ERNEST BLOCH: ***Creative Spirit***

A PROGRAM SOURCE BOOK

[Originally prepared in 1976 by Suzanne Bloch and Irene Heskes]

NOTE TO THIS 2020 COPIED VERSION: This book was produced in anticipation of the 100th anniversary of Ernest Bloch's birth in Geneva, Switzerland. This book is out of print. As time permits sections of this book will be copied and posted here. Anyone using material gleaned from these pages is requested to include this attribution: "Quoted from Suzanne Bloch's ***Ernest Bloch: Creative Spirit*** -- A Program Source Book as found at www.ErnestBloch.org."

Part Two: Program Notes for Bloch's Compositions, by Suzanne Bloch is over 60 pages in length. If you do not find what you are looking for, let us know. Use the "contact us" feature at www.ernestbloch.org.

[COVER]

Ernest Bloch: Creative Spirit
A PROGRAM SOURCE BOOK
Prepared by Suzanne Bloch, in collaboration with Irene Heskes,
Published by JEWISH MUSIC COUNCIL of the NATIONAL JEWISH WELFARE BOARD

[INSIDE COVER]

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1976
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Published by
JEWISH MUSIC COUNCIL of the NATIONAL JEWISH WELFARE BOARD
15 East 26th Street, New York, N.Y. 10010

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[Photo of EB perusing a musical manuscript]

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"There is no progress in art; all beautiful things belong to the same age." (Oscar Wilde)

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PREFACE

It is my particular pleasure to salute our colleague of the Executive Board of the JWB Jewish Music Council, Suzanne Bloch. A gifted musician, creative intellect and charming personality, Suzanne Bloch has labored with steadfast dedication in the development of this new resource.
I am personally privileged to acknowledge the capable leadership of Irene Heskes, Director of the JWB Jewish Music Council, and to particularly note her devoted collaboration and technical guidance in bringing this significant publication to fruition.

This opportunity is also taken to thank all associated with JWB for extraordinary support and encouragement of the Council and its work.

SHALOM ALTMAN
Chairman of the JWB Jewish Music Council
Summer 1976

[Photocopy in Bloch's handwriting.]

"O America, because you build for mankind, I build for you. (Walt Whitman)
America
an epic Rhapsody in three Parts
for
Orchestra

This Symphony has been written in Love for this Country.
In reverence to its Past
In faith in its Future

It is dedicated
to the Memory of Abraham Lincoln
and
Walt Whitman
whose vision have upheld its inspiration

Title Page: Bloch's Handwriting

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We wish to express our gratitude to all who have enabled us to prepare this *Program Source Book* on Ernest Bloch. Special appreciation first is extended to The Ernest Bloch Society for making available inclusion of so many exceptional materials on Bloch and his music, particularly the Society's annotated catalogue listing of his compositions. Our resource publication may encourage many to join the Society in its significant activities, and therefore we note that membership information may be obtained by writing to:
[address label affixed here]

Ernest Bloch Society
34844 Old Stage Road
Gualala, CA 95445

[covering old printing from original in 1976]

Ernest Bloch Society
Star Route 2
Gualala, CA 95445

For the inclusion of extensive information and of articles, we are please to acknowledge the following: *The London Times*; *Aperture Magazine of Photography*; Summy-Birchard, Publishers; E.P. Dutton Company, Publishers; Yehudi Menuhin; Gary P. Letherer; Eric Johnson; Alex Cohen; Mrs. Isadore (Riva) Freed; and, the estates of: Serge Koussevitzky; Ernest Newman; Olin Downes; Jacob Epstein; and, Carl Engel. Of course, a warm "thank you" is extended to Ivan Bloch and to Lucienne Bloch Dimitroff, who have blessed this project with supportive enthusiasm and much kindness.

Beyond thanks-giving, we are indebted to JWB and its leadership, with helmsmen Daniel Rose and Herbert Millman. The dedication of the JWB organization and its nation-wide constituency of Jewish Community

Centers and YM-YWHAs, to the advancement of the quality of American Jewish life has enabled this publication, as well as many other Jewish Music Council projects, to reach happy fruition.

In addition, our warm appreciation for their encouragement goes to our colleagues, the Executive Board membership of the JWB Jewish Music Council and its Chairman, Shalom Altman. Much thanks also to the following JWB staff: Seymour Warsaw, art director; Maria Cubria, varitypist; Elvita Hook and Rose Bresloff, secretaries; and Jack Rosen, archivist.

This book is dedicated to music-makers and music-lovers everywhere, and to the living memory of Ernest Bloch, who viewed musical composition as an act of faith.

SUZANNE BLOCH
IRENE HESKES
June 1976

[Photo. Self Portrait: Bloch and his children, Geneva, Switzerland, 1911 (left to right: Lucienne, Suzanne, Ivan and EB]

FOREWORD

In 1956 the JWB Jewish Music Council dedicated the festival theme of Jewish Music Month to "The Music of Ernest Bloch." At that time a program manual was compiled with the purpose of guiding the many organizations that planned lectures and concerts dealing with Bloch. I was asked to assist Leah Jaffa who organized the material. Though at first my father had been skeptical about the project, he warmly approved of it when he saw the results. Over the following years, that program manual was a useful source of information to individuals and groups.

After Bloch's death, it became increasingly evident that there were very few practical and up-to-date sources of information on his life and music. Irene Heskes, Director of the JWB Jewish Music Council, broached the subject to me, suggesting that an expanded program manual on Ernest Bloch was very much needed. I agreed wholeheartedly to make a new edition of the old resource book, and thought we would simply add information that had not previously been available. In the process, what was to be a modest brochure grew as we met and planned, while I gathered material. Soon it became imperative that this manual should become the first comprehensive collection of information on Bloch's works including publication sources, a complete discography, and a section of program notes for all the works. I used as much as I could from Bloch's own writings, and also added my own notes. We further decided to augment these materials with articles -- biographical and informative -- thus giving life to this collection.

Being the musician in our family, Bloch's music has been my responsibility since his death. He left sketches well-classified on his shelves, with masses of pedagogical notes stemming from the many courses he gave. The total comprises an immense amount of material, such as several booklets with his counterpoint studies. At the age of forty-eight, he decided he needed to do these again. In the studies is to be found a study of *basso ostinato* in the mixolydian mode whose theme, repeated over and over in different rhythms, is the one he used as a base for his *Avodath Hakodesh*. Included also are detailed analyses of Bach's fugues from the "Well Tempered Clavichord," the pages of studies of Beethoven sketches used for his courses on Beethoven's "Eroica" and other works. All the musical examples were written out by him in the most beautiful penmanship, as if he cherished every note he put down, and all this with much commentary appended.

There are also notes in French outlining the 110 lectures Bloch gave in Geneva between 1911 and 1916. At the time, he was also writing what is generally called his "Jewish Cycle." There are lectures he gave in the United States after he settled here. Thus, besides his compositions, there remains the essence of his deep thinking, and of the constant studies which he continued to the end of his life.

It has also been my task to be currently engaged in writing his biography, and emotional as well as arduous load, for facing the myriads of his letters bring back moments of torment and crisis. Bloch was all of many people, true to his many facets, never reticent, wanting to share all he felt with the ones near him. In such close relationship,

one cannot help being subjective at first, and at times it has been difficult to find the right perspective. Yet, already looking back on the many decades, there stands the consistent strength of Bloch's musical integrity, never swerving from the idealized vision of the art he wished to serve and so dramatically expressed

already in his own teenage letters. There was also a great family feeling, this Hebraic traditon deeply ingrained, creating conflicts with his artistic temperament, conflicts that tore at him at times, but which in the end were resolved with a family unity that would continue after his death in the sense of the heritage received by his children.

An Ernest Bloch Society had originally been founded in England in 1937, with Albert Einstein as Honorary President, and with a roster of such important names as Sir Thomas Beecham, Serge Koussevitzky, Havelock Ellis, Romain Rolland, Ralph Vaughan Williams, Sir Henry Wood and Sir Donal Tovey. For that earlier Society, concerts had been given and articles written, leaving an impact still felt to this day. With the advent of World War II, and its devastation of London, the Bloch Society had to dissolve. In 1967 it was decided, with the encouragement of many musicians, to revive that Society here in this country.

It was my privilege to write the introduction to the first issue (March 1967) of the Bulletin for the newly re-established Ernest Bloch Society:

"During the period from 1937 to the beginning of the War when the Ernest Bloch Society was thriving in England, its eloquent voice often expressed itself through the tireless pens of some of its members. Articles, letters to newspapers, stirring discussions would crop up, creating an awareness of Bloch's unique and rather lonely stand in the musical world.

"Nowadays, this sort of activity is not possible. The pressure of competition, the immense number of concerts, and the lack of newspaper space are the price paid for the modernization and expansion of our artistic world. One must have promotion in order not to be forgotten, or wait patiently for time to bring creative art in its rightful perspective.

"Thus, after a few devoted memorial concerts following Bloch's death in 1959, there came the inevitable lull, with occasional performances of his well-known works. Little by little came the realization that, although most musicians spoke of Bloch with admiration and respect, very few seemed to know or want to know about the music written in the last twenty years of his life when he settled in Oregon and isolated himself from the musical world in order to compose and fulfill what he had set out to do all his life.

"Only recently some of these later works have seen the light. We are grateful to the artists who have brought forth this music, and it is because of them that we feel we must bring Bloch before the public and have him known; not only as the musician but as the scholar, the writer, the teacher and the man. All who had contact with him remember his richness, his uncompromising artistic honesty, and at times, his irritated impatience

with the phony, the calculated, the dry cerebral approach in music which he could not accept. Art to him was always the expression of the highest aspirations of man. He was not, however, an ivory-towered snob. On the contrary, he was an earthy person: simple, often with a sardonic sense of humor.

"A year following his death, I was approached by several young people who, discovering Bloch through recordings, felt something should be done to have more of his music performed and recorded. They wanted to know about this man who was only a legend to them. Having heard about the past Bloch societies, they suggested that this be revived in the United States. At first, I was skeptical, knowing how much labor would be involved in such a plan and not being certain it would have much of a future, and that the tide is bound to turn as it always does. I decided to start by writing to some of Bloch's friends and key-figures in the artistic world.

"The immediate, warm, affectionate response from all encouraged me. It was heartening to receive prompt letters of acceptance from those from whom membership was solicited for the Honorary and Advisory Boards. Many plans were suggested. As ideas poured in, the decision was made to start simply by having Bloch speak for himself through the Bulletin with his letters, articles and notes. We would give something of deep meaning to interested readers. In the same spirit that Bloch gathered and treasured the good thoughts of men, the magnificent statements of great minds throughout history, so we would give out some of his richness. Out of little folders, yellowing notebooks, shoe-boxes full of letters, file-cards with quotations copied in his most careful and beautiful handwriting, we would take out riches to be shared by followers and eventual members of this Society. Of course, we shall also give news, and note musical events where Bloch's work can be heard; we shall ask for communications and for suggestions. We hope the Society can become a focal point for the exchange of ideas and even heated discussions as between friends. The main idea is to make this Society alive and human; thus it will be true to the Bloch creed."

Over the past years, the Bloch Society's annual Bulletin has included "Bloch memorabilia", such as translations of hitherto unknown letters, quotations, articles anecdotes, reviews, news of perfances and recordings. These materials are considered by the former Chief of the Library of Congress' Music Division,

Dr. Harold Spivacke, to be a most valuable biographical contribution and "a real collector's item," adding much information on Ernest Bloch's life and work. I am therefore grateful to the Society for its particular cooperation in my preparation of this publication.
This new and much-augmented version of the JWB Jewish Music Council Ernest Bloch Program Manual will be an excellent addition to the Bloch Society archives; and I hope that it will enhance the understanding of Ernest Bloch and encourage the performance of his music.

Suzanne Bloch
June 1976

[Photocopy in Bloch's handwriting.]

A page from Bloch's Studies of Hebrew in relation to his writing the "Adon Olam" for "Sacred Service"

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NOTE: This section presents general background information and non-technical descriptions of the music. These Program Notes for about 65 works have been arranged in a chronological order so that the material is also in the nature of a biographical and musicological narrative. Any use of these texts must be accompanied properly with quotation marks, notice of Suzanne Bloch's authorship and the full title of this resource publication.

Bust of Ernest Bloch, by Sculptor Jacob Epstein, 1949 . . . End of Part One
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PART ONE

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"Art, real Art, is not governed by arbitrary principles, by fashion, mood -- but its real laws are those of life, of nature, of evaluation; there is not a logic for life and a logic for art -- there is but one logic."

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ERNEST BLOCH -- A BIOGRAPHY

(*This biography was originally prepared by Alex Cohen, and was included in the first (1956) edition of the Bloch Manual. It is a rich source of factual material and of quotations from distinguished critics and musicologists. It provides basic information from which lecturers can cull material for their own talks on Ernest Bloch. The biography has been edited and brought up to date by Suzanne Bloch.*)

The son of a Jewish merchant of Geneva, Bloch was born in that city on the 24th of July, 1880. Neither of his parents was actively musical; yet Bloch's bent towards music showed itself early, and the parental opposition quickly yielded before the boy's determination. At the age of ten he set down a vow that he would become a composer; then, on a mound of stones in the open, he burned the sheet of paper on which it was inscribed. This juvenile dedication was to be typical of the man. Throughout the many vicissitudes of his career, during periods, too, when events forced him to withdraw from "professional" music, the inner fire burned bright and deep. The urge that he called forth, the boyish vow remained as ardent as ever.

At the age of ten he had begun to study the violin, and was already writing pieces for the instrument. At fourteen he was having violin lessons in Geneva from Louis Rey and was studying composition with Jacques Dalcroze. In the following year he wrote an "Oriental" Symphony, (based largely on melodies that he had heard his father hum). In 1896, Marsick the violinist, hearing Bloch play, and reading through a string quartet that he had written, spoke of him with such warmth to his parents that he was sent abroad to study. Just seventeen, he became a pupil at Brussels, of Ysaye and Schorg for the violin, and of Rasse for composition.

At the age of nineteen he went to Frankfurt, there to work with Ivan Knorr who, as Bloch later acknowledged with gratitude, taught him to delve within himself and so to develop his latent personality and become his own teacher. In 1900 he wrote the still unpublished symphonic poem "Vivre-Aimer" the performance of which, at Geneva in 1901, first attracted the attention of the critics to him.

His first big work, the *Symphony in C sharp minor*, dates from his first year in Munich where he studied alone, from 1901 to 1903. Romain Rolland, hearing the Symphony under Bloch himself, wrote to the composer: "I know no work in which a richer, more vigorous, more passionate temperament is revealed. From the first beat to the last this music has a life of its own. It is not a composition coming from the brain without having first been felt. It is wonderful to think that it is a first work."

Leaving Munich, Bloch spent the next year in Paris. (*The Historiettes au Crepuscule* were written during his stay there.) His experience in the French capital, however, soon convinced him of the part that influence and intrigue can play in the establishment of a reputation. Disillusioned and disgusted, he decided to leave the musical profession.

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Returning to Geneva in 1904, he entered his parents' business, and in the year of his return, wrote the well-known *Poems for Orchestra*, "Winter" and "Spring". Such time as Bloch could spare from business during the following three years was spent on his opera *Macbeth*, written to a French libretto adapted from Shakespeare by Edmond Fleg. In 1906, too, the songs *Poems d'Automne* were composed. During 1908 and 1910 Bloch conducted a series of highly successful concerts at Lausanne and Neuchatel, but he resigned the conductorship after a year, partly because the impending production of *Macbeth* and all that this involved, made too great inroads into the time he could spare from the business.

In 1910 *Macbeth* was given at the Opera-Comique, Paris. It was received with enthusiasm and warm appreciation. (It was later given in Naples in 1938 but was suppressed after three performances because of the impending visit of Hitler to Italy.)

During the years 1911 and 1915 Bloch delivered 115 lectures on aesthetics at the Geneva Conservatoire. It is interesting to recall that these were attended by, among others, Basil Chamberlain, brother of Stewart Houston Chamberlain, the renegade Englishman who fomented German Anglophobia bring the first World War and who was mainly responsible for the rise of "Hitlerism" in Germany. This brother expressed his appreciation and thanks to Bloch at the end of the series of lectures. The episode was one of "Fate's little ironies." In 1915, circumstances determined Bloch's withdrawal from his lectureship.

During those harassed and arduous years Bloch had composed the *Psalms*: 114-137-22 (of which Casella said, "Bloch's art is of a grandeur and majesty which sometimes recalls the Moses of Michelangelo"), the three *Jewish Poems*, the King Solomon rhapsody *Schelomo* written for the cellist Barjansky, (which drew from the musicologist and critic Ernest Newman these words: "The man who could write *Schelomo* is both imaginatively and technically in a place by himself in contemporary music"), and the *Israel Symphony*, of which Vaughan Williams upon hearing for the first time remarked that he "greatly admires and would much like to hear it again," and the epic quality of which made writer Guido Pannain say: "Bloch is the prince of modern musicians. His Israel Symphony recalls the twenty-four rhapsodies of the *Iliad*."

In 1916, with business aggravated by the first World War, Bloch found himself in grave financial straits and saddled with heavy responsibilities affecting not only his parents, but by now his wife and three small children. His old friend Alfred Pochon of the Flonzaley Quartet, learning that Maud Allen, the dancer, needed a conductor for an American tour, advised Bloch to take the position. And so, collecting an orchestral library, he set sail in July 1916, surmounting the hundred and one difficulties with which wartime conditions beset this venture.

Towards the end of August, shortly after his arrival in New York, he wrote the finale to the great First String Quartet, the first three movements of which had been composed earlier in the year at Geneva. (Tobias Matthay, music educator and performer, placed this Quartet succinctly as: "The greatest piece of chamber music since the death of Beethoven.") The Maud Allen tour began in October, but even in the New World, Bloch's old luck still dogged him. The tour collapsed after six weeks, and he found himself, a friendless stranger, stranded in New York.

On the last day of the year, however, the Flonzaleys performed the Quartet. It created an immense, and musical New York realized that a new genius was in its midst.

Three months later the conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Karl Muck, invited Bloch to conduct the *Jewish Poems* in Boston. In May 1917, a concert of his works, conducted by Artur Bodansky and the composer himself, was organized by the New York Society of the Friends of Music. The concert was hailed as an important musical event in America. A year later, a similar one with the Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra under Bloch, in conjunction with several subsequent performances of the now famous *Viola Suite* that had won the Coolidge Prize for 1919 (in the orchestral version one of the most magical scores in all music) served to set the seal on the composer's reputation in the United States, and to gain for him the wide recognition that the writer Romain Rolland had foretold.

The years 1917 to 1920 were devoted chiefly to teaching, first at the David Mannes School and then privately. The necessity for a steady income to sustain his family influenced him to accept the invitation in 1920 to found and organize the Cleveland Institute of Music. The holding of that post necessarily curtailed Bloch's creative activities. Nevertheless, between 1920 and 1925 he wrote the two *Violin Sonatas* (the first of which Alan Bush and Edward Sackville-West consider to be the finest of modern violin sonatas, and which critics consider to be one of the most powerful and dramatic works in the whole "violin and piano" repertory). He also composed at that time the *Baal Shem Suite*, the Quartet pieces, the Cello pieces, the Nocturnes for piano trio, the Piano pieces, the popular *Concerto Grosso* (composed for his students' orchestra), and the Piano Quintet. In 1925 Bloch openly expressed disagreement with the policy of the Cleveland Institute, which caused an irreparable rupture with the governors of that institution. During that period, Bloch applied for American citizenship papers and on November 8, 1924 received them.

