Duet: God and Satan

Con fuoco \( \dot{\mathbf{\text{=80}}} \)
molto declamatorio, quasi recitative

God

Have you seen my serv-ant Job? -

There is none like him on the

ff

Satan

Violin

Timpani

Con fuoco \( \dot{\mathbf{\text{=80}}} \)

Piano

Have you seen my serv-ant Job? -

There is none like him on the

ff

A blame-less and up-right man!

ff sfz

ff

sfz

earth.

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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...
Satan

12

$pp$ accel.

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

Vln.

Timp.

Pno.

15

Molto agitato $j=120$

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

Timp.

Pno.

18

With grief $j=60$

face!

With grief $j=60$

face!

Timp.

Pno.

R.H.
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:

**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.
IV: Naked I Came
Solo: Job

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

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

Meditatively \( \frac{3}{4} \) \( \approx 50 \)

*Job*

(Begin with narrator)

\( \text{non. vibrato} \)

\( \text{molto vibrato} \)

Very freely

Narrator: *(wait for Job to finish)*

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 \( \dot{\text{=}} \text{72} \)

God 

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

Satan

Violin

Piano

ff molto declamatorio

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

fff molto marcato

ff

fff

God

earth!

A blameless and upright man!

Vln.

Pno.

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Who fears me, and turns a-way from evil. He still holds fast his integrity although you incited me against him to destroy him without 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!

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

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

**rit.**

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VII: Curse God and Die!
Duet: Job and his Wife

Agitato e dramatico \( \approx 60 \)

Wife

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

Job

Violin

Double Bass

Timpani

Piano

Quasi Cadenza

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

Shall we re-ceive good from God? and not evil?

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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 $\frac{1}{2}=60$

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.
**I curse the day I was born!**

**quasi "breathy" with exceeding frustration**

**grace figures on the beat**

**foot pedal (lowest voice)**
**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**

\( \frac{4}{4} \)  \( \text{accel}^{**} \)

---

**Job**

**Eliphaz**

\( \text{cautiously} \)

**Bildad**

**Zophar**

---

**Double Bass**

**Timpani**

- (from previous movement)

**Piano**

---

**Eliphaz**

\( \frac{3}{4} \)  \( \text{mf} \)

- Can mortal man be right before God?
- Can a man be pure before his Maker?

---

**Job**

\( \frac{3}{4} \)  \( \text{teach me and I will be silent. How have I gone astray?} \)

---

**Bildad**

**Zophar**

---

**Db.**

- (\( \text{p} \))

---

**Db.**

- (\( \text{p} \) (\( \frac{72}{6} \))

---

**Pno.**

- (\( \text{semplice} \))

---

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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 cannot answer God. Mercy must be my judge.

Surely then he will restore you.

There is no arbiter 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.

Db.

Pno.

Job

Eliphaz

Doubt you are the people, wisdom will die with you!

Zophar

Should a wise man answer with knowledge and

Db.

Pno.

Job

Eliphaz

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

fill his belly with the east wind? What is man, that he can be pure?
Job
I have heard many such things. Mis-er-a-ble com-forts!

Eliphaz
That he can be right-eous?

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

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

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

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

Pno.

whispered (pp) to shouting tone (ff)

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

Pno.

warding!

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

Pno.

whispered intensely suddenly shout

Be hold I know your thoughts and your schemes to wrong me!
With Anger $q=120$

Is it any pleasure to the Almighty

Do min-ion and fear are with

God has made my heart faint!

A - gree with God! Be at peace!

Though evil is sweet in his mouth
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 \( \frac{\text{sffz}}{\text{q}=88} \)

wait for narrator to finish, then begin

With Colossal Force \( \frac{\text{fff}}{\text{q}=40} \)
Who are you that darkens counsel without knowledge?

molto cresc e agitato

molto precipitando
11  Agitato appassionato \( q=60 \)

Timp.
\( \text{Timp.} \)

Agitato appassionato \( q=60 \)

Pno.
\( \text{Pno.} \)

\( \text{ff} \)

\( \text{f} \)

\( \text{L.H.} \)

13  Lyrical, with reverence and awe, legatissimo

 Job
\( \text{Job} \)

Vln.
\( \text{Vln.} \)

Db.
\( \text{Db.} \)

Pno.
\( \text{Pno.} \)

\( \text{mp} \)

\( \text{pp} \)

\( \text{pp} \)

\( \text{pp} \)

\( \text{pp} \)
God: emphatically

Job: Dress for action like a man!

Vln.

Db.

Pno.

God: Make it known to me!

Job: leision e leision

Vln.

Db.

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

Shall a fault finder contend with the
God: Almighty?

Job: e e leison e le i

Vln.

Db.

Pno.

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

34

God

Job

Vln.

Db.

Timp.

Pno.

out your anger!

35

rit.
Meditatively \( \frac{4}{4} = 50 \)

**Job**

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.

---

**Molto meno mosso**

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.

XII: Restoration

Epilogue

Meditatively \( j = 50 \)

Molto Lento \( j = 40 \)
Curriculum Vitae

Name: Kevin Gibson

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