For the next five years Bloch was Director of the Conservatory of San Francisco. In 1926 he wrote the fascinating Episodes, which won the Carolyn Beebe Prize. His *Symphony America*, a tribute to his adopted country, won for him in 1928 the $3,000 prize offered by the periodical *Musical America*. That

work achieved the astonishing distinction of five practically simultaneous "first performances" in various American cities.

The years 1928-29 saw the completion of the moving souvenir of his native land, the symphonic fresco that he called *Helvetia*.

By 1930, friends in San Francisco had made it possible for Bloch to be financially independent for a few years. This was through the Jacob and Rosa Stern Musical Fund, in return for which Bloch donated to the University of California at Berkeley's Music Library many of his most important manuscripts. By that year, ill and weary of his administrative duties, he returned to Europe and settled for a while in Ticino, Switzerland. In the quiet of his retreat at Roveredo-Capriasca, he wrote that "vast epic" as Florent Schmitt has called it, the *Sacred Service* (*Avodath Hakodesh*), revisiting New York to conduct it in April 1934. Bloch had, in the meantime however, taken part in some thirteen highly successful concerts in Italy, organized mainly through the activity of that indefatigable worker for the cause of Bloch's music, Mary Tibaldi-Chiesa.

From 1934 to December 1938, apart from stay in Paris, Bloch lived a secluded life on the edge of an Alpine village, among the mountains of Haute Savoie and on the border of his beloved Switzerland, his withdrawal interrupted only by occasional visits to various European cities for the purpose of conducting his own works. In 1935 the *Piano Sonata* and *Voice in the Wilderness* were written, and the next two years saw the composition of the orchestral suite *Evocations*. Its first European performance was at Birmingham in England, on March 26th, 1938.

Bloch's great poem, the *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra* was premiered in Cleveland on December 14, 1938 (Dimitri Mitropoulos conducting) by Josef Szigeti, a faithful pioneer in the cause of Bloch's music. He also gave the first English performance with Beecham at a Royal Philharmonic concert on March 9th, 1939; and his was the first French one a few days later with Charles Munch at Paris, where those same artists recorded it within a day or two of that public performance.

In December 1938, a few days after a reception that had been held in his honor in London by the Ernest Bloch Society, the composer set sail, after an almost unbroken absence of eight years.

The second World War affected Bloch very profoundly, plunging him into despair at the sight of the foundering of all his hopes for humanity and completely paralyzing his creative faculty. At that time, he stayed in New York, during which period he conducted two concerts of his own works in Boston, with the Boston Symphony Orchestra on March 20th and 21st, 1939. Following sundry wanderings during those earlier war years, he went West again. In 1941 he settled finally at Agate Beach, a hamlet on the Pacific Coast, in the State of Oregon. From there, he journeyed to Berkeley to deliver two courses of lectures annually at the University of California. As a result of presenting hundreds of lectures, Bloch accumulated an enormous amount of pedagogic materials in his personal library collections.

Bloch's *Suite Symphonique* (with its notable Passacaglia) was introduced by Pierre Monteux at San Francisco, and his *Second String Quartet* was premiered by the Griller Quartet in London on October 9, 1946. Ernest Newman described that Quartet as the "finest work of our time in this genre, on that is worthy to rank beside the quartets of Beethoven. Its musical thinking is unique in modern chamber music for its alternation of subtle contemplative beauty and torrential power." In 1947, Bloch completed his *Concerto Symphonique* for Orchestra and Piano, a work of great dimensions. In mid-November of that year, the Juilliard School of Music in conjunction with the League of Composers gave a Bloch Festival consisting of three concerts performed at the school by its students with distinguished faculty members and guest artists.

In 1949 Bloch conducted his works in Portland (Oregon), Milan, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Geneva and London; and, he recorded his *Sacred Service* and *Schelomo*. He also was the piano accompanist for his Cello pieces *From Jewish Life*, performed with Zara Nelsova, cellist.

His seventieth birthday was celebrated in Chicago in December 1950 with a week-long "festival" sponsored by the Ernest Bloch Society branch of that city. This had been initiated by Samuel Laderman (uncle of the distinguished composer, Ezra Laderman), who was co-chairman of these events, to whom Bloch dedicated his *Suite Hebraique*.

In 1951, Bloch presented his last course at the University of California at Berkeley. He was made Professor Emeritus of Music in 1952. Now he was able to devote his full time to composition and he produce[d] a large number of works, though his health was failing. In that single year he completed his *Sinfonia Breve* (dedicated to the memory of his good friend, Serge Koussevitzky), his *Concerto Grosso*

No. 2, and his *String Quartet No. 3*. These last two works received the New York Music Critics Circle Award for 1954.

In 1953, three performances of *Macbeth* at the Teatro Dell' Opera at Rome, and four at the Theatre Comunale Giuseppe Verdi of Trieste were enthusiastically received. It was most fitting that a country which had banned Bloch's music in 1939 should be the first in Europe to revive it after the War. For this occasion, Bloch made his last visit to Europe. At the end of that year, after his return to America, he wrote his *Fourth String Quartet*.

The remaining years at Agate Beach continued to be prolific. 1954 saw the completion of his *Symphony for Trombone* and the start of his *Symphony in E Flat*, which he completed in 1955 when he also wrote his *Proclamation for Trumpet and Orchestra*. In 1956, he wrote his *Fifth* (and last) *String Quartet*, three *Suites for Unaccompanied Cello*, and the *Suite Modale for Flute and Piano* which was later orchestrated for strings.

Many of these works, "eclipsed" by some of his more famed Jewish Cycle works, are now coming into their own. Bloch used to say that for some of his music, it took 35 or more years to be accepted. Thee is a strange status to his music. In his early years, he was considered too "dissonant"; later in the thirties, he was "not modern enough." His *Sacred Service* was for some "not Jewish enough." In other works, where he had no intention to stress Hebraic qualities, some found "Jewish themes." For example, in his *Violin Concerto* some themes had been influenced by Southwest Indian music. Time and perspective will answer all these questions. Bloch wrote what he had to write regardless of opinions, and never deviated from his own direction. His advice to students was: "Il faut suivre sa Ligne." ("One must follow one's line.")

The National Jewish Welfare Board's Frank L. Weil Award was given to Bloch in 1956. Unable to receive it personally for reasons of health, it was accepted in his name at the testimonial dinner in New York by his daughter, Suzanne.

In 1957 he completed his *Second Piano Quintet*. The following year he was gravely ill and told he would have to face major surgery if certain medical treatments alone would not alleviate his condition. At the time, he had been working on another flute work with full orchestra which he had at first entitled *Funeral Music*, though at the time he was not aware of the serious nature of his ailments. Bloch finished the composition that year (1958), but changed its title to *Two Last Poems*, adding (maybe . . .). He had made up his mind that he would still be able to write more music in spite of the diagnosis, having always been skeptical of medical prognoses. He was justified, for he wrote two *Suites for Unaccompanied Violin* which he dedicated to Yehudi Menuhin, (one of his last friends to come to see him at Agate Beach) who had commissioned such a Suite. Bloch was almost finishing another unaccompanied Suite (for Viola) when that Autumn, he had to submit to surgery. During Bloch's convalescence, the Fine Arts Commission of the City of Portland, Oregon, gave him a special award. While there, he also had the joy to again see Josef Szigeti who was then on tour, to whom he had dedicated is *Violin Concerto*.

Bloch returned to Agate Beach but did not write music again. On July 15, 1959, he died at the Good Samaritan Hospital in Portland.

The impact of his prodigious intellect, wide knowledge of subjects other than music, his vitality and enthusiasm for Nature and Art, sometimes overwhelming, left an indelible impression on all who knew him. The composers: Roger Sessions, George Antheil, Theodore Chanler, Herbert Elwell and Howard Hanson were among his students.

Bloch received numerous honorary awards during his lifetime: honorary membership at the Academia Santa Cecilia of Rome in 1929; first recipient of Gold Medal in Music . . . American Academy of Arts and Letters, 1942 and membership in 1943; honorary degree of Doctor of Hebrew Letters, Hebrew Union College- Jewish Institute of Religion, 1943; Henry Hadley Medal, 1957; Doctor of Humane Letters, Linfield College in Oregon, 1948. Posthumously, Bloch was awarded the Brandeis Creative Arts Award in 1959.

On December 5, 1967, Bloch's violin made by the 18th Century luthier, Lorenzo Guadanini, was officially presented to the America-Israel Cultural Foundation at a commemorative concert where some of Bloch's violin music was performed. In accordance with arrangements made by the composer's three children: Ivan Bloch, Suzanne Bloch and Lucienne Bloch Dimitroff, the instrument was loaned to a gifted scholarship artist chosen by Isaac Stern, and has since been passed on to other deserving artists.

The first recipient was the young musician Yuval Waldman, who performed at that concert in 1967. Since then, the Russian-born artist Dora Schwartzberg (now a citizen of Israel) has toured Europe with the Bloch violin. Much to their satisfaction, the Bloch heirs know that their father's instrument will be

"kept alive" in this most ideal way, assisting the talented and thereby spreading in the world man's best universal language.

CORRESPONDENCE: An Exchange Between Bloch and Koussevitzky on Schelomo

Boston, Mass.
February 20th 1930

Ernest Bloch
San Francisco, California
Mr. Koussevitzky intends to play *Schelomo* in New York, solo part to be played by four cellos. Please wire your opinion if you approve or disapprove of it at once. With best wishes, sincerely

Boaz Piller

* * * * *

San Francisco, Calif.
February 21st 1930

Boaz Piller
Symphony Hall
Boston, Massachusetts
The cello part in *Schelomo* personifies the one voice of the king. It is senseless to give this part to four cellos as to play Hamlet with four actors talking at the same time.

Ernest Bloch

* * * * *

Boston, Mass.
February 22nd 1930

Ernest Bloch
San Francisco, California
Request your permission to have an experience of Schelomo with four cellists tried in rehearsal. Results are remarkable. The greatest cellist could never obtain the same effect for the sonority of four cellos give a powerful and imposing impression of King Solomon's voice. Greetings. Answer collect.

Serge Koussevitzky

* * * * *

San Franciso, Calif.
February 24th 1930

Serge Koussevitzky
Symphony Hall
Boston, Massachusetts
Replying to your telegram of February 22nd, if it pleases you, use your own discretion. Cordial greetings.

Ernest Bloch

* * * * *

March 15, 1930
Ernest Bloch
San Francisco, California

Cher Ami:

My work is absorbing me to such a point that in spite of my efforts to write you I have been unable to do so. But the desire to communicate to you my impressions is so strong that somehow I am finding the means to send you these few lines.
Allow me to thank you for having consented to an execution of *Schelomo* with four violin-cello. After all this, I have abandoned this intention and here is why: The rehearsals with the four cello without the orchestra gave the happiest result; but from the first rehearsal with orchestra, I understood at once how right you were! "En effect", the distinct voice, arising from the depth of the orchestra, the voice of *Schelomo*, disappeared, melted, lost itself in the ensemble of the orchestra; it was no longer a solo, but simply an orchestral work. And even more, what is strange, the sonority of the four instruments seemed no stronger than that of the sonority of a single cello. I have been asked by orchestra soloist, Mr. Bedetti, who is a cellist of first class, to play the solo part. I have the pleasure to let you know that we have performed Schelomo four times during our last tour and each time with the greatest of success.
I cannot tell you enough what a profound joy I have always in playing your works. No other contemporary composer makes my soul vibrate, stir to its greatest depth all of my being, as you have the power to do

through your compositions. I would like to see you, talk often with you when I shall be free from my occupations this summer.
While waiting, dear friend, I send you my best and affectionate thoughts.

Your Serge Koussevitzky

Serge Koussevitzky (1874-1951)

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MY SACRED SERVICE: Ernest Bloch

(Transcript of a lecture presented at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music on September 16, 1933)

Ladies and Gentlemen -- Dear Friends:

I am afraid this lecture is going to be very long, for in order to present my work properly, I should be a good singer, a pianist (which I am not), have an orchestra, a cantor, four voices of the chorus, all at the same time -- together with the Hebrew text, which you can see makes it difficult.

In about one and a half hours I must try to explain my conception of this service, which has taken three years of hard work, a whole lifetime of experience, thought, living, human sufferings, contacts with men, and the suffering all around the world which I have absorbed.

My whole work is made up of this contact with the world and its people. Had I been born on a desert island I could not have written it. It contains life with its joys, sufferings around me and within me, the plants, rocks, clouds, the birds, the animals; all of Nature have contributed to it. I have been only the humble worker, trying to do his best.

This work of mine is dear to me because it has caused me so much trouble. I shall give my conception of it to you, for as the mentality of people differ, their interpretation of it will be different. Take the word "music" for instance. It may mean merely radio, or phonograph record, the operas of Wagner, or modern music. The difference of race, people and education give a different conception.

This work has been composed from the text of the Prayer Book of the Reform Synagogue of America, and while it is named the *Sacred Service*, or *Sabbath Morning Service*, it embraces the whole of humanity, rather than a creed or sect.
I have made a few slight modification[s] from the prayer text, put in certain parts that were not usually sung and ended with an English text. The work is written for baritone -- cantor, mixed chorus, four voices SATB (eight singers can do it), a piano part, or organ.

I knew from the text there was a great message to be given to the world. I did not write that only first-class artists could interpret it; but, that any modest musicians, providing they could sing the notes and felt the text could carry the message. For my own pleasure I wrote it for full orchestra and chorus. For its first presentation, I would prefer a first-class orchestra, chorus, baritone, and I conducting, for the message of it I have lived and wish to deliver.

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This work instead of being made up of fragments is written in five parts, which have to be played without interruption, as a unity. The text as a liturgy is very beautiful. It is a whole drama in itself, and like the mass of the Catholics it must go on without interruption. It requires fifty minutes and will be used to end the Service for the Reform Synagogue. For fifty minutes I hope it will bring to the souls, minds and hearts of the people, a little more confidence, make them a little more kind and indulgent than they were and bring them peace. I have not written to astonish the world with a spectacular achievement. I have a message to deliver -- that is all.

When I was approached to write from the text, I was given the Union Prayer Book; but, I could not write this work before knowing exactly the meaning, significance, depth of each word in the Hebrew language. I made my Hebrew "communion" when I was 13; but, I was not educated religiously and my life was lived among the Gentiles. Just as a plant has to go to its roots for nourishment, I, too had to go back to my own soil for growth. I did not know the language, and I could not put sounds in music without knowing the meaning of the words, so I was compelled to learn Hebrew.

Providence acted here, as I was to learn the Hebrew language from Cantor Reuben Rinder, who suddenly met with an accident and so I was forced to learn it by myself. Just as a lady who goes to a doctor

and pays a high price for a prescription which in itself does not cure her, as she must do that job herself, so I, too, had to learn the Hebrew grammar and with what patience.

I had kept for many years a little Hebrew dictionary, from which I had to learn the letters and sometimes it took an infinite time for every word. Instead of merely translating, I had to go to the roots and imagine my feeling when I found the word *olom*, for instance, meaning the universe, space, eternity of time. When you are in the business of "moving and expressing," have imagination and go deeply into things, and find something enormous, it makes you actually suffer.

From my early youth I have asked questions of my mother, "Who is God?" "Where is God?" "Has God a shape?" To which she answered, "Yes, but God has no shape, no form. We cannot see Him just as we do not see air." She told me He was in everything, everywhere, in the stars, in the trees, within me and I would dream and wonder. You can imagine how I got along with my comrades in school!

When I received this text, it was the thing I had been waiting for my whole life, with my own ideas, conceptions and beliefs. Yet, even in its pure simplicity, the problem was hard, the thing was so clear and yet so remote and mysterious. Its deep, cosmic significance came to me.

My conception of God and religion has been put into this work. I am not a religious man, outside at least. I have been in all kinds of churches, and been moved and bored in them. I have been deeply impressed with the little synagogue of Lengnau in Switzerland. My father told me that the old people and poor would come at four or five o'clock in the

morning, praying for help and guidance to bear their poverty and misfortune. My father always said that we cannot take religion from the people, as they need to hold to something.

My religion is a living religion. Oppressing humanity is not a living religion. I have prayed without words -- it is something organic. I have trusted my heart and soul to an Unknown Mind. I am too small to know whether there is life after death. "Wisdom is not the meditation of death, but of life." (Spinoza)

I grow humble when I look into words. Take the word "God" when it comes in the text. God is so immense that one cannot define it. In this Jewish Service, it takes shape according to a certain Liturgy and my conception of the word "God" that had no form and shape, must take on a certain form, in spite of the limitation of my own soul and within the limitation of they Liturgy.

The whole Service is a kind of history of all of mankind, of the family life and the cosmic. In the Reform Synagogue Service there are certain fragments, like "Lift up your head," and I was puzzled and distressed when I tried to interpret the meaning.

The first part is a Meditation, a simple Prelude, principally musical, written in tonality, and for unity I used the old modes, as musically I had to make the work compact. Music enters first the external ear, then the inner ear, the heart and finally the mind of should. The motive is very simple.

After the Meditation, the Cantor and chorus come. With my own limitation I can now only give you a general idea of the work; but, if you can feel a little of the spirit in which it was written I will be satisfied.

The whole text is Hebrew, translated into Italian and English. I have been asked by four different organizations to conduct it in Europe, among them the Catholic, which is very gratifying, as it is a message not alone given to the Jews, but to humanity in general.

It contains the old Jewish message of faith and hope in life. It is a human thing. When I used the word "Israel," I thought of it in a symbolic way. I wrote from my heart, with my roots in Jewish soil, for the whole outside world. The entrance of this Jewish element is dramatic.

You must first imagine a Temple of Service, with good in everything that is made, and beautiful. Then comes a motif, a cosmic thing, with the force of the Universe. Then comes the Proclamation of Faith. Then a more human thing, a chorus of exaltation, then the misery of humanity, thus forming the exposition.

The second part is like the Sanctus of the Catholic Church which was originally taken from the Hebrew.

The third part is liturgic, woven around the Torah and the Laws of Moses, with its organization, discipline, symbolism. When I read, "Lift up your heads, oh he gates and be ye

lifted up you everlasting doors and the King of Glory shall come in." I could not understand what this was about. It mystified, puzzled and worried me. I was in the Switzerland mountains at the time, the day was foggy, the fir trees drooped, the landscape was covered with sadness, I could not see the light. Suddenly a wind came up, the clouds in the sky parted and the sun was over everything. I had understood. I felt God was within me at that time in living up the clouds. They were simply doors painted with the varnish of communism, technocracy, the cults, sects, fetishisms of today, which we cannot understand, all our ideas in a Babel. We were in a fog, we could not see the Truth, nor understand God and Life. But, when the clouds lift from out of our mind and life, and our hearts become as a little child, then the Truth will come in as a King of Glory.

I did not imagine a God with a beard and crown; but a God of Force, Truth and Good for the happiness of humanity, speaking of Him in a fine, human way. Like a physician trying to understand the law and the truth of the body, curing so many people and yet in all humility saying: "I never cured anyone," I too grow humble before Life. Here again you must understand the accepted discipline of life, the man who will deprive himself that others might benefit.
The third part of the Service then ends with the *Exaltation*.

The fourth part says: "Then put the Law away in the Ark now that you have understood it. It must be a Living Thing, the rejoicing, happiness, the exaltation of all mankind, ending with the Tree of Life and that all those who are supporters of it are happy."

The fifth part is that man has to accept the Law as unlimited. There is a *Adoration*, a short Epilogue, the Cantor or Rabbi talks to you, giving a personal message, in English, Italian, Hebrew, in all languages. My difficulty here was not to regulate the rhythm, to combine the talking and singing, bringing the whole philosophical message of humanity, brotherhood, and lamentations of mankind, asking what this is all about. Then in the distance, outside of space, time, everything, you hear the chorus, as a solution of the laws of the universe and eternity, the smallness of this space, of life and death, and in what spirit you are to accept it. The work ends with a *Benediction*.

As I plan and sing each part now, I will again give a sort of description. *Meditation*, the first part gives motifs from which the whole thing is written, very simply. It comes in many forms. Different harmonization and then against a cosmic motif, chorus, Cantor, the chorus takes it again. It comes in a liturgical manner and again with a cosmic meaning, mysteriously. Then there is the unity of nature, the city of man, a beautiful human element, through it all you will feel the cosmic element. It is chanted in a family life. Here one feels God Himself knows how beautiful life can be made with joy inside, not through external possessions.

From the precept comes the emotional part, against the secular life, symbols of laws, of organization, which change according to the sense of the words. Then the symbol of the Rock, "my helper, shelter," is symbolic of the whole misunderstanding of the world, the lamentation of the rich because they are poor and the poor because they are: all asking for the help of God, thus, the *Amen* ending the first part.

In the second part we are in another world, more earthly. This is the *Sanctification*, a dialogue between God and Man, the chorus discovering the law of the atom, the stars, the whole universe, the One. He. Our God. Then the crowd on earth taking up the chorus, our King, our Lord, our Liberation, then the Exaltation and Hallelujah. This is a shorter part, more compact and very different.

In the third part, Man has to put himself into a state of mind of humility and within his limitation accept the order of the whole. First, there is a *Silent Meditation* which comes in before you take your soul out and look at what it contains. Then a chorus, orchestra, the Cantor-priest with the symbols of head and door; then the chorus, "Who is this King of Glory?" and the answer, "He is the King;" then the symphonic music.

After the House of Jacob is a chorus of the people, "Let us walk in the Light of the Lord." The Cantor-priest says then that Humanity is One, we are a simple children; then the exaltation, which the chorus repeats. Then the unity of mankind, the immensity of everything, the greatness of the world, everything in Heaven and earth, nothing omitted. Then follows a motif in the lydian mode, taken from the counterpoint which I studied at the Conservatory five years ago.

The fourth part -- calling upon the people to praise the Lord, in the style of the French. After the *Allelujah*, the cantor-priest sings, "The Law of the Lord is perfect, the text of the Lord is truthful, the Precepts of the Lord are enduring." Then the fear of the Lord enters in the softest way, like a little wind, not

as a mighty earthquake. "Thus a good Doctrine was given to you, do not forsake the precepts, the Tree of Life, the Supporter of health, for those who follow this pathway are sure of happiness."

The last part is like an Epilogue. Here is the whole realization of humanity, the love of God, when all men will recognize that they are brothers, a fellowship in spirit and united, and on that day the world shall be one. Then there is a terrible crash, as if suddenly poor, fleshy man thinks of himself, his fears -- death.

I was moved by the text. When I wrote this part I was in terrible distress, hopeless, something within myself was breaking my life and heart. Then appeared a philosophy of the whole of life and death, that in the fullness of time we shall know why we are brought sorrow as well as happiness, to wait patiently and be of good courage, then surely our souls would be satisfied. Not to question, but to have faith and not judge people's actions.

Then in the enormous silence, outside of space, comes an impersonal Voice, with the Law of Eternity, that everything was and will be; that He Is, He Shall Be, without beginning, without end. "He is my God, my Living Liberator." Then the motif of the third part when the man is purified of heart.

When I saw the last small violet in the field, dead, after giving everything it could, I, too, thought I was never going to finish the work. The last twenty-five measures took me two years to write. I wanted something lyrical, a joy for the people. Two years of groping

in the darkness it took to deliver the message to the people, the conquering of death, life, suffering with the highest sense and in the highest proportion. "Judge not that ye be not judged." If I were a judge and had to condemn a man, I would ask his forgiveness for condemning him, as the social law so commanded me to condemn him.

Then after the orchestra and chorus give this message of faith, hope and courage, we must send people back to their routine of living, cooking, laundry and so on. Thus, the Cantor-priest gives a *Benediction*, the chorus answers, "*Amen*," and they leave.

TWO REVIEW ARTICLES ON ERNEST BLOCH

-- by Ernest Newman

I. BLOCH'S SACRED SERVICE -- London Sunday Times, April 3, 1938

The SACRED SERVICE was written between 1930 and 1933; it dates, therefore, from that period of his brooding upon the sorry condition of the world that gave birth also to the *Piano Sonata* (1935).

The composer has told us that while it relates primarily to the Jewish Sabbath Morning Service it is meant to be of universal appeal. It has to be listened to with minds from which all association with Christian structures such as the Mass have been temporarily banished. The Catholic Mass is a skillful piece of dramatic construction, providing liberal contrasts and telling climaxes. There is nothing dramatic about the Sacred Service; this is mainly contemplative and philosophical, though of course there are highlights as well as low. For Jewish listeners the work no doubt has a communal significance at many points; but for the rest of us its interest resides mainly in the intensity of the composer's personal expression.

There are several leading motives, the one most frequently used being the short mixolydian phrase (the scale of G to G with F natural) with which the *Service* opens; the simplicity of this allows of it being adapted to all kinds of purposes, harmonic, contrapuntal and rhythmic. The specifically Jewish elements in the music are comparatively rare: we meet with an occasional Oriental melisma or a harmonic complex with other fundamental associations that those of the usual modern European scale, but nowhere do these "exoticisms" clash with the general "Western" texture of the music. Manifestly, however, even when working along apparently traditional lines, the imagination at the back of it all is specifically Blochian; the choral writing in particular has a stamp of its own.

Universal as I believe the appeal of the work to be, it is of course Jewish at heart: Bloch may mourn the sufferings that the modern world has brought on itself by its blindness and its cruelty, but he obviously suffers in the first place as a Jew. His aspiration for a better world in which hatred and division shall have made way for human brotherhood is universal in its scope, but even for the non-Jewish listener what gives the music its peculiarly moving quality is the cry throughout it all of a sorely persecuted race.

The most tragic feature of the Service for me, is the evident inner clash between Bloch's mind and his heart. There are many occasions on which the words say one thing and the music, it seems to me, another, as if doubt and despair were always weighing down the wings of hope. Take, by the way of illustration, the unison choral cry, in the first section of "Hearken, O Israel; the Lord our God in One," a cry that is repeated in the third section,

and again near the end of the work. Is it in accents such as these that a community expresses its sure conviction? In each case the phrase terminates in a wild orchestral dissonance: in the second instance the dissonances culminate in a heart-rending orchestral cry. (The marking is *doloroso*.)

The same procedure occurs after the words "The Lord shall reign to all eternity;" not only do G's and F sharps tug against each other in the voices, but as soon as these have ceased, the full orchestra gives out a tearing minor ninth as a prelude to a short interlude that is agonized from start to finish. As I have said, it is as if the composer, in his heart of hearts, had little belief in his own words of faith and hope. I know no other religious music that presents us with an intellectual and emotional dilemma of this strange kind.

II. BLOCH'S MELODIC FREEDOM -- The London Times, December 28, 1941

Some Jewish writers deny that Bloch is in the proper sense of the term a "Jewish composer," because his art is not rooted in the traditional music of his race. "He does not turn to real Oriental or Jewish music for themes," says Alfred Einstein, "but tries to construct the character and the spirit of his race out of himself;" while Idelsohn insists that Bloch is "the refutation of the . . . unthinkingly accepted present-day opinion that the musician, unconscious and ignorant though he be of his people's music and folklore (as, we are given to understand, Bloch is), yet instinctively manifests these racial expressions . . . Not through composers without Jewish background, and without being imbued with their people's folk-song, has Jewish music left any unique impression upon general art-music." This is a domestic matter which it must be left to Jews to decide in their own way, though to me the thesis seems to deny, by implication, that Debussy's music can "leave any impression upon general art-music" because it is not "imbued" with French folk-song.

But whether gentiles are right or wrong in imagining that Bloch's music speaks the pure authentic language of Jewry does not matter in the least. What really matters to us is that Bloch re-endows music with certain resources which it had gradually lost. One of these is the melodic freedom which began to disappear from European music when, during the early Middle Ages, the Northern mentality, with its bent towards the more obvious modes of music symmetry, began to oust the Oriental bent towards arabesque. The long struggle ended with the complete victory of rhythmical or "measured" over "non-measured" song -- of the simplest verse-music, as it were, over prose-music -- and the universal acceptance of the two- or four-bar phrase as the only norm for melody. In *Schelomo* in particular Bloch recaptures the rhythmic freedom of other lands and other times: the melodies run their course untrammeled by considerations of regularly recurring stresses, and launch out into all kinds of luxuriant foliations of a type the secret of which music once possessed but has long lost.

It is significant, however, that it is only in connection with a solo instrument that Bloch can allow himself this joyous freedom; and his prudence is in accordance with the unwritten law of musical history that bars composers from innovating fruitfully in more than

one department -- melody, harmony, or rhythm -- at a time. In the same way it is only in the solo cor anglais that Sibelius dares venture upon the wayward melisma of portions of his "Swan of Tuonela," where some of the melodic turns bear a curious atavistic resemblance, by the way, to certain plainsong formulae -- yet another illustration of how extremes sometimes meet. Neither Bloch's nor Sibelius's harmony, in passages of this kind, arrogates to itself the license permitted to the melody: these flights into the melismatic are at present possible only if contact with a more or less standardized base is always maintained. But some day, no doubt, a further step will be taken in the direction of emancipation. Instead of the melisma being restricted as now, to a solo instrument, which can allow itself to divagate aloft only because it is securely fixed below, the whole orchestra will more or less partake in it. This, of course, will lead insensibly to the conquest of a whole new world of harmony and of rhythm; and when the process of evolution is complete humanity will at last see something truly deserving the name of music: for the art, old as it seems, is still hardly out of its infancy. Going by the time it has taken a fundamental change in the European musical mentality to establish itself in the past, I estimate the period necessary for this development at some ten generations; however ardently, therefore, we may long for the Promised Land, few of us, alas, are likely to enter it.

Ernest Newman (1868-1959)

ON ERNEST BLOCH

(Excerpt from the Postscript of Jacob Epstein's Autobiography Published by EP. Dutton Company in 1955)

About this time (1951) I was invited to a party of welcome to the famous composer Ernest Bloch. I seldom accept invitations to parties but I had admired the musical genius of Bloch for some time and was interested to meet the composer in person. A large gathering had assembled to do him honor, but time passed and the principal guest did not materialize. At last, when we had become thoroughly impatient and I was leaving the hall, it was announced that Bloch had appeared earlier on, but after a few minutes he had hurried off to a rehearsal of his *Sacred Service* leaving the party to fend for itself. However when he heard that I had been there to meet him, he came to my studio unannounced one Sunday morning as I was leaving for the country.

Cancelling my plans I at once put him on the stand and started his portrait. I am told that the whole house resounded with the ensuing conversation, carried on in a resonant mixture of several tongues. Nevertheless the portrait developed rapidly, assisted by Bloch's complete lack of self-consciousness and what might truly be called a dynamic personality. His conversation was a series of eruptions alternating between despair at his "chequered career" and wild hilarity.

He invited us to hear him conduct a rehearsal of his music for a recording. This was a fascinating experience, and later we sat with him listening to the finished record. He was pale and unusually quiet and sat with a smile of complete satisfaction. AT the end all he said was: "That is good, that is very good." I couldn't help thinking of Schubert, amongst other unsuccessful composers, who in his lifetime never succeeded in getting a hearing for his great C Major Symphony. No wonder Bloch smiled to be able to put on record his own exact version of a major work. I greatly enjoyed these somewhat stormy sessions with Ernest Bloch and greet him from these pages.

Jacob Epstein (1880-1959)

A GREAT COMPOSER AT 75

■ by Olin Downes ■

(This article appeared in the first Bloch Manual of 1956. It had been reprinted from the New York Times edition of Sunday, July 24, 1955. The noted music critic, Olin Downes, passed away on August 22, 1955.)

From Ernest Bloch, born in Geneva, Switzerland, July 24, 1880, and celebrating today, in his seaside home in Oregon, his seventy-fifth birthday, comes a letter in response to an inquiry about his latest compositions. We take the liberty of quoting certain of its paragraphs, which supply information of an impressive number of scores that he has recently completed or is now at work upon, and also opinions highly characteristic of the artist and the man, which we recommend to the thoughtful consideration of all who practice composition or are otherwise interested in the art of musical creation.

As for the compositions: "*After the String Quartet No. 4 (July -- November, 1953) I completed a Symphony for Trombone Solo and Orchestra (November, 1953 -- June, 1954). Broude Brothers are publishing it and I hear that (Leopold) Stokowski plans the premiere with that excellent artist David Schuman, to whom it is dedicated. Then, I completed a Symphony in E-flat (June, 1954 -- March, 1955). Then I completed a short 'Proclamation' for Trumpet Solo and Orchestra (in Broude Brothers' hands) and I am now struggling with a chamber work. . . . So, you see, I am not lazy.*"

As for his estimates of contemporary music, Mr. Bloch is distrustful of his impressions gained from his present isolated position far from music centers and performances of new works. "*As you know, since many years I live outside of everything and, especially, of what one calls the 'musical life.' Radio reception is practically impossible here . . . How could I fairly judge what is going on in the musical world? I receive only 'echoes' of what is going on and, after my experience, it does not make me very optimistic. But I could not, of course, express a decent view. Much music, many works, a lot of 'tapage,' innumerable geniuses, indeed . . but how much real, necessary, music is all that?*"

He does not take the shibboleths, the "isms" that so quickly become the "wasms" of this group or that group of composers very seriously. "*As you know,*" he writes, "*I have never subscribed to any theories. . . . I have seen so many of them prevail and disappear during my long life! In my early youth, Wagner was still discussed. He was 'bruyant,' had no melody, etc. Then he was canonized; as a climax tons of books were written; he was the 'solution,' the coronation of all efforts before him! Then, about 1903-4 . . . in Paris, reaction, as usual! -- The Debussy clique dismissed him! (He was too great for them!) -- At that time, also, the Frankists and their panaceas which passed also!*

"And so on. . . . I had witnessed that, since my adolescence . . . Frankfurt on the Main, only Brahms! No Berlioz, no Liszt, no Wagner! Then, in Munich (1901-03), no Brahms! but instead, Liszt, Wagner, Berlioz, and -- to replace Brahms -- Bruckner!

"Already then I lived outside of all these 'currents,' alone, a fossil, admiring, without regard to labels, cliques, or fads, or 'groups,' adore MUSIC, when a man has something to say, and says it in his own proper way. . . .

"I had always to pay for not belonging to a group. But I never changed. And so I can enjoy very different styles and conceptions when a Master was able to convey his message: Orlando di Lasso, Josquin, Palestrina, Claude Le June -- the Gregorian chant, naturally -- Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven -- Bach, Wagner Debussy and many works of Stravinsky.

"Nowadays, more systems, theories, cure-alls, than ever! How much impotence they are hiding. Each one has his 'marotte' (bauble) and writes about it. Is it not strange that neither Bach nor Beethoven nor Wagner, who wrote so profoundly about all subjects, ever discussed their own ways of creating their works?

"Wagner -- race, vegetarianism, the work of art of the future, etc., etc., but not a word about his own 'musical system'! As Pierre Lalo, in his admirable book, 'Wagner ou le Nibelung,' says, the little man disappeared in his cave and . . . returned with a finished score! And the true principle of music, undefined, Protean -- formed in history (these manifestations), dissimilar in appearance, but all of them psyche-physiological, probably are embodied in these masterpieces -- in a Gregorian chant as well as in the motets in the manner of the vocal poly-phony period, in a Bach fugue, in a Mozart or Beethoven quartet or symphony, in the Preludes of 'Tristan' (I and III acts) or "Parsifal,' in 'L'Apres-midi D'un Faune' or 'Nocturnes,' in many modern works.

"'The measure of Man is Man,' said Confucius, 500 B.C.E. And the principles of receptivity, in fact, have not changed, (of 'perceptibility,' as says Schoenberg.) . . . And this is a complex problem, somewhat puzzling, according to time, races and individual capacities. I have spent my life, in my teaching, my considerable pedagogical work, trying to discover, analyze, classify these essential principles, which rule the musical language -- no theories, but the works themselves. . . .

"So I have no theories, no system -- I always made my music as I felt I had to -- tonal, atonal, polytonal, chromatic -- each work has its own style . . . but I learned all this from the classics. Compare the Quartet in F major (opus 59) and F minor (opus 95), both . . . in sonata form! Or each fugue of the 'Well-Tempered Clavier.' All different in scope, in shape, in mood!"

Mr Bloch looks back upon the evolution of his style. "*It is true,*" he says, "*that works written 50 years ago and recent works of mine are different. But not quite consciously. At 75, the psyche-physiology of a human being is different from that of a man of 25. (Alas!) My present works probably less subjective than those I wrote around 1912-16*

(Quartet No. 1, my greatest, I feel). They, are, perhaps, now more impersonal, more objective, perhaps. After all -- it all originates from the same individual -- a continuation . . . (and I hope not a deterioration! But I am not so sure . . .)."

It is worthy of remark that America has heard and has stimulated in various ways all of Bloch's most representative music, if we except his opera *Macbeth*, which first drew Romain Rolland's attention to his genius at the Paris premiere of that work in 1910. From about the period of his first incontestable masterpiece, *Schelomo*, until today, Bloch has lived and created in this, the country of his adoption, and in a large variety of forms, styles, moods; but always as a composer whose music is inspired by the stuff of life, whatever the specific form that it takes under the pressure of his inspiration.

Bloch spoke once, on the occasion of a performance of his *Helvetia* symphony, of this principle of art, and his words were golden.

"Art, for me, is an expression, an experience of life, and not a puzzle game . . . or icy demonstration of imposed mathematical principles . . . or dissection in a laboratory . . . I would add, that in not one of my works have I tried to be 'original' or 'modern' . . . Theories like 'novelty,' pass so quickly . . . And what remains? In revenge, my sole desire and single effort has been to remain faithful to my Vision, to be True."

It is a statement eminently appropriate to the seventy-fifth birthday of one of the few great creative musicians of our era.

Olin Downes (1886-1955)

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ERNEST BLOCH AS TEACHER

■ by Isadore Freed ■

In an obituary of Ernest Bloch, published in the *New York Times*, there was the following: "Bloch, one of the most important composers of the present century, neither founded a school nor had active disciples. His music was too original to be imitated. He never foisted his own theories upon his pupils, being content to analyze great masters like Bach and Beethoven." I must take issue with that statement.

Regarding the matter of originality, Bloch always held that there was no such thing as originality in art -- only personality, the special speech of a given artist. In fact, he said: "We all use the same words, yet how differently we speak." Bloch had few successful imitators because while he was content to use the musical language as he found it, he gave it his personal Blochian coloration. It is this inner personal quality which cannot be imitated, rather than his outward technique.

Bloch believed that true creativity is so personal that its secret lies locked in the breast of its possessor. But he went beyond this idea and asked the question: "If composing is so highly individualized a process, how then does one learn to compose at all?" His answer was disarmingly simple, and yet so profound. He taught his pupils to observe what had been done by the great masters -- not by reading history books, but by studying what was in the actual scores themselves. This was no perfunctory course in musical analysis. It was a deep delving into the basic aesthetic and philosophic principles, and into the essential artistic reasoning which caused a composer to make a given choice and no other. Bloch was constantly confronting his pupils with hypothetical situations such as "Why did Beethoven do this and not that?"

He seldom discussed his own style of writing, and this was the elemental magic of his teaching. He taught by unfolding the vast panorama of what he himself had learned from the master musicians of the centuries. Thus, instead of creating a group of pupils who aped the characteristics of the Bloch style, he created in each of his pupils a strong desire to develop their own personalities along whatever road seemed right for them. While it is true that he never founded a "school," he left an indelible mark on the music of our time through his many famous pupils -- all his "disciples" in the highest sense of the word.

After forty years, I still remember Bloch's skills as a great teacher. He often taught by the use of parables which he invented as the need arose. These were picturesque explanations which sought to point up one's errors. Once when I had written a string quartet movement with a very long coda, too long in fact, he drew a picture on the music paper -- a little man with an enormous stove-pipe hat. "There is your composition," he said, "a little Jew and a tremendous hat." Yet, he was kind when kindness was needed. Once, after a partic-

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-ularly severe criticism of my counterpoint exercises, he brought out his own exercises on the same theme and showed me that his were just as bad! He was very demanding, and would not tolerate mediocrity. I did one thousand exercises in counterpoint on two chorale themes, one in major and one in minor. When I complained that I was tired of the themes, he said to me: "That is what you are here for, to learn to make them interesting with your own counterpoint."

Bloch was always so filled up with his latest experiences. This was Bloch! Everything that he came in contact with had meaning for him, which he translated into musical terms. I must affirm that Bloch's instruction formed the basis of my need to know the very essence of the musical art; and he provided the tools the could help a student grow.

* * * * *

Several times between 1945 and 1955, when Ernest Bloch was in New York on a visit, he and Isadore Freed would meet together. For a nickel fare, they would ride the Staten Island ferry several trips back and forth, and sit "on the deck" talking about music. Freed established and guided an Ernest Bloch Award, which for some years annually gave a stipend for a music work by a young composer.

Six months before he himself passed away, Isadore Freed presented this paper as the prelude to a special concert program dedicated to the memory of the then recently deceased Ernest Bloch. That memorial concert, sponsored by the New England Jewish Music Forum, was held at Temple Adath Israel Meeting House in Boston on April 24, 1960. (Riva Freed)

Isadore Freed (1900-1960)

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HE STORY OF A SCULPTURE

By Suzanne Bloch and Ivan Bloch

Ernest Bloch has been known as a Jewish composer, a voice expressing the proud heritage of Israel. Yet always visible on a wall in Bloch's home, wherever he lived there was an almost life-size wooden carving; Christ on the Cross! In the vastness of Bloch's last home in Agate Beach, Oregon, overlooking the Pacific, "the Christ" dominated the living room not so much by its physical presence as by the deep aura of its meaning in Bloch's life.

Very few people have really known the true symbol which this figure represented for Bloch. Some expressed surprise at what they termed an anachronism - - a Jewish composer with a crucifix? Others took it as a pose, a sardonic expression of Bloch's universality. In the course of his life zealots wrote him letters calling him a traitor and a renegade. They did not know the story, the reason why he kept "this Christ."

In the Spring of 1903 at a festival of Swiss and German music in the town of Basle, there was given a performance of two movements from a symphony by a totally unknown young Swiss composer who himself conducted his work. This twenty-three year old musician, Ernest Bloch, arrived in the town full of hopes, very shy, naïve and unworldly. At a preliminary banquet in honor of the musicians taking part in the festival, no place had been reserved for him. He felt solitary and rejected, but thought that when his music would be played the musicians would recognize and accept him as one of them.

He was grateful for the two periods allotted him to rehearse his symphony. He felt fortunate to see Gustav Mahler at a distance, to hear him rehearse, though he was too shy to approach him and tell him of his great admiration.

When the performance came the young man put all the fervor of his soul in his conducting, certain that the music would stir his listeners as it had stirred his teacher Ysaye earlier when he showed him the score. These illusions were quickly shattered. The public was cold, the critics attacked him violently. One of them wrote that a young upstart of this caliber having the effrontery to write that sort of dissonant and violent music should be jailed permanently with bread and water for sustenance.

In spite of the shock and disappointment, Bloch wrote his fianeee, Marguerite, a young German pianist who lived in Hamburg, that there was nothing for him to do but to return to Geneva and make his living in his father's business, a large store of Swiss souvenirs, of cuckoo clocks and music boxes. But, he added, he was determined to continue to write music.

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A few weeks later he was surprised to read a new article about the Festival in ***Le Temps***, a newspaper published in Paris. To his amazement, the correspondent wrote that there had been nothing of value presented at the concerts in the new works, except two movements of a symphony by "one Ernest Bloch of whom we know nothing." The music was highly praised and the writer signed his article "R.G."

Bloch at once wrote to this "R.G." It was Robert Godet, a former political correspondent of ***Le Temps***who lived in Switzerland. A great friendship ensued, lasting ten years.

Godet was older, highly cultivated. His knowledge of music, art and literature was phenomenal. He was an ardent champion of the music of Moussorgsky and a close friend of Debussy. Through him Bloch's horizon opened and there is no doubt that the impressions he received from Godet's vivid descriptions of his travels in tropical countries, such as Java, influenced Bloch's use of exotic motifs in some of his later works, mainly the *Suite for Viola* and the first *Piano Quintet*.

It was Godet who encouraged Bloch in his decision of 1906 to express his Hebraic heritage in music, as he listened to Bloch's impassioned aspirations. These two men presented an interesting contrast - - Bloch, ardent, effusive, naïve – Godet, sophisticated, almost "precieux" in the deliberate way he chose to

express himself with choice vocabulary. For years he was involved with the French translation of a large publication of which he said little to Bloch. But at times Marguerite heard Godet say, “Ernest, today I have worked on pages, some of which would make you very unhappy.”

They often discussed the philosophy of Tolstoi and the concepts of Christian ethics. Though Bloch had greatly admired Tolstoi he doubted that there could ever be true, completely true “Christians” other than “the original Christ.” In these discussions Godet would question the authenticity of Christ’s being a Jew!

One day in 1906 Godet urgently asked Bloch to accompany him to Berne. There was something in a small antique shop that he felt Bloch should buy. It was a large statue of Christ with the tired face of a Jew, with all the suffering of humanity in his weary body.

Bloch did not hesitate to buy the sculpture at once. He hung it in his study. His parents were shocked. He explained that this was not a religious symbol to him. It was a profound expression of all times, all races, all beliefs. Yet he wondered why Godet had urged so persistently that he buy it. He would tell Marguerite, “I am puzzled. I don’t understand. What was in the back of Godet’s mind to insist that I own this crucifix?”

One day, a terrible day for Bloch, he received from Godet the book which he had been so long in translating. With it was a short note written in Godet’s usual precise style which read that though this was certainly not the sort of book that he, Godet, would recommend to Bloch, they had known each other too long and he had lived too long with the book to hold back from offering it to him. There was a certain refined cruelty in the wording of the note, for the book proved to be Houston Stewart Chamberlain’s *The Genesis of the XIXth Century*,

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the book that preached the superiority of the Aryan race, the book that later Hitler would read and which would influence all his thinking.

Though Bloch had no conception of the future horrors this book would unleash in the world, its contents then stunned him. He was immediately aware of its dangers. These theories of extreme racism so carefully analyzed, so powerfully expounded could only create untold harm.

And this, this terrible document, had for years been in the hands of the one he thought to be among his closest friends, to whom he had poured out his innermost thoughts. This man had listened to him like a wise mentor – this man had coldly observed him, applying to him the theories of H.S. Chamberlain. What kind of gigantic treachery had this been? Was Godet after all as “demoniaque” as some people had said in the past, and which he had refused to believe? Why had Godet singled him out and sincerely expressed his faith in his talent? Why had he encouraged their friendship? Why “the Christ?”

He broke relations with Godet. He said over and over again that this was the great tragedy of his life. “The Christ” remained on the wall, a silent witness to his sorrow.

When he left Switzerland with his family in 1917 to go to America, he had to sell everything he owned, but he could not bring himself to give up this sculpture. It had been part of his creative growth, his aspirations as a young man, and his great disillusions. He took it with him, and with him it remained a silent reminder until his death.

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A COMPOSER'S VISION: PHOTOGRAPHY BY ERNEST BLOCH

■ by Eric Johnson ■

(Reprinted from Aperture Magazine 1972 issue. This article included 12 photographs by Bloch, specially printed by Eric Johnson. The original publication may be secured from Aperture Inc., Elm Street, Millerton, New York 12546.)

In 1922 Alfred Stieglitz made a group of photographs entitled, "Music -- a Sequence of Ten Cloud Photographs." The following year, he related what he had wanted in his series:

> ". . . I told Miss (Georgia) O'Keeffe I wanted a series of photographs which when seen by Ernest Bloch (the great composer) he would exclaim: Music! Music! Man, why that is music! How did you ever do that?" And he would point to violins, and flutes, and oboes, and brass,

> full of enthusiasm, and would say he'd have to write a symphony called "Clouds." Not like Debussy's but MUCH, MUCH MORE. And when finally I had my series of ten photographs printed, and Bloch saw them -- what I said I wanted to happen, happened VERBATIM.

The mention of Ernest Bloch by Stieglitz was more than fortuitous, for Bloch photographed seriously for fifty years and is the only important man of music known to have had a strong interest in photography.

Music and photography seem to be radically different media. However, a surprising number of photographers have had a deep interest in music. Ansel Adams, Wynn Bullock, and Paul Caponigro studied music before turning to photography. Adams once drew an illuminating parallel between music and photography when he called the photographic negative the "score" and the print from that negative the "performance." Both negative and score are intermediate steps to the final result, which varies with the mood of the performer. Both photographer and musician work with similar fundamentals. The scale of continuous gray from black to white, within a photographic print, is similar to the unbroken scales of pitch and loudness in music. A brilliant reflecting roof, can be *heard* as a high pitch or very loud note against a general fabric of sound or gray tone. The background fabric serves as a supporting structure for either melodic or visual shapes. The photographer captures a moment out of the continuous flow of time. The composer structures sound to flow *through* time. They must each have the creative intuition to recognize barely perceptible changes in that flow of time: a swiftly vanishing cloud-form intuitively seen -- then captured; or a carefully placed half-beat of silence, before a crescendo. But if there are these links and more between

photography and music, it is largely thanks to Ernest Bloch's long practice of both arts that discussion of them is more than a theoretical exercise.

In a letter to Bloch, dated July 1, 1922, just after the "Cloud Photographs" meeting, Stieglitz wrote:

> "My dear Mr. Bloch: Have you any idea how much it meant to me to have you feel about those photographs as you did? -- To have you see in them what you do -- And to know that what you express I understand -- and feel is true. It was a memorable hour. A very rare one. . . ."

It was a rare hour because Bloch was a rare man. The leap from qualities in music to tones and shapes within cloud images was natural for him. He had been composing and photographing for twenty-five years before this meeting. Bloch's music is known for its drama and emotion. His photographs have been unknown until today.

Before he was ten, Bloch wrote on a scrap of paper a vow to become a composer and burned it atop a pile of stones. This dramatic quality permeated his life and his music.

A struggle in the grand romantic tradition between a towering intellect and giant emotions, his life was filled with turmoil and suffering. His frequently alternating states of mind were never hidden, and were sometimes truly ecstatic. Julius Haart, writer and friend, relates:

> “Bloch is sensitive to nature in all her manifestations. Several years ago we were walking in the country. Suddenly from out of the silence there came a great cry, partly of anguish, partly of ecstasy. Turning about I beheld him, his face distorted with emotion, tears streaming down his cheeks and his entire person betraying the more intense feeling. He came to me and resting his head on my shoulder wept for a time in silence. At last in broken accents he told me that after the years of perplexity and confusion he had seen the light again. Nature had spoken to him as she only speaks to those who love her and draw inspiration from her inexhaustible reservoirs."

His music reflects this temperament: first agitated, then tranquil, grandiose then sorrowful, joyous then embittered. Bloch's view of art:

> "Art for me is an expression, an experience of life and not a puzzle game or icy demonstration of imposed mathematical principles."

The final result of creation was always emotionally charged. Bloch's daily life, however, was marked by an extreme self-discipline and concern for logic, which balanced his tumultuous emotions. In his sixties he undertook three years of analysis of Beethoven's

Eroica Symphony. In preparation for composing his *Sacred Service* in 1929 he did over one thousand two-part counterpoint exercises. He studied the forty-eight preludes and fugues of Bach throughout his life. Bloch's love for the music of Bach was a perfect balance to his own stormy scores. On musical discipline, he wrote:

> "Composers must remember that greatness lies in doing little things well. With Bach the tiniest detail becomes of magnificent importance in the development of his scores. Even the restrictions he sets for himself become heights of glory."

Bloch's interests ranged far beyond music and photography. At age twenty-three he taught metaphysics in Geneva and composed at night. His other interests varied widely -- theology, etymology, genetics, literature, painting, hiking, mushroom-hunting and, late in life, agate polishing. His attitude toward this variety of interests was that "they are all the same, part of life . . . the circulation of the world." To prove it he would quote Confucius on music or point to the "physiology" similar in a plant and a fugue by Bach.

Consistent with both his global view and temperament, Bloch was never satisfied to stay in one place very long. He wandered over Europe and America, composing, photographing and teaching, until he settled in Oregon at the age of sixty.

Bloch made his first photographs at seventeen, when he was a violin student in Brussels. These were self-portraits, pictures of the countryside and of peasants tending their fields. He developed and printed them himself, then tacked some to his wall and others into an album (the kind with the thick, soft, black paper). The final home for his photographs was nearly always a little snapshot album to show friends. He made some five thousand negatives in his lifetime; they compose a visual diary of his wanderings. The negatives show Bloch realized that discipline is necessary in photography as well as in music, for he always composed his photographs using the entire frame. His early work (4" X 5" and 2-1/2" X 4-1/4") was contact-printed the same size as the negative. Later, in 1927, he turned to 35mm camera but continued to be concerned with the discipline of using the entire frame even when enlargements became essential.

As Bloch matured musically, he matured photographically. He became aware of light, relationships of form, and contrasts in tone. His sense for the revealing moment became more acute. During the composition of his opera, *Macbeth*, 1904-1909, his photographs became direct and decisive.

Bloch's daughter, Lucienne, remembers many times when her father would exclaim, "*Look at the light on the roofs!*"Light reveals the identity of the subjects in Bloch's photographs, whether a peasant face, a cloud, a tree, a roofline, or an old lady -- eyes direct, holding large mushrooms in a gesture of invitation. His mushroom lady is an outstanding example of the magical life a photograph can assume when conditions are captured at the revealing moment. Portraits are an important and compelling part of his photography. The character expressed in the weathered faces of Swiss peasants attracted his eye. He had

great respect for the unpretentious person, a relief from the posturing socialites he knew as a teacher and musician. Portraits of musicians, artists and writers are also found in Bloch's work. He frequently viewed himself as subject matter and made self-portraits consistently from age seventeen through age seventy-five. Some merely record him in a particular place. Many, though, are self-analytical and searching. When in 1924 his position as Director of the Cleveland Institute of Music was in jeopardy, he sought refuge in Santa Fe, New Mexico, to compose his *Concerto Grosso* and *Poeme Mystique*. There is a group of negatives made that winter. He was upset, but his self-portraits are contemplative and quiet. Perhaps they were a means of affirming his concept of Self. It is true, nonetheless, that many of the self-portraits reveal a burning intensity in his eyes, the intensity that permeates his music.

The most common subject in Bloch's photography is landscape. He saw character in trees, clouds, mountains, and village buildings in much the same way as he saw it in peasant faces. In 1924, after crossing the American continent, he wrote to Ada Clement (co-founder of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music):

> "I was tremendously impressed by the prairie. It is as big as the mountains and ocean for me! This solitude! This infiniteness! . . . flat . . . flat . . . and the clouds! and here and there a little home lost in the immensity -- and a tree or three, four trees . . . a hedge! How welcome they are -- what personality they have! How one would like to know them, to rest under them . . ."

Bloch bypassed this century's early concern for making photography accepted as an art, His art was music, photographs were secondary; but they served, like hiking, to release the tensions that built up in composition.

Bloch was a romantic in an anti-romantic age. Describing this age he said:

> ". . . and 'serious' composers persist in the obsession with technique and procedure. They discuss and argue; they laboriously create their arbitrary, brain-begotten works, while the emotional element -- the should of art -- is lost in the passion for mechanical perfection. Everywhere, virtuosity of means; everywhere, intellectualism exalted as the standard. This is the plague of our times and the reason for its inevitable death."

He saw Alfred Stieglitz and his use of the camera machine as a rare symbol of the use of techniques toward spiritual ends. In a tribute published in the 1947 memorial portfolio of Stieglitz's photographs, he wrote:

> "I shall never forget my two short meetings with him, so many years ago. They are alive as he is within me. Since 20 years, I have, in my courses, almost each year referred to him and quoted a few unforgettable talks we had -- not only his marvelous works of art -- his interpretations of Life, what he called 'the machine!' The 'machine'

> subservient to man's thoughts and visions. His incredible 'technique' he never mentioned; it was a tool in his hands, for a higher purpose. -- What an example of 'Spirit' in our present time of 'Robots'."

Contemporary abstractionists in music reflected their age. Bloch reacted against it. Merle Armitage, impresario, book designer, promoter of many modern artists, and close friend to Stravinsky, said Bloch was not an "advanced" composer. He did not "push the horizons of music like Debussy and Stravinsky." From his point of view this is true. Bloch might have responded with a statement by Oscar Wilde that he often quoted:

> "There is no progress in art; all beautiful things belong to the same age."

Bloch felt art lives or dies on its ability to touch man's eternal soul. Short-range assessments such as "advanced" or "conservative" did not interest him. For Bloch, musical composition was an act of faith. It was a means of becoming or being more human.

Isolated in mature for several years, Bloch began to do a series of tree photographs. Lucienne describes her memories:

> "It took him a good year to finally get to photographing them, because when I was there, and we were walking he would say, 'You have no idea how extraordinary these trees are when there are few leaves, and when it's dark in back so they show up.' He kept saying 'I've got to photograph them. I must make a study of trees.' And that's when he would point to them and say, 'Now look at this -- this harmony of trunks' . . . "

Bloch saw music in trees. He labeled some of his tree photographs according to the musical composer who he felt was similar in feeling and structure: "Debussy," "Bach," "Beethoven," and "Mozart." The photographs evoke feelings much like each composer's music. His "Debussy" tree is a continuous thread, incomplete within the frame. Figure-ground relationships become ambiguous, structure is loose and feeling is undefined. His "Bach" tree photograph is a strict counterpoint of illuminated birch trunks with a complex background. Bloch sees "Beethoven" invariably as a single massive tree appearing to twist and struggle out of the soil. "Mozart" is much different; a deceptively light, but sturdy, tree, complete within the frame and clearly defined by light. Yet these preconceived photographs are not Bloch's greatest images.

They are enlightening, but their calculated analogies limit their universality. His finest photographs, his portraits and mountain scenes, were made in an intuitive response to immediate experience.

Ivan Bloch, after seeing group of his father's photographs, commented:

> "In a real sense his photography is an outlet for something over and above the music -- in many senses they are almost a relief from it . . . He was such an abundant person in so many ways . . . He was not

> a musician, period, end of paragraph -- he was much more than that . . . You know, he always said, 'First I'm a man'."

There is a quiet passion generated from Bloch's photography with little of the violence and introspective turmoil of his music. Those who have only listened to Bloch's music will never experience the full substance of the *man*. His photographs communicate a direct confrontation with life itself. They are pure Bloch -- beyond art and ideology.

BLOCH AND THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

■ by Carl Engel ■

(This article originally appeared in the November 1928 issue of Musical America, under the title of "Where America Received Its Inspiration." At that time Carl Engel was Chief of the Music Division of the Library of Congress, 1922 to 1934, and wrote this piece when Bloch won the composition award for his symphonic rhapsody *America*.)

Ernest Bloch's *America Symphony*, in a way, owes its existence to the Library of Congress. This is the story:

On January 1, 1922 I came to Washington and temporarily went into lodgings near Farragut Square . . . Bloch came to visit me. It was the first time he had seen Washington. He arrived from Cleveland early in the morning . . . It was a wonderful morning. Though Bloch, during his stay, got a fair taste of what Washington is like in hot weather, the city, that week in early June, was radiant. The first glimpse Bloch caught of it impressed him visibly. But old wounds and new were smarting and bleeding; he was too full of bitter tales to see anything for the moment but his own grievances. His supreme need was to have it all out.

There is a great comfort in comforting a friend. And sometimes we can offer him no better easement than to let him talk. After breakfast we wandered down Pennsylvania Avenue in the direction of the Capitol. Bloch, fortunately, was still too much absorbed in a diatribe to be aware of one of the most unattractive stretches of Washington. The burden of his lament by no means novel, was that he had reached the end of his patience with rank commercialism, base intrigue, and flagrant hypocrisy. America apparently had no room for him and he had no use for America. Although he had his first citizenship papers, he would let them lapse. If he were to remain in America, it would be to fulfill his engagements; but then he would set his face once more towards Europe.

These periodic unburdening of Bloch's, no matter how vehement, were never tedious to me, because they were always interlarded with rich sayings, capital jokes, and little cynicisms after my own heart. We had mounted Capitol Hill, too closely immersed in discussion for Bloch to have taken much notice of our surroundings. Bloch was in high though still in rather "pesky" spirits when we arrived at the Library of Congress. Here was prepared for him the hour of his "conversion."

Bloch suddenly entered a new world, unsuspected by him in America. I showed him not only the Music Division; I took him over the entire building. His resentment collapsed;

his wonder grew. He became as voluble in his admiration as he had been before in his reproof. We got to the gallery in the main reading room, with its impressive dignity and vastness. The place imposed silence, but Bloch's mobile features betrayed his emotion. His eyes flashed surprise, and his throat gulped once or twice. He was thrilled. He recognized that here was a side of American people and the government of the United States that he had not imagined.

Then I took Bloch to the top floor of the Library into the Librarian's dining room, where some of the division chiefs, and a few privileged guests, gather round Mr. Putnam's table at luncheon. From the

room we stepped out on the balcony. Immediately before us lay the Capitol with its spacious grounds and fine old trees. The city spread beyond, dotted and lined with green squares and avenues; the obelisk of the Washington Monument rose in its simple grandeur, and behind it the Lincoln Memorial shone like a white jewel. In the distance the whole was framed by the silver band of the Potomac river and the hazy hills of Virginia, all drenched in a flood of sunlight. When Bloch had recovered speech, he turned to me and said in French: "*Do you know what this means to me, this Library and this view? My second papers! I want to be an American citizen*." He carried out the resolve then made.

When Bloch left Cleveland in 1925, he deposited with the Library of Congress his manuscripts, letters and personal documents. It was the first time that the Music Division of our National Library had been entrusted with the complete biographical record of so unusual a man and musician. The Librarian's report for 1925 laid due stress upon the significance of the gift and the giver. When the published report reached Bloch, he wrote me in English from San Francisco on December 19, 1925.

> "I wrote you a very stupid letter a few days ago and, in reply, I found yesterday the Report of the Library of Congress. I wish to tell you that few things have moved me more than Pages 94 and 95**. I really cannot explain why, but it seems to me as if it were a definite consecration of my voluntary Americanization. It brings back to me memories of Washington and the unforgettable days spent in the Library of Congress, and at the round-table in Mr. Putnam's dining room. It impresses upon me once more the idea of America of the past and America of the future, and makes me indulgent with America of the present. It gives me, too, a sense of duty of what we can do to help this great country. I have rarely felt prouder of anything that has happened in my career than of this two pages in an official document of my own country."

Carl Engel (1883-1944)

**From pages 94 and 95 of the Librarian of Congress 1925 Report (the following is from that report and not from Creative Spirit):

When the composer Ernest Bloch three years ago visited Washington for the first time, our National Capital impressed him beyond his expectation. So greatly, in fact, that, a native of Switzerland, reared on the cultural pabulum of France and Germany, he decided to become an American citizen. More especially our National Library inspired him with the wish that here might eventually be gathered his manuscripts, letters, and any other records of his life. The wish became a resolve; the resolve has now been carried out.
The music division has received from Mr. Bloch:

1. An immediate gift, consisting partly in holograph sketches, partly in finished holograph scores, of his Israel Symphony, Concerto Grosso, Poèmes juifs, Viola suite, Hiver-printemps, Poème mystique, Méditation hebraique, Nuit exotique, Sketches in sepia, Baal-Shem, Three nocturnes Piano quintet, Poems of the sea, In the night, Psalm 114, Poèms d'automne, In the mountains, Macbeth (opera), another compositions; scrapbooks and miscellaneous documents relating to the activities of Mr. Bloch during his years in Europe and since his arrival in the United States; also the entire material prepared by Mr. Bloch for his pedagogic work at Peterborough, N. H.
2. A conditional gift, consisting of family papers, letters, documents, etc., covering the years 1888-1925, and including Mr. Bloch's extensive correspondence with many prominent musicians, conductors, critics, educators, and others. The condition attached to this gift is that these papers shall not be made available to the public until 25 years after the death of Mr. Bloch, who reserves, however, to himself the right of modifying or waiving this condition in his lifetime as he may see fit to do. Furthermore, the Library has been made the depository for a number of other holograph scores of Mr. Bloch, with the view of ultimately adding them to the collection. This is the first time that the music division has been entrusted with the complete biographical records of so unusual a man and musician. He now stands in the front rank of contemporary composers. It does not take prophetic vision to predict that in years to come these records will find attentive readers. Not long ago Mr. Philip Hale, the critic, after the performance of a work by Mr. Bloch, expressed the view that "there is no music like it," and added that to hear it was "worth a pilgrimage." Perhaps it is not too extravagant to foresee that some day the inspection and study of the Bloch papers -- invaluable as source material for the musical life of our generation, both in Europe and in America -- will draw musical pilgrims to Washington.

[Two-sided [unpaginated] page featuring on first page a photo with caption reading: "Bust of Ernest Bloch by Sculptor Jacob Epstein (1949) and on the opposite page a photo with the caption reading: "Bloch in Roveredo, Switzerland, 1931, composing "Sacred Service"]

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PART TWO

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"I am a Jew. I aspire to write Jewish music because racial feeling is a quality of all great music which must be an essential expression of the people as well as the individual. Does anyone think he is only himself? Far from it. He is thousands of his ancestors. It he writes as he feels, no matter how exceptional his point of view, his expression will be basically that of his forefathers . . .

"In all those compositions of mine which have been termed "Jewish', I have not approached the problem from without, i.e., by employing more or less authentic melodies . . . or more or less sacred 'oriental' formulas, rhythms of intervals! No! I have hearkened to an inner voice, deep, secret, insistent, burning, an instinct rather than any cold, dry reasoning process, a voice which seemed to come from far beyond, beyond myself and my parents, a voice which surged up in me on reading certain passages in the Bible . . . .

"It was this Jewish heritage as a whole which stirred me, and music was the result. To what extent such music is Jewish, to what extent it is just Ernest Bloch -- of that I know nothing. The future alone will decide."

Ernest Bloch

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SYMPHONY IN C sharp MINOR (1901)

The C sharp Minor Symphony was composed in Munich and published in 1925. It was Bloch's first important symphonic work. The composer said of this symphony:

"The work represents me as I was at twenty-one, with my struggles -- already -- my hopes, my joys, my despairs. I only tried to express myself simply, sincerely, without looking for originality, harmonically or orchestrally. I thought -- I am of the same opinion today (1927) -- that music is a means of expression: A man has something to communicate to other men, something that cannot be expressed in any other way, either by words or colors -- feelings deeper than language can express. The work has probably the qualities and defects of youth. I am neither completely myself, not completely alone in it. I had just finished my preparatory musical studies and was ready to begin the real studies about life -- about everything. Life and music cannot be explained in words, but in my early sketches are found a few indictions that may be able to furnish a point for orientation to the listener:

First Part -- Doubts, Struggles, Hopes (The Tragedy of Life)
Second Part -- Happiness, Faith
Third Part -- Struggle (The Irony and Sarcasms of Life)
Fourth Part -- Will, Happiness."

Eventually, Bloch decided not to use these notes, and the four movements of the symphony are listed as:

Lento -- Allegro agitato
Andante Moderator
Vivace
Allegro Energico

In 1903 Bloch was invited to conduct two movements of the symphony at a festival of Swiss composers in the town of Basel. Hoping that through this he might gain recognition, and find a way of making his living through his music in spite of his family's opposition, he accepted though he had no formal training as a conductor.

The results from the Swiss and German press were disastrous. There was even anger that a young unknown upstart would have had the cheek to write such dissonant and violent music. Only a little later a critic, Robert Godet, correspondent of the French newspaper *Le Monde*, wrote that the only work of an value heard at that festival was Bloch's and one would hear about this young man in the future.

When the writer Romain Rolland heard the first performance of the work in its entirety in 1910, he wrote the following to Bloch:

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"Your symphony is one of the most important works of the modern school. I do not know any work in which a richer, more vigorous, more passionate temperament makes itself felt. It is wonderful to think that it is an early work. If I had known you at that time I should have said to you: Do not trouble yourself about criticisms or praises, or opinions from others. You are a master of yourself. Do not let yourself be turned aside or led astray from yourself by anything whatever: influences, advice, doubts, anything. Continue expressing yourself in the same way, freely and fully; I will then answer for your becoming one of the master musicians of our time. From the very first measures to the end of such music one feels at home in it. It has a life of its own; it is not a composition coming from the brain before it was felt."

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HISTORIETTES AU CRÈPUSCULE (TWILIGHT TALES)
Song Cycle for Mezzo-Soprano and Piano
(1904)

These early songs were composed in Paris where Bloch spent many months trying in vain to create some interest in his first *Symphony in C Sharp Minor*. He made the rounds of conductor's waiting rooms and from his observations developed a well seasoned and sardonic sense of humor. In spite of his frustrations, he was absorbing with delight the French ambiance, its culture, its music. During his musical studies he had written several songs to French texts that he called "Lieds." From Paris in 1903, he wrote to his sister mentioning that he was composing "just bagatelles" and was sending one in time for her birthday, a song to the text of the French poet Camille Mauclair.

This was the beginning of the *Historiettes*, four poems by Mauclair having an almost folk-like text with quasi-religious and naive subjects. They were entitled:

Légende
Les Fleurs
Ronde
Complainte

These simple short songs, in their harmony and prosody, strongly reflected the influence of the music of Debussy.

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TWO POEMS: HIVER-PRINTEMPS (WINTER-SPRING)
(1905)

These poems completed at Geneva were published in 1918, and were performed for the first time in this country in New York in 1916. Bloch gave Lawrence Gilman, the editor of the program books of the new Symphony Orchestra, the following information about the composition when it was played in New York, in 1919:

The title is sufficient, I think, to suggest to the audience the atmosphere I intended to create – so far as musical titles are able to represent the content of that language, inexpressible by words. ***Hiver*** *is sad and hopeless;* ***Printemps*** *is full of joy and hope. I was twenty-four when I wrote them. They are a small part of my personality and my youth. That is already far away in a past that will not come again . . . They are neither 'classical' nor 'ultra-modern,' and absolutely unfit for making a 'sensation.' The only thing I can tell about them is that they were sincerely written and are the expression of an inward necessity."*

This orchestral work was dedicated to his wife, Marguerite.

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POÈMES D'AUTOMNE (POEMS OF AUTUMN
Song Cycle for Mezzo-Soprano and Piano
(1906)

The second set of songs was composed two years after his first cycle, of 1904, shows a greater sophistication and individuality. The gifted young poetess, author of the text, Beatrix Rodes, took life very seriously and her beautiful poems are somber and extremely solemn.

Though still under the spell of the French school, Bloch responded to these texts with his innate intensity and romantic lyricism. The four songs are:

La Vagabonde	(The Vagabond)
Le Declin	(The Waning)
L'Abri	(The Shelter)
Invocation	

These songs were also orchestrated. English translations have been made by musicologists Sigmund Spaeth and Thomas Baker.

"MACBETH" OPERA
Lyric Drama After Shakespeare
9 Scenes (Prologue and 3 Acts)
(1904-09)

Ernest Bloch was twenty-four years old when he began to sketch the music of his opera, ***Macbeth***. He has two symphonic works and four songs to his name. For months he and his friend, the poet Edmond Fleg, had been trying out all sorts of ideas for lyrical theater on which to collaborate. On June 26, 1904, Bloch wrote that he was not too interested in the idea of Macbeth, that what he really wanted to write was a work of "great gaiety."

In the following six months he changed his mind, for the next mention of Macbeth is on December 7, when he began to sketch the music of the *Prologue*, and on the 27th he writes that he has finished sketching the first *Tableau*, "certainly not material of great gaiety!"

For five years he worked on the opera, when he was not involved in his parents' business in Geneva, raising a family, giving lectures at the University of Lausanne, and conducting concerts there and in Neuchatel. It is hard to imagine how he could keep the continuity of such an opera with the sort of life he led, but Macbeth was the thread that held him together.

His conception of the music was to express the inner ferments of the characters, more important to him than the actual external drama. With little encouragement from his countrymen, with no financial subsidy, he was stirred by an immense inner force. He exulted, he despaired, he slashed, he rewrote. He once wrote Fleg that he didn't like the music for Duncan's arrival, that it made Duncan sound too much like a "civil employee."

In 1907, when the music was almost all composed, Bloch had a chance to play it at a salon at the home of the son of George Bizet. Among the persons who heard it were the famous singer, Lucienne Breval, and critic Pierre Lalo. Both were enthused and arranged an interview for Bloch and Fleg with Albert Carre, director of the Paris Opera Comique. Carre at once signed up for the rights of performance of *Macbeth* within two years, an unheard of thing in Paris, to bring out the work of two young unknowns who were not even French.

In September 1909, Bloch finished the opera, copying the orchestral score himself, a tremendous job of several hundred pages; and on November 30, 1910, in Paris, after all sorts of upheavals and intrigues which Bloch reacted to dramatically in contrast with Fleg's calm and serene irony. *Macbeth* had its first performance. There were thirteen performances in all, which met with mixed reactions – either tremendous admirations or complete dislike.

Bloch cherished a letter from a young musician, telling of her appreciation to Bloch and signed by Nadia Boulanger. At the same time, Gabriel Faure, Boulanger's teacher, wrote that he was impressed by the opera but disturbed by the violence, the "laideurs" in the work. He felt that even though there was ugliness in the drama the music shouldn't necessarily express it. Pierre Lalo wrote in praise of the work. Romain Rolland and others felt their faith in the young composer had been justified.

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TWO SYMPHONIC INTERLUDES (Acts 1 and 2)

From the Lyric Drama "MACBETH"
(1904-09)
(Libretto after Shakespeare by Edmond Fleg)

The opera Macbeth had its premiere in 1910 at the Paris Opera Comique. After sixteen performances it lay unperformed for twenty-eight years. In 1938 it was revived at Teatro San Carlo in Naples where due to the anti-semitic edict by Mussolini the performances were halted. It again saw the light of day, with an Italian translation by Mary Tibaldo Chiesa, 1953 in Rome and then 1957 in Trieste. There followed performances in Brussels in 1958 sponsored by Queen Mother Elizabeth, and the following year after Bloch's death, at La Scala in Milan.

In the United States, the Opera Workshop of the University of California at Berkeley performed the work in 1960. Bloch's native sity of Geneva then presented the work for five performances in 1970. Juilliard School of Music in New York City presented it three times in 1973. A concert performance of the opera was planned for 1975-76 in London, and to be broadcast over Europe by the British Broadcasting Company.

In 1938, at the publisher's request, Bloch extracted from the full score the two *Interludes*, which had served as transitions between scenes one and two of the first act and between the first and second (final) scene of the last act. This music has been presented in concert form.

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PSALMS: 114, 137, 22
(1912-1914)

(Set to French text by Edmond Fleg, for Solo Voice and Orchestra)

In 1911, Bloch left Geneva and lived with his family in the outskirts of town. His opera Macbeth, that had taken six years to write, had been performed in Paris, but after thirteen performances had been discontinued. In spite of a Succes d'estime from the persons who counted, the press had been antagonistic even before the first performance, resenting the entry of a totally unknown stranger, not even French and Jewish besides. The leading primadonna, Lucienne Breval, jealous of the greater success of the baritone, Henri Albers, pretending ill health cut short the opera performances.

Bloch "licking his wounds," in the lovely village of Satigny and finding solace as he always did in nature, for a time did not compose though much was brewing inside him. To his close friend and librettist, Edmond Fleg, he wrote:

"*I note here and there themes that are, without my willing it, for the greater part Jewish, and which begin to precise themselves and indicate the instinctive and also conscious direction in which I am going . . . I do not search to give them a form. I am producing nothing so far, but I feel that the hour will come and I await it with confidence, respecting this present silence imposed by the natural laws that know. There will be Jewish Rhapsodies for orchestra, Jewish poems, dances mainly, poems for voice for which I have not the words, but I would wish them to be Hebraic. All my musical Bible shall come, and I would let sing in me these secular chants where will vibrate all the Jewish soul, in what it has profoundly national and profoundly human. New forms should be created, free and well defined, also clear and sumptuous. I sense them without seeing them yet before me. I think I shall write one day songs to be sung at the Synagogue, in part by the minister, in part by the faithful. It is really strange that all this comes out thus slowly, this impulse that has chosen me, whom my outer life have been a stranger to all that is Jewish. One could almost say that no exterior barrier could be fond, so that the soul even would be freer, and could surge out without constraint*."

(Translated from the French by
Suzanne Bloch.)

Soon after, Bloch received from Fleg the adaptation from the Hebrew of *Psalm 137*, and later that of *Psalm 114*. This opened the floodgates of his Jewish works. In a letter to Fleg, Bloch described how he felt when he read *Psalm 137* and rushed to read it to his wife who also was enthused. Later, he wrote about these Psalms: "*When I received these translations from Hebrew, I was immediately struck by the power expressed, and in my mind the music took shape and was sketched at once*." But it took much longer for him to produce the final forms. He spent much time perfecting what he had at first sketched, and the works are dated 1912.

Psalm 137, whole text, *By the Waters of Babylon* is deeply expressive, with an orchestral background as described by the late critic Horatio Parker as "plangent, puissant, penetrating like to the bare, bold imagery of the Hebrew Prophets . . . bitter and wild and fierce

in this lamenting, acrid, savage through the tones, stalk pride and hate . . . the work of a composer in whom an individual technique darting through many a detail, is the servant of an individual and dauntless imagination. Had the major prophets of Israel written music, they would have held Mr. Bloch's pen."

Psalm 114 deals with the passage of the Red Sea. In this Bloch unleashes the wildness of the event, the voice shouting it; the orchestra describes the scene, "The Sea, beholds and flees . . . River Jordan turns back in amaze . . . The hills leap up like unto bounding lambs." The music ends in the exultation of Israel shouting to the skies. These two Psalms are dedicated to Edmond and Madeleine Fleg.

Of a different order in *Psalm 22*. It was completed in 1914. More substantial than the earlier Psalms, here Bloch had found his medium and was freer. Nothing held him back in the dramatic opening where the voice cries in agony and doubt: "Elohim! Elohim! Wherefore hast Thou forsaken me? I cry at day, Thou hearest not. I cry at night, and Thou Art dumb." Later the anguish is heard in the asking, "Show Thyself," when the music is that of the primitive God that appears terrifying and glorious. The Psalm ends in a wild exultation of praise. This work was dedicated to his friend, the writer Romain Rolland.

Bloch also scored the three Psalms for large orchestra. A chamber orchestral version of Psalm 22 has been made recently by the gifted young Israeli conductor, Yoav Talmi.

The English translation of the French was made by Waldo Frank.

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THREE JEWISH POEMS
(Trois Poèmes Juifs)
(1913)

The *Three Jewish Poems* were composed in 1913 and form part of what has been called Bloch's *Jewish Cycle*.

Though he had no such label in mind, this was indeed a period when he was involved with the idea of expressing his heritage in music. An ida had germinated in 1906 when he began to read through the Bible, and he wrote to his close friend, the poet Edmond Fleg about it, saying that they both should express this in their art. Fleg later translated some of the Psalms from Hebrew into French, of which three were set to music by Bloch in 1912, thus starting this. The first mention of the *Jewish Poems* is found in a letter dated

August 11, 1913, where Bloch says that he has been busy copying the forty orchestral pages of his little Suite whose first part is entitled *Danse*. He followed the *Danse* with *Rites*, then wrote the *Funeral Cortege*, where he expressed what he had felt at his father's death some months before. This work, which had its premiere in Geneva in 1914, played a great part in Bloch's start in America. It is a story worth telling.

Having left Switzerland in 1916 because he couldn't make a living there as a musician, Bloch arrived in America as the conductor for an American tour of the English dancer, Maud Allen. After six weeks, the tour went bankrupt due to poor management. Bloch, quite broke in New York, happily found good friends thanks to the kindness of the writer, Waldo Frank, who had been recommended to him by the noted novelist Romain Rolland. Other devoted friends, the members of the Flonzaley Quartet, who had been instrumental in getting him the conductor's post for the dancer, suggested that Bloch now go to Boston to see the conductor of the Boston Symphony, Dr. Karl Muck, and play his music for him. They financed Bloch's trip and did all they could to get him entrée, having sent in advance the score of his *Jewish Poems*.

Bloch managed to attend a rehearsal and talk to the conductor. Dr. Muck was a cold, dry man with a sort of bittersweet sour smile. He was polite, said he had not looked at the score, was very busy, but would have an hour on Sunday to hear him. Bloch came and played. The hour passed and someone reminded Much that he had an appointment, but Muck shook his head and asked Bloch to play other works.

Finally he said to his guest, with his German accent: "Well, Mr. Bloch, I like your music greatly. You are a true composer, and I would like to play this work. But how can I perform in Boston something with the title of *Three Jewish Poems*?" To this, Bloch very quietly got up and took his score and said: "Thank you so much, Dr. Muck, for giving me your time and appreciation, but I cannot hide my flag in my pocket." Dr. Muck went ahead to the door, then turning and facing him said: "Mr. Bloch, may I shake your hand. Would you want to conduct the work?" Thus Bloch got his first break in America! Though, he most deliberately cast it away, because he would not retract from his title, even for the sake of a performance which meant everything in the world to him.

The work made a tremendous impression judging from the reviews now in a scrap book at the Library of Congress. The recognition Bloch then received in this country sounds like a fairy story. The hue and cry caused by his *Jewish Cycle*, created the legend that Bloch only had written Jewish works, which still continues. Bloch was at times disturbed by this, since the specially designated Jewish works are but part of his life work. He didn't care to be labelled or made into a "specialist."

It is interesting to find that at this period of recognition, he wrote rather condescendingly about this work. Having finished other larger works in this character, he was comparing it to others. This is what he said:

"*The Jewish Poems are the first of a Cycle; I do not wish that one should judge my*

*whole personality by this fragment, this first attempt which does not contain it. The **Psalms**, **Schelomo**, my symphony **Israel**, are more representative because they com from the passion, the violence which I believe to be characteristic of my nature. In the **Jewish Poems**, I have wished in some way to try a new speech, the color of which should serve my future expression. There is in them a certain restraint. I hold myself back; my orchestration is also guarded. The **Poems** are the works of a new period; they consequently have not the maturity of the **Psalms** nor of **Israel**.*

"*It is not easy for me to make a program for this work. Music is not translated by words. The titles should sufficiently inform the listener.*

"*I . . . **Danse**. This music is all in the coloring -- coloring rather somber, mystical, languorous.*

"*II . . . **Rite**. This movement is more emotional, but there is something solemn and distant, as if in the ceremonies of a cult.*

"*III . . . **Cortège Funèbre**. This is more human. My father died and these **Poems** are dedicated to his memory. There is something implacably severe in the rhythms that obstinately repeat themselves. At the end, sorrow bursts forth, and at the idea of an eternal separation, the soul breaks down. But a very simple and serene melody arises from the orchestral depths as a consolation, a balm, a gentle faith. The memory of our dear departed ones is not effaced; it lives forever in our hearts.*

"*The form of this work is free, but is really there for I believe that our constitution demands order in a work of art.*"

Later on, this rather short analysis did not satisfy Bloch, or possibly he was asked to elaborate. He then wrote a more detailed description of what he may have pictured at the time of writing. It is as if he had looked over his score much later and then made a scenario of it.

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TWO PIANO PIECES
EX VOTO
(1914)
DANSE SACRÈE
(C. 1913)

Both of these brief works were discovered among his materials after Bloch's death.

The little piece *Ex Voto* was found amidst scattered sheets inside a sheaf of four pages that much have belonged to a Swiss fashion journal entitle: Le Monde et la Mode. Included also were part of a short story and drawings of the latest (!) fashions of that time. How this music got in there remains a mystery. Based on a simple Blochian pastoral theme, the treatment is in the style of Debussy.

Obviously, the short *Danse Sacrée* was conceived by Bloch for use in his never completed opera *Jézabel*, to a libretto of Edmond Flerg. The music is in character -- evocative and oriental.

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ISRAEL SYMPHONY
(1912-1916)

It took four years for Ernest Bloch to complete his Israel Symphony. During its course of creation he also composed his *Three Psalms*, the *Three Jewish Poems* and *Schelomo*. At first he intended to name this symphony *Fetes Juives*, but the writer Romain Rolland, a champion of Bloch's music, heard him play the work and suggested the title, *Israel*.

It had its World Premiere in 1917, in New York for a special concert devoted to Bloch's works, at this time consisting mainly of his *Jewish Cycle*, given by the Society of the Friends of Music. This event brought Bloch's name to the fore in the musical world. It made it possible for him to return to America with his family to start life anew, as his native country had refused him a living as a composer and musician. Bloch dedicated the symphony to Harriet Lanier, the guiding force of the Friends of Music, whose admiration and great friendship for him had lasted all her life.

Bloch's notes about the form of the work are as follows:

"*Though a single unit, the symphony falls into three sections: a slow introduction,* ***Adagio Molto (Prayer of the Desert)****, is immediately followed by the* ***Allegro Agitato (Yom Kippur)*** *with a main theme of bold barbaric character . . . A short transition leads into the second part* ***Moderato (Succoth)****, which after a fierce climax, brings in the voice . . . The second part of the work is more contemplative, serene, a kind of prayer*."

Bloch stressed that the voice used at the end of the work not be placed in front of the orchestra. "*They must be extremely discreet, almost subdued, mysterious, never operatic, without emphasis and thus given an impression of utmost serenity*."Only in certain sections of the Bass solo did Bloch state that, "*The voice must surge with almost fanatical accents, great warmth and conviction, strong forzati to which the orchestra must join*."

Bloch's original plan had been to add another movement to what had already been written. In a letter to his friend and librettist, Edmond Fleg, he had written that in this last section he wanted to envision the return of the Jews to Israel and express rejoicing over the redemption of the Jews -- with his ever eternal hope for unity of mankind. Giving up this idea he explained:

"*After the war was over the real horrors and the moral degradation of the world were exposed to humanity*." Bloch was so disillusioned that the second part, expressing joy and redemption, has never been written.

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SCHELOMO
HEBREW RHAPSODY FOR VIOLONCELLO AND ORCHESTRA
(1915-1916)

Ernest Bloch was in his thirty-fifth year when he began to compose *Schelomo*. The work had been in his mind long before, germinating and sketched slowly, inspired by the day and pessimistic passages in the Book of Ecclesiastes: "I have seen all the works that are done under the sun, and behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit . . . Vanity of vanities, all is vanity."

In the Fall of 1915, those words were much part of him, for he had just experienced a great defeat in his career when the post he so wanted and so needed, that of conductor of the orchestra of Lausanne, had been given to his former pupil, Ernest Ansermet. It had been a bitter blow, for Bloch was in serious financial straits. The only source of income he had, that of the family store in which he worked, was facing bankruptcy due to the seemingly endless war raging in Europe, with no tourists coming to buy the Swiss objects, cuckoo clocks, music boxes and jewelry that it specialized in.

He had reasons to be pessimistic. Twice already there had been crushed hopes. At the age of twenty-three when he conducted two movements of his first symphony written at the age of twenty-one, so sure the work would be accepted as legitimate, the Swiss and German press had received it with vicious attacks finding the music too dissonant and intense. In 1910, his Opera, *Macbeth* was taken off the boards after thirteen performances in Paris, due to the petty intrigues of a prima donna who felt she had less success than the male lead in the work. Members of Bloch's family who had little faith in his ability were again saying: "We told you so."

What kept his faith up were the efforts and encouragements of a few staunch friends, among them the writer Romain Rolland, who had done all he could to persuade the Lausanne Committee to accept Bloch. Yet Ernest Anserment who had come to Bloch earlier for guidance and lessons, highly intelligent and talented, had another gift which Bloch sadly lacked, that of politics. Thus with persistent and subtle campaigning he was engaged. Perhaps in the long run it was for the best. Bloch realizing that Switzerland had no use for him began to think of leaving and going to America, where his good friend Alfred Pochon, of the famed Flonzaley Quartet, told him he would find recognition.

But in 1915, Bloch had no premonition of his destiny. Buried in a town that rejected him, he had almost lost hope. It was typical of him to be in the depths of despair, and yet to bounce back again immediately when he would be stimulated by some artistic contact.

One day that Fall there arrived in Geneva a quaint couple -- a lanky long-haired and long-faced Russian cellist with his diminutive wife, who specialized in miniature wax sculpture

portraits of most of the famed figures of Europe at that time. Alexander Barjansky in those days was at the height of his playing. He had an immense rich stirring tone and tremendous emotional power. The two men felt at once a kinship. When Bloch heard Barjansky play, he found the solution to his problems with the work on the Ecclesiastes which so far had held him back. As he said later: "*I could not hear the fervor of the text or accents in the French language . . . or in the German or English . . . and since I did not know Hebrew the sketches mounted while the work lay dormant.*" Now he knew what to do! "*Why - - instead of a human voice, limited by a text and language, should not my Ecclesiastes utilize the soaring unfettered voice of the cello?*"

He plunged into his sketches and worked enthusiastically, day after day. He forgot his defeats, the financial problems of the store, all his miseries. In six weeks the work was finished. Bloch was reborn, and so thus would he be reborn many more times in his long life. When he created he was alive and nothing stopped him.

Much later, he wrote about this work which he dedicated to the two Barjanskys: "*I had no descriptive intention. I was saturated by the Biblical text and conscious of the woes of mankind to which I have always been acutely sensitive. It was much later that I had the idea of psychoanalyzing my work and so this is a programme drawn <u>after</u> the score which follows:*

> "*If on likes, one may imagine that the voice of the solo cello is the voice of the King '<u>Schelomo</u>.' The complex voice of the orchestra is the voice of his age . . . his world . . . his experience. There are times when the orchestra seems to reflect his thoughts as the solo cello voices his words.*
>
> "*The introduction, which contains the germ of several essential motifs, is the plaint, the lamentation - - 'Nothing is worth the pain it causes; Vanity of Vanities - - all is Vanity' - - an emotional, nearly a physiological reaction. The cello cadence then puts this pessimistic philosophy into words - - this beginning is a soliloquy.*
>
> "*A new and important motif - - violas! The mood changes, but the atmosphere of pessimism almost despairs - - There comes his life, his world. Is it **Schelomo** himself who tells us his dark reflections? There are the rhythms of languorous dance - - a symbol of passion? The rhapsody says: 'I have tasted all of this . . . and this too is <u>Vanity</u>!'*"
>
> "*The orchestra enlarges on the main theme; it becomes rich as though his wives and concubines would displace these thoughts. He enters their seductive dance . . . The theme*

> *returns in the orchestra and here it becomes the royal pomp - - the concubines, the slaves, the treasure, all that man might desire. Here the exotic panoply of an Oriental world. 'I am the King! This is My World!'*
>
> "*And then <u>revulsion</u>: To what end? Vanity? The rhapsody comments, more gentle, more desolate . . . the broken idealism of **Schelomo**. The languorous dance returns, but **Schelomo** spurns it. The grand <u>tutti</u> -- tumult -- barbaric splendor, power - - and then **Schelomo**. And all of this? - - nothing, nothing. . .*

*"I cannot describe the next episode. It is a motif my father sang in Hebrew; I don't know the meaning of the words. Is it the call of the muezzin? This strange motif of the bassoon which later permeates the orchestra. Is it the priests? At first **Schelomo** seems to withstand it. Soon he joins in. Is it the crowd? Their prayers? Again one hears their lament, their unrest growing fevered, anguished*

*"Again, tutti. Is it **Schelomo**, or the crowd -- the maddened crowd hurling blasphemies against the Universe? Vanity, Vanity. The tumult is appeased. Schelomo alone meditates, a shudder of sadness -- 'I have seen it all -- wasted effort -- the triumph of evil -- I too knew hope; it is become barren, sterile . . . a gesture of despair. All is Vanity.'*
*"The orchestra leaves this world to enter into a Vision, where live again peace - - justice - - loving kindness. **Schelomo**drifts into the dream, but not for long. The splendors of power and the throne topple like tarnished fanes into ruins. Here **Schelomo** thinks through the orchestra as his voice and the solo cello cries imprecations. The orchestra magnifies his thoughts. This time the cadence is a downfall, then alone is the silence, Schelomo; 'Vanity of Vanities, all is Vanity!'*

*"Even the darkest of my works end with hope. This work alone concludes in a complete negation. But the subject demanded it! The only passage of light falls after the meditation of **Schelomo**. I found the meaning of this fragment, fifteen years later, when I used it in the **Sacred Service**. The words are words of hope, an ardent prayer that one day, Men will know their brotherhood, and live in harmony and peace."*

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QUARTET NO. 1
(1916)

For some musicians and reviews, Bloch's chamber music is considered his greatest. In retrospect, from the part played in his career, it had the biggest impact in the way of publicity and general reaction.

In 1916, his *First String Quartet*, performed for the first time by the famed Flonzaley String Quartet (to whom Bloch dedicated the work), brought Bloch's name into the light and made him known, though he had just arrived in America, quite obscure.

*Bloch considered this work as still a part of his **Jewish Cycle**. Of it he wrote in his later years (1953): "I have a tender spot in my heart for my **First Quartet** because it represents me completely, as I felt, at least in 1916. This work, like my **Symphony in C sharp Minor**, or my **Israel Symphony**, is in some ways a synthesis of my vision of the world at the time I wrote it. It is a kind of confession, of open heart, with no other concern, and for that reason, a more subjective work than the other quartets. They are more objective and perhaps more detached, as far as I can judge."*

The *Quartet* is cyclic, where the same theme will appear in different movements, very typical of Bloch's music. Writing to the Flonzaley Quartet, he wrote: *"The first movement is perhaps the most difficult for interpretation, due to my free perpetual change of nuance and movement. Yet these fluctuations must naturally become fixed in some unity."* In a letter to his friend Alfred Pochon, who organized the famed Flonzaley Quartet which premiered the work, Bloch detailed his own annotations to assist the performance interpretation of the work:

"**PART I** -- *LAMENTO. Decidedly of Jewish inspiration - - mixture of bitterness, violence and of pain. Don't fear an 'excess' of expression. This old bruised race whose sufferings throughout the centuries cannot be measured! Recall the Bible, the ardor of the Psalms, of Oriental blood. Recall those poor old fellows which you have certainly met in the streets, on the roads (around Geneva), with their long beards, sad, desperate, dirty . . . and who still have some hope - - (what hope?) as they mumble their prayers in Hebrew. There is all of that in my Lamento. At 3 - - A very Jewish theme of faith and ardor (which is found in others of my Jewish works), and at 4, harsh and raucous, and more Hebraic especially the viola part to which I could almost give words. - - In fact all that I am telling you here will seem idiotic to you. If it is in the music, you will feel it! If it is not, you must have pity on me. Except that I tell myself this: Perhaps there are things in my personality which are distant from you and since I would like you to understand, I am trying to explain. This first part is perhaps the most*

difficult for interpretation because of its freedom - - my perpetual variations of nuances and movement - - fluctuations which must naturally merge into some unity.

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"**PART II** -- *I am almost certain that this **ALLEGRO FRENETICO** will make you grind your teeth at first regardless of your familiarity with modern music! My view of humanity is not too kindly. It is a horrible grimace, a witch's stew with no small part of bile. Here: continuity of tempi - - it goes without stopping. (If it's Jewish, it's in spite of myself this time. I gave it no thought.) Tempo: 6/8 or 9.*

*"In the **Trio** of this movement (scherzo) I was inspired by reminiscences of the painter Gauguin. There is some Tahiti in here, distant Pacific isles at any rate, especially in that ornamental passage where the four instruments, leaving their role for an instant, become almost exotic; here sonority alone and poly-rhythm is required. Should you perform this **Quartet**, I don't doubt that you will find the manner in which to render the color I intend, that I imagine . . . souvenirs of colonial expositions, in default of world travel experiences which has been beyond my means to date. (But after all I may have failed utterly.) Je me suis peut-etre 'fichu dedans' jusqu'au cou. Hell is paved with the best intentions . . . You will find abuses of frenetico, féroce, furioso in this scherzo!*

*"**PART III** -- PASTORALE. I have already written to you about this. It was composed almost entirely in open air, in the woods, the mountains. (I owe it to myself!) Let me explain. For ten years, I have been taking notes for a great symphony 'ON THE MOUNTAINS.' Life has not been kind to me; I've had to hold back, to wait. I was too bitter to write this work of peace and calm. So at times, rarely, I have poured out a part of it in some shorter works. The Pastorale is one of them, though there is nothing 'pastoral' in the usual sense of the word, you'll see, it is rather a 'reverie' in the solitude of nature. I hope that my music will speak better than what I write.*

"The theme of the Lamento comes back here full and serene, almost with affection. The theme following the viola could be the land. For me it smells of smoked lard, and milking shed. Here is a strange thing, this theme came I know not why. I can't help it. It belonged as well as to a hunting scene in a project dating ten years ago for a lyric drama 'a l'epoch Lacustre' . . . a sort of savage lullaby. I explain all this because I find no other explanation myself! . . .

"**FINALE** -- *ALLEGRO CONFUOCO. Is rhapsodic in style and is intended to emphasize the subtle bond of character which without a set program, links together the four movements of the **Quartet**."*

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SUITE, FOR VIOLA AND PIANO (OR ORCHESTRA)
(1919)

This *Suite for Viola and Piano* won the $1,000 prize offered by Mrs. F. S. Coolidge in 1919 for a new composition in some form of chamber-music. In its original shape the *Suite* was played for the first time at the Berkshire Festival of Chamber-Music held in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, September 25-27, 1919. The score used in the Pittsfield performance bears on its title-page the inscription, *Suite for Viola and Piano (or Orchestra)*. The music was composed in New York between February and May 1919. *"From the beginning,"* Bloch said, *"I had the idea of an orchestral version, and took notes to that effect. The first movement was instrumented in June 1919, and the whole score was finished in the Autumn."*

The following is an analysis of this *Suite* made by Bloch during that earlier era:

"First of all my Suite does not belong to my so-called 'Jewish works,' though perhaps, in spite of myself, one may perceive here and there, in a few places, a certain Jewish inspiration. It is rather a vision of the Far East that inspired me: Java, Sumatra, Borneo – those wonderful countries I so often dreamed of, though I never was fortunate enough to visit them in any other way than through my imagination. I first intended to give more explicit – or picturesque – titles to the four movements of the work, as: (1) In the Jungle; (2) Grotesques; (3) Nocturne; (4) The Land of the Sun. But those titles seemed rather incomplete and unsatisfactory to me. Therefore, I prefer to leave the imagination of the hearer completely unfettered rather than to tie him up to a definite programme.

"The following, however, is what I believed that I myself saw in the music:

I. Lento – Allegro – Moderato

"The first movement, the most complicated in inspiration and in form, aims to give the impression of a very wild and primitive Nature. The Introduction Lento begins with a kind of savage cry, like that of a fierce bird of prey, followed immediately by a deep silence, misterioso, and the meditation of the viola. Other motives follow, and a small embryonic theme that later assumes very great importance. All these motives will be recalled further, either in the first movement or in the following ones, with more or less transformation.

"The following Allegro brings a motive of joyful and perhaps exotic character which is answered by the viola. There is a new motive for the viola, and there are transformations of earlier material. The second part of the Allegro begins with a new idea – perhaps

a little Jewish, in my sense. There is a climax worked out from the most important themes. Then follows a decrescendo that leads to the conclusion of the Allegro – again in silence and in slumbering mood. Like a sun rising out of clouds in the mystery of primitive Nature, one of the earlier viola motives arises in a broader shape, Largamente, and the movement ends, as it began, with the meditation of the viola.

The movement is an Allegro, in – roughly speaking – three divisions, preceded by an Introduction and followed by a Conclusion; these are the chief features of the form."

II. Allegro Ironico

"Rather difficult to define is the second movement. It is a curious mixture of grotesque and fantastic characters, of sardonic and mysterious moods. Are these men, or animals, or grinning shadows? And what kind of sorrowful and bitter parody of humanity is dancing before us – sometimes giggling, sometimes serious? I myself do not know, and cannot explain. But I find traces of this kind of humor in parts of my former works: in the Scherzo of ***my First Symphony*** *(1902), in the Witches of my opera* ***Macbeth*** *(1904-1907), in the Scherzo of my* ***String Quartet*** *(1916). But here, of course, it has a different color and significance.*

"The musical form follows closely the expression in its alternating moods. It is a sort of rondo-form . . . The first group of motives (Allegro) is made up of short fragments. The following section is based on a quite different motive (Grave)."

II. Lento

"This very simple page expresses the mystery of tropical nights. I remembered the wonderful account of a dear friend who lived once in Java, -- his travels during the night . . . their arrival at small villages in the darkness . . . the distant sounds of curious, soft wooden instruments with strange rhythms . . . dances, too . . . Many years have passed since my friend told me all this; but the beauty and vividness of his impressions I could never forget – they haunted me; and almost unconsciously I had to express them in music.

"There is first a dreamy melody in the solo viola, above dark chords; then a second and a third motive; and, as if from far away reminiscences of motives from the first movement."

II. Molto Vivo

"The last movement is probably the most cheerful thing I ever wrote. The form is extremely simple – an obvious A-B-A, the middle part being a more lyrical episode, built on motives from the other movements treated in a broad and passionate mood.

"The first motives are constructed on a pentatonic scale. A later motive, more lyrical, seems to be a transformation of the first. The middle part (Moderato assai) uses subjects from the third and first movements. A Presto leads to a Largamente, where a subject from the first movement is triumphantly recalled. The solo viola remembers the motive of the meditation from the first movement. A short and cheerful Allegro vivace concludes the work."

This work has been published and widely performed in either of Bloch's versions: for viola and piano, or for viola and orchestra.

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SONATA NO. 1, FOR VIOLIN AND PIANO
(1920)

After Bloch completed his *Suite for Viola and Piano* and orchestrated it, he started to write his *Sonata*. Of the same caliber as the Suite and also his next major work, the *First Piano Quintet*, it is in three movements. Bloch who saw this work as pure music within any sort of program, did not write about it; but others did and with many different interpretations.

The first movement, Agitato, (wild and brutal) has been ably described by the critic, Alex Cohen: "It projects into sound the nightmare feeling that man is at the mercy not only of the eternal cosmic machine that he himself created; that by some grim ruthless freak of an inexorable determinism he is fated to be its creator, destroyer, and destroyed."

The second movement, Molto Quieto, having the indication Molto misterioso, was influenced by a book on Tibet Bloch had been reading. The sonorities are of another world in which the violin in a flowing cantilena softly speaks in sounds of mystery. The movement has great plasticity, its shape a great curve descending to one of Bloch's most beautiful endings.

However the peace does not last. The third movement, Moderato (pesante molto) bursts forth in a barbaric march where the piano plays a heavy percussive part. It is powerful and brutal, reaching a high climax before the end where material of the first movement returns. Then a short theme of great freshness and peace is introduced as a parting statement.

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QUINTET NO. 1, FOR PIANO AND STRINGS
(1921 - 1923)

On the occasion of the first performance of his ***Quintet*** at the Cleveland Museum of Art in 1925, Bloch gave a short introductory speech in which he said at the end: "I write without any regard to please either the so-called 'ultra-moderns' or the so-called 'old-fashioned'. My place . . . between them."

Whether it pleased or not, the work made a tremendous impact wherever it was played, stimulating articles by leading writers such as America's Paul Rosenfeld and Olin Downes, Italy's Guido Pannain and England's Ernest Newman. Fifteen years later, Newman would again write about the work saying that: "No other piece of chamber music produced in any country during that period can be placed in the same class with it."

The work started as sketches for a **Cello Sonata** which were put aside. A year later Bloch came upon them, and decided that the material he had jotted down, using quarter tones, needed heavier instrumentation and thus transformed this into the ***Quintet***. He would abandon this work for a year, and then took it up again completing it by going every Sunday to the empty Cleveland Institute of Music, where in solitude he could work undisturbed. Writing to Olin Downes about this he exclaimed: "*An Institute of Music without music is an ideal place!*"

Subsequently, Olin Downes, having learned the piano part of this work that he admired passionately, planned to perform it with a local quartet and had asked Bloch to send him some information that he could use in giving a short talk about it. Bloch's answer (containing mostly his philosophy of life and his criticisms of young composers who expected to be given the "right conditions" in order to create)

was more than brief. "*The music speaks for itself. The first movement is more objective than the second. The third is a kind of exotic dream.*"

In the many elaborate interpretations and descriptions of this ***Quintet*** which have since been given by others, those impressions of intensity and of power from the very first note to the last were always echoed.

The first movement, Agitato, is followed without interruption by an Andante Mistico, in which material from the preceding movement is transformed as from a mysterious world. The last movement, Allegro Energico, is a barbaric exposition in which themes seem to come from a far-off primitive landscape and mingle with exotic bird cries. Beneath this tapestry of rhythms and sounds underlie deeper emotions and impulses, which at the end resolve themselves in the Blochian statements of affirmation, so often found in his music.

In the reaction to this work, much discussion was created concerning two opposite effects in the music. The first was his use of quarter-tones in the strings. The constant mention of this irritated Bloch for he insisted he only used them as an inflection, only a coloring and nothing more. The other point was the conventional C major cadence at the end. Harold Bauer, the pianist who performed in the New York Premiere, wrote to Bloch in utter disbelief when he first received the score: "How could this work so wild and so free have such an ending?" Bloch replied: "*Can you suggest a better ending?*" After some time, Bauer wrote back that after following Bloch's advice and experimenting with various endings, he now agreed that this ending was the right and only one.

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POEMS OF THE SEA: A CYCLE FOR PIANO (1922)

During the summer of 1921, before moving from New York to Cleveland where he had become the director of the Cleveland Institute of Music, Bloch took his family for a vacation to the little village of Percé, in Canada, at the edge of the Gaspé Peninsula. In those days all was still isolated. There were no automobile roads. One came by a slow rural train that at times stopped to shoo off a cow that blocked the tracks. There was only one hotel at Percé and the summer visitors were mainly people from Montreal and Quebec.

This was ideal for the Bloch's who hated resorts and crowds. The magnificent beaches were never crowded. The little fishing village was picturesque with the sort of natives that delighted Bloch who always liked the simple people close to the soil. Old Seamen who spoke in a hard to understand French full of 16th Century expressions liked to talk to this strange sympathetic man who seemed to be so interested in their lives. Bloch was indignant at the way these fishermen were exploited. He met some remarkable people among the visitors, one being Monseigneur Gaultier, Archbishop of Montreal, with whom he paced the beach singing together in full voice Gregorian Chant. Another person he admired was a woman of over 55 years of age who cut trails all over the wilderness and had discovered a large crevasse in the hills which became known as "La Craque à Mme. Chauvin." His admiration for her trail-making had such impact that we Bloch children, as often as we could, tried to cut trails in whatever wilderness we encountered in our young years.

During his solitary walks on the Percé beaches, Bloch began to think of music which he jotted down in a little book. The following year in Cleveland, he composed these three pieces which he generally called *The Sea Pieces: Waves, Chanty, At Sea*. He was able to give a special tang in them, of these colder northern seas, for the music surely doesn't bring to mind a type of tropical ocean. It is the sea of a Brittany, an Ireland, of the old-time sailors who settled the American Eastern Coast.

The music is tonal and straight-forward. Bloch had no intention of producing world-shaking music. What he wrote fitted his purpose. Bloch prefaced these pieces with a poem quotation from Walt Whitman, the American poet he admired:

> "In cabin'd ships at sea,
> The boundless blue on every side expanding,
> With whistling winds and music of the waves, the large imperious waves,
> Or some lone bark buoy'd on the dense marine.
> Where joyous, full of faith, spreading white sails,
> She cleaves the ether 'mid the sparkle and the foam of day, or under many a star at night,
> By sailors young and old haply will I, a reminiscence of the land, be read,

In full rapport at last."

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TWO PIANO PIECES
IN THE NIGHT
(1922)
NIRVANA
(1923)

Amidst the contrasting sets of piano pieces that Bloch wrote between 1922 and 1923, stand out two isolated and very romantic works. They are very different in mood as the captions by Bloch under their titles indicate.

In The Night (*A Love Poem*) is from the very first, lyrical, with a soaring passionate theme that surges and flows to an fro until it recedes at the end into a pianissimo. This work was later orchestrated by Bloch.

Nirvana (". . . *Sans Désir*, *sans souffrance* . . . *Paix*, *Néant* . . . ") is all atmosphere, sonorities, impersonal and contemplative. A resurgent mysterious rhythmical pattern of repeated triads give one the impression of the Orient.

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TEN ENFANTINES, FOR PIANO
(1923)

These pieces were composed during Bloch's tenure as Director of the Cleveland Institute of Music between 1920 and 1925. He was exposed to all levels of piano students from the "prodigies" to the ungifted and long-suffering! As Director-Educator, he groaned and fretted, mostly about "the mothers." Bloch's own theory was always that children should never be forced to study music. (Thus, it had to be a schoolteacher in Geneva, who recommended music lessons for me. As parents themselves the Bloch's had never tried to find out whether we their children were musically-gifted!)

Listening in Cleveland to young children's repertoires, Bloch felt that most of the contemporary material written for them was either too childish, superficial or over-sophisticated. Based on his own memories, those of a highly impressionable, sensitive and sentimental child, he decided to write pieces that, though easy to play, would still communicate a variety of feelings and moods with the sort of depth that he clearly remembered. This turned out to be more difficult than he had realized. Bloch often said that it had been one of his hardest projects, with the technical limitations that he had to accept. Struggling along, he sent

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each piece to his good friend, the pianist Harold Bauer, for help with details of the fingering. When Carl Fischer, the publisher, enthusiastically accepted them for publication, Bloch asked his younger daughter, Lucienne, who had at an early age shown great talent in drawing, to make illustrations for each piece. He dedicated these pieces to different members of the Institute's piano faculty and to his two daughters.

The first, **Lullaby**, was dedicated to his daughter Suzanne, whose own first little composition had been in the same key and in the same rather wistful mood. The second, **Joyous Party** is strangely in a minor key, but has a busy lively motion. There follows **With Mother**, dedicated to his younger daughter, Lucienne. (That piece was originally called Meditation, but in the manuscript he crossed it out in favor of a more down-to-earth title.) The next piece, **Elves** received the same treatment with the original title Prelude crossed out. **Melody** is an unabashed sentimental piece definitely aimed at the variety of children who like to use much pedal and pour their little hearts out. **Pastorale** is pure Bloch, a man whose love of nature, of the serenity of deep-flowering valleys and high pastures, was expressed in so many of his works. Very different is **Rainy Day**; there is all the melancholy of his own childhood when alone in the apartment he waited for his mother to return from her work at the family store, watching from the window where on rainy days the drops fell with regularity. **Teasing**, again in a complete change of mood is purely biographical. A cousin, Irma, according to Bloch, was long-legged and would prance into a room in a wonderfully special way. As a little boy, he would say: "*Cousin Irma comes in like this*." And sing a rhythmic pattern. That motif he used for the piece. The last **Dream** is lyrical and peaceful, a proper way of completing his Piano Suite for Children.

[This is not in book, but added below to show to whom each piece is dedicated. Note too: Above discussion is missing "Joyous March."]

Lullaby . . . SuzanneBloch
The Joyous Party . . . Mrs. B.F. Kortheuer
With Mother . . . Lucienne Bloch
Elves . . . Ruth Edwards
Joyous March . . . Beryl Rubinstein
Melody . . . Dorothy Price
Pastorale . . . Eleanor Foster
Rainy Day . . . Nathan Pryor
Teasing . . . M. Edith Martin
Dream . . . Anita Frank

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FIVE SKETCHES IN SEPIA, FOR PIANO
(1923)

Though written during the same period that Bloch composed his ***Enfantines*** and the ***Poems of the Sea***, these pieces are of a completely different style and texture. They are atmospheric sketches, impersonal, short and more abstract. The writing is light, having nothing of Bloch's strong rhythmical idiom. All indeed is in a musical coloring that can be rightly identified as the title describes.

After the opening Prelude setting the mood, Fumee our la Ville follows, no doubt inspired by the skies of Cleveland, a city whose soft coal smoke stacks left a constant pall in the skies. *Lucioles* (*Fireflies*) is but the fluttering of notes, a breath's duration. ***Incertitude*** is descriptive in its haziness. The set ends with an *Epilogue* where, as was often Bloch's custom, themes from the preceding movements return as memories, to a flowing of arpeggios for the left hand. It is only in this last section that Bloch becomes personal and expressive, as if he arrives on this "sepia scene" to give his blessing.

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BAAL SHEM SUITE FOR VIOLIN
(1923)

After Bloch finished a Jewish cycle of compositions in 1916 with his *Israel Symphony*, the works that followed were composed with no particular attempt to express his racial consciousness. Bloch had never intended to specialize solely in one idiom. Thus, when people read Hebraic strains in some of his more abstract works, he strongly dissented and at times was irritated. Yet when he deliberately set out to write Jewish music, he let go wholeheartedly, with gusto. This is what he did when writing the *Baal Shem Suite*.

In 1923, when stimulated by the presence of Andre de Ribaupierre, the splendid Swiss violinist whom he had engaged to teach at the Cleveland Institute of Music, he began to think of writing short violin pieces for his friend "Ribau." These would be less serious than his *Violin Sonata* or the *Viola Suite*.

The Baal Shem pieces that ensued were disapproved of by many of Bloch's friends. They felt that he was slipping. Bloch himself knew that this *Suite* was of a totally different caliber than his other works. He knew well that this couldn't be compared with his *Violin Sonata*. He enjoyed telling the story of his visit to the office of Carl Fischer who was to be the publisher of the music. After he and Ribaupierre had finished playing the *Suite*, Carl Fischer got up excitedly, slapped Bloch on the back and exclaimed, "Now, Bloch, you are improving and really getting somewhere."

The *Suite* became successful, eclipsing his other works for a time. He was unhappy about that. But if anyone said a word of criticism about the Baal Shem pieces, he would bridle at once. Bloch dedicated the work to the memory of his mother, who, though having had little knowledge of serious music, would have understood these pieces and liked their titles.

The first, *Vidui* (Contrition) has a meditative quality and could serve as a prelude leading to the following piece, *Nigun* (Improvisation), which has been the most played of the trio. Bloch let go and pulled out all the stops of violinistic emotions and drama. He gave himself a musical holiday, well aware that he would incur the displeasure of the highbrows, the purists, but also would be the delight of uninhibited violinists.

The last piece, *Simchas Torah* (Rejoicing) shows Bloch in his most expansive mood. This the Bloch who liked to tell a good Jewish story, have a good meal, look around at his family and friends, and pour out his unique warmth and sense of well being.
In this piece he inserted a Jewish melody which he must have heard in his youth. The refrain of the tune contained in the text the name Mezinka. That fragment comes near the end with gusto. An amusing addition to this is that during the epoch he was writing these pieces, Bloch bought his first car, A Ford, whose particular manufacturer had then openly professed anti-semitic views. Bloch, with his usual sense of sardonic humor, at once named his car Mezinka.

At the request of his publisher, he later prepared an orchestral version of this *Suite*.

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MÈLODIE FOR VIOLIN AND PIANO
(1924)

A leading personality in the faculty of the Cleveland Institute of Music was the genial Andre de Ribaupierre who had been a student of Eugene Ysaye. His robust playing and great artistry could at times give way to intense romantism. When Bloch wrote the ***Mélodie*** that he dedicated to him, it was to bring out every facet of his friend's lyricism. This caused some of Bloch's students and colleagues to wince at the first hearing of the piece, as Bloch at the piano, with gusto and a wide smile, emulated the violinist broadly.

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FROM JEWISH LIFE: THREE SKETCHES FOR VIOLONCELLO AND PIANO;
PRAYER, SUPPLICATION AND JEWISH SONG
(1924)

These three pieces were dedicated to the cellist, Hans Kindler, who had given the world premiere of ***Schelomo*** in 1917 at a concert in Carnegie Hall, devoted to Bloch's music, sponsored by the Society of The Friends of Music. All the works, except the ***Three Jewish Poems***, were first performances.

These ***Sketches*** are minor works written at a time when Bloch's duties as Director of the Cleveland Conservatory of Music took all his time and energy. Very expressive but simple in idiom, they cannot compare to his larger works for cello, but have been popular with cellists because the instrumental writing brings out all the richness of that solo instrument.

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THREE NOCTURNES FOR TRIO
(PIANO - VIOLIN - VIOLONCELLO)
(1924)

These three pieces belong to a series of short and less important works. Bloch's post as Director of the Cleveland Institute of Music, in which he had contact with student classes in ensemble, stimulated him to write simpler music than his earlier works. The only orchestral work of this period was the ***Concerto Grosso No. 1 for Strings***, and the only major work was his ***First Piano Quintet***. All the rest were solo instrumental pieces and a few short quartet pieces.

The Nocturnes consist of a first *Andante*, with echoes of Alpine strains, hazy, heard as if in the distance. The second, *Andante Quieto*, is also pastoral in mood. Both these pieces are in simple three-part form. The last, *Tempestoso*, more rhythmical and using thematic material from the second movement, gives the feeling of a passing storm which loses itself in the distance leaving behind a quiet and a serenity.

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MEDITATION HEBRAIQUE, FOR CELLO AND PIANO
(1924)

In his early years in New York, Bloch saw a great deal of the cellist Pablo Casals, who though famed, had remained a simple human being, often telling Bloch about his personal and professional tribulations. Bloch at one time wrote that he felt Casals was not getting the appreciation he deserved in America. He did not forsee the adulation that would grow in Casals' last years. Bloch dedicated

his ***Meditation Hebraique*** to him. This work starts quietly, rising to the lyricism which is found in Bloch's Jewish works using the typical chromatic progressions of this idiom: the augmented seconds, and in spots, the use of the quarter tone -- which is more as an inflection than the actual note such, as in ***Schelomo*** and later in his ***Piano Quintet***.

Bloch could never accept the reaction to these quarter tones which he received from the press and public. To him they were just a small thing, not a "new sound" to be talked about. He did not deliberately decide to "invent" these. First, they always existed in various ethnic musics, and secondly he had no intention of making this his "trade mark" as some people thought.

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POEME MYSTIQUE (SONATA No. 2 FOR FIOLIN AND PIANO)
(1924)

The idea of this ***Second Sonata*** came to Bloch while attending a performance of his ***First Sonata*** at a concert of the Cleveland Institute of Music. As he observed an uncomprehending audience, he wondered what these people could grasp of this violent and tormented music, thinking that he should now compose a totally different work of greater serenity. Triggering the actual writing of it was an unusual dream he had following a period of intense crisis and illness. It was an emotional thing, unreal and ecstatic. From that dream, he found the music.

The work is in one continuous movement, with here and there an Hebraic inflection. In this music of serenity, he also introduces in ecumenical mood, the Credo of Gregorian chant and also a fragment of the Gloria of the Mass "Kyrie fons bonitatis." The violin part has long lyric lines. Later, Bloch made cuts and changed too much tremolo in the piano part. After his death, I found eight pages of such changes which I now gladly can show to any performers of this work.

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CONCERTO GROSSO NO. 1
(1924 - 1925)

In 1924 my father, who complemented his duties as Director of the Cleveland Institute of Music by giving several master courses in composition and by conducting both the *a capella* chorus and the string orchestra, became concerned with some of his students who expressed their doubts that the validity of tonality and form in contemporary music. Some of them, unable to distinguish the difference between major and minor thirds, yet composing dissonant effects by groping at the piano since they couldn't distinguish sounds away from the keyboard, were skeptical when Bloch told them that one could still write alive and original music with the means that had existed for so long. He felt that he had to prove his point.

Thus on evening, he wrote a *Prelude* scored for strings and asked some of us students to write out the parts from this pencilled score. On the day of orchestra rehearsal we arrived, waving in the air parts that were still inkwet, and then sat down to read the piece, Bloch conducting us with a broad smile. It was an exciting moment. The *Prelude*, with its rhythmic

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life, was truly stirring, and we all played with gusto. At the end the whole orchestra shouted with glee; so did all the young composers present. Bloch said: "What do you think now? This tonal with no a single new noise or harmony. It has just old fashioned notes!" Thus, the ***First Concerto Grosso*** was born.

He wrote the Dirge, in order to make a strong contrast to the Prelude. Then remembering themes he had jotted down in 1899 at the age of nineteen for a possible "Suite of Swiss Dances" (never written), he composed the Pastorale using some of them. He was especially pleased with the lovely short transition between the Dirge and the Pastorale where in the last chord of the Dirge, the E sharp became an F, as dominant of the B flat Pastorale. Through this, he explained to me the function and magic of enharmony.

When he decided to end this work with a Fugue, again he made it a point to follow the schema of the classical Fugue with no "novelty" or special effect in it whatsoever. Yet the Fugue theme he wrote is typically Blochian with its skips of sevenths giving it a personal tang. He worked hard on it in the living room of our apartment, and one day there was a shout, "M*arguerite (Mother), les infants, come here*." We trouped there to find him jubilant with the stretto of the Fugue near the end, when the theme comes in twice as slowly in the first violins. He was as pleased as a child with the Fugue and then gravely said: "*I think this work might some day be published, and could be played in schools*."

He had no idea that this would become a regular orchestral repertory work. As the work continued to be played throughout the years, while fashions in modern idioms came and went, he was pleased to know that he had proved his point.

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PIECES, FOR STRING QUARTET
(1925)

After having spent several years in urban Cleveland, Ohio, Bloch's nostalgia for nature found escapist expression in his writing a series of *Quartet* pieces in which he created the rustic atmospheres he longed for:

IN THE MOUNTAINS
Dusk
Rustic Dance
Night

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The last piece, ***Night***, was inspired by the beautiful documentary film "Nanook of the North" by Robert Flaherty. Another piece, ***North***, in the next group was also influenced by this film:

PAYSAGES (Landscapes)
North
Alpèstre
Tongataboo

The last piece of this group was a result of Bloch's frustrated desires to travel to exotic lands, of which he had heard and often read about. In his research for the lectures he gave in Geneva (1911-1916) he also delved into collections of primitive music from Africa and of Eskimo country, with some themes becoming part of his own musical thoughts.

PRELUDE

He composed this piece late at night at his desk, right after he had severed his ties to the Cleveland Institute of Music after an association of five years. Those particular struggles to maintain his artistic integrity had come to an end. This is not a sorrowful work but rather of melancholy, of looking back, wondering whether all his efforts had been worth the battle and finding comfort in writing this music in solitude.

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FOUR EPISODES, FOR CHAMBER ORCHESTRA
(1926)

This work won the first prize of the 1927 New York Chamber Society competition. The four movements are unrelated in character and mood, but certain thematic material is brought in through the entire composition, unifying it subtly. The scoring is for string quintet, flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, French horn and piano.

These are Bloch's own notes about this work:

HUMORESQUE MACABRE

"Grotesque forms, a bit hazy as if in a nightmare, advance limping as in a sad procession and seem to grow and submerge us. Then silence and always in the same fantastic frame but veiled far away comes an obstinate complaint in this unreal world. The gray forms

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return slinking and begin to dance (grimace) tormenting us more and more. They come nearer, swelling, overtaking everything, multiplying like a swarm of bees . . . and break up into emptiness suddenly."

OBSESSION

"It is the obsession of a single motif, repeated and repeating itself in the form of twenty-four variations and a concentrated Fugato."

PASTORALE

"The sound of a shepherd's pipe, then a flute . . . the peace of nature and its mystery insinuate themselves in us and penetrate little by little . . . yet afar one senses a stirring -- a slight anguished shudder . . . but all fades, quiets down to calm and serenity."

CHINESE THEATER

"Impressions of the Chinese Theater in San Francisco: I went there every evening for a whole week from 7 p.m. to midnight, fascinated by its music, its colors, its odors, its mysteries, its little fragile and chaste princesses, its wild warriors with their dreadful beards, their terrifying dragons, all this fantastic imagination . . . I shuddered at times like a child in a dream . . . and feel still its irresistible nostalgia.

"I tried to reconstitute a synthesis, where all these elements are mingled. Squeaking strings, raucous trumpets, divers tam-tams, percussion instruments of wood, of metal, without forgetting the incredible voices of the actors . . . all this without any authentic Chinese instruments, not even their percussion. I have, though, used authentic themes noted from memory and created others of my own, saturated by this atmosphere.

"First there is a Prelude, somewhat as an accompaniment to a scenic and dramatic action . . . weird rhythms, battery, then squeaking violins, and the theme of the first movement, Humoresque Macabre seems to crawl underneath like a Chinese dragon, and the battery frames this episode. The violins start again and over their background, the singers (oboe, clarinet, bassoon and cello) make heard a Chinese melody (of my own) this in fantastic and tragic accents that burst forth imitating the shrill menacing trumpet-oboe effect so well described by Paul Claudel in his 'Connaissance de l'Est.' This is broken up by reminiscences of the dragon theme, and the 'obsession' theme that seems to become Chinese in its turn . . . and all this leads to a paroxysm ending with a violent salvo of battery. Then comes another episode, fast and gay this time, on authentic Chinese Motives that go accelerating in stretto, but always clear and in joy. The tragic trumpet them interrupt again, but like a conclusion punctuated by the final note of the singers and percussion."

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AMERICA
AN EPIC RHAPSODY IN THREE PARTS
(1926)

Three works by Bloch have consciously dealt with his varied backgrounds: the *Symphony Israel* -- his racial heritage; *Helvetia* -- his native country; and, the epic *Rhapsody America* -- his land of adoption. From the moment in 1916 when he landed in New York, watching its spectacular skyline, Bloch had the idea of writing a composition about his new country. Later living in New England, then discovering the West, the Indian country and finally the Pacific Coast, he stored all his impressions until they culminated in this work.

America was composed in San Francisco. Facing the multitude of American folk material he had gathered as a preliminary to writing the work, he realized that unless this was to be "centralized," as he said, "and not become hodgepodge," he had to find a way to unite the composition. Thus before doing anything with his material, he wrote first an *Anthem*, that would be a means of holding the work together. Fragments of the *Anthem*, for which he wrote the text, having special meaning, would be used throughout the work. The *Anthem* in its entirety would be heard only at the end with the audience joining a choir, thus concluding the *Rhapsody*.

This *Anthem* is extremely simple and tuneful; its purpose was to have it singable. It is naive because it is sincere, which in our times is not fashionable. This is what Bloch wanted knowing well enough that his *Anthem* would be criticized. He also blatantly constructed this work as "Program Music," peppering his score with quotations from Walt Whitman. Indeed this "story in music" was felt by a European-born man who through reading and absorbing America's past had a vision in which he expressed his faith and hope in its future.

Each of the three sections has its own atmosphere. The first movement, having a mysterious opening depicting "The Soil . . . . The Indians," suddenly changes as a flashback to 17th Century England. This leads to the episode of "the crossing of the Mayflower and the landing of the Pilgrims." A musical tapestry -- Indian songs, an Old English march, a sea chanty -- all are intermingled with fragments of the *Anthem*, culminating at the end with a great Psalm Chorale -- "Old Hundred" -- soaring above a multi-counterpoint of all the themes.

The second movement, dealing with the old South, uses Creole tunes giving the warm lazy feeling of the plantations in which many familiar melodies are heard. As Bloch expected, this created great shock amidst many people. How could it be possible that the creator of the *Suite for Viola* included in one of his works "Pop goes the Weasel?" The answer is that he simply saw the tune as very characteristic ethnic material and so why not use it. That episode leads into the Civil War, where a most exciting array of tunes are jumbled together with battle calls in which the often heard *America* theme comes as a cry of sorrow with the death of Lincoln. The music becomes funereal, its final chord poignantly dissonant.

The third and last movement, "The Present" (1926), contains raucous jazz tunes of the times chosen for their discordant cliches, intermingled with the sound of machines giving the impression of the mounting tensions and frenzy of that "prosperity" era. The music reaches a climax of noises in which "America's cry of distress" is heard. But the frenzy goes on until what Bloch noted as "The Inevitable Collapse," where all seems to disintegrate, descending both in pitch and dynamic. (How prophetic of 1929!) Then is heard the opening music of "The Soil . . . . The Indians," and slowly with reminiscences of past melodies a march arises built out of thematic fragments of machines. The music forges ahead steadily, with part of the *Anthem* whose text "Our fathers builded a nation" joins the surging progression. The movement grows until it reaches the entrance of the voice, where for the first time the complete *Anthem* is heard.

In 1927, Bloch submitted America to a national composition sponsored by the magazine Musical America, and unanimously won the prize from amongst ninety-two contestants. The judges were Leopold Stokowski, Serge Koussevitzky, Walter Damrosch, Alfred Herz and Frederick Stock.

The work was premiered simultaneously by several orchestras throughout the United States. During the 1976 American Bicentennial year, it was performed by the Cleveland Orchestra under the direction of Lorin Maazel, in a ninety minute Television Special devoted to Ernest Bloch, a program of a TV series "Music in America."

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ABODAH
(1929)

In the year 1929, while living in San Francisco, Bloch met a seven-year-old violinist whose playing moved him to tears, not for his technique, already stupendous for his age, but for the depth of expression and musicality that seemed almost unreal for so young a child. This youth was Yehudi Menuhin whose friendship began then and lasted faithfully until Bloch's death 30 years later. If Bloch was enchanted with Yehudi, he also was extremely impressed with his two sisters whose giftedness and intelligence also amazed him. That young prodigies could be so charming and full of humor, natural with no self-consciousness, delighted Bloch.

Years later Yehudi Menuhin said: "Ernest Bloch was the first composer who ever wrote a piece for me. It was his arrangement for violin and piano of the Hebrew prayer, *Abodah*. He dedicated it to me when I was seven. And the last piece he ever wrote, the two unaccompanied violin sonatas -- these too, he dedicated to me."

Abodah means "God's Worship." This is a piece in which Bloch put his whole heart, to express what he felt about the miracle of a little boy of seven who played the violin as if God had spoken through him.

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HELVETIA
"THE LAND OF MOUNTAINS AND ITS PEOPLE"
(1929)

(*These Program Notes were written by Ernest Bloch for the Premiere in Geneva as performed by the Orchestra de la Suisse Romande Conductedd by Ernest Ansermet.*)

"*For a long time I wished to sing of the Mountain and Mountaineers . . . But at twenty I did not feel I had enough technique to write a work that would be very simple, direct. For today, a certain courage is needed to dare to be simple, to be freed of all the theories and systems that poison us -- in our time, when so many 'specialists' believe that the value of a work depends upon the esthetic doctrine that it pretends to represent or upon its complications -- harmonic, contrapuntal, rhythmic, orchestral . . . I have never believed in that; for the history of music superbly gives it the lie. Gregorian chant, for example, or the work, incomparable in its richness and depth, of Josquin des Pres, Palestrina, Orlando di Lasso, are infinitely more subtle -- in spite of the simplicity of the harmonic materials used -- than most modern works. It is they who are the refined ones, we the barbarians. Later I was occupied with my* ***Jewish Cycle*** *which, revealing a side of my nature -- more profound, hidden and perhaps more 'universal' -- required a wholly different style. Thus I waited . . . and, in the course of more than twenty-five years, I accumulated a considerable mass of musical material.*

"*In 1928, I at last decided to realize my long-delayed plan. The difficulty was to establish a Unity among the diverse motives, to classify them, to make a whole of them . . . and also to sacrifice many of them. (The actual works contain more than thirty motives; some date from 1900, others from 1928; I have used also many melodies or fragments of folk origin.) At last I adopted a plan, which allowed me to give form to my idea: a large fresco, or rather five frescoes, each representing a portion of the general theme. This theme is the Mountain -- Man -- and the Union of Man and his native soil.*

"**Part I of Helvetia**, *in which a large number of essential motives are announced, depicts the Mountain itself, its mystery, its rocks, its forests, and also man's joy before nature, and here and there, peasants and their simple songs; and also the fear of danger which menaces the little free nation . . . then, Peace, and finally twilight, the shepherd leading back his flocks at nightfall.*

"**II. Then Dawn**. *The awakening of the Mountain and of the calls of one Alp to another . . . and the descent of these men, in many-colored groups, and their mediaeval weapons, symbolizing -- through motives in old modes -- the various cantons, a veritable procession in which one distinguishes the cry of a vendor of Mountain cheeses -- heard in my childhood at Geneva. All these groups gather in the public square.*

"**III. There is the Landsgemeinde**, *the gathering, in the open air, which discusses events. The Elders announce, with dignity but tragically, that the Fatherland is in danger. And it is a hymn, in minor, of a folk character, purely German-Swiss, representing the Old Cantons which were the cradle and the heart of the Confederation. That hymn will ring out*

in major as a peroration, as a national hymn. But her it depicts the immediate Distress, and it answered by lamentations.

"IV. But Suddenly the People Arise. *Their mountains shall not be enslaved! All are for liberty, to give their lives for the hallowed soil, the Fatherland. And it is a true mediaeval battle which is unchained for the defense of the country, the mountains. It ends in a victory, which I have symbolized by an old song of Geneva Cé qué lé no (The one Who Is Above) -- illustrating, to me, the town's beautiful motto: Post Tenebras Lux.*

"**V. Epilogue**. *The motive of the Mountain sounds again. But it is the mountain freed, again serene, as after a storm. This motive spreads, grows, in a lyricism more and more intense; then it is combined with that of Peace and, through a fervent progression, leads to the final hymn, in which I clearly hear the multitude joining the orchestra, symbolizing the union of man and his soil, the Fatherland. One of the themes of the Mountain sounds again, with passionate warmth, as if man wished to be at one with his native soil. There the motive of the hymn emerges again, above everything, like the national banner, the symbol of the Country.*

"*Program music? Let it be! The essential thing is that musical logic be observed . . . I have done my best in that direction. Moreover, most of my works have been inspired by a poetic or philosophic idea,*

even sometimes unconsciously. Art for me is an expression, an experience of Life, and not a jig-saw puzzle or an application in cold blood of mathematical theories -- a laboratory dissection.

*"Some claim that, both in **America** and **Helvetia**, they fail to find me. The fact is that they have never really known me . . . It is evident that **Helvetia** and **America** required a style quite different from that of **Israel** or **Schelomo**. In **Helvetial** have deliberately chosen my means and have confined myself to the style that matched the subject I was interpreting. A style clearly diatonic and tonal, strong and traditional, a style which, after all, is not so easy as many today believe . . . But those who have eyes and ears -- and a heart -- will find me as well in this work, and in **America**, as in **Schelomo** or my **Quintet**. It is only that, in each of these works, I have set free a different part of my personality. In Helvetia and America, the subject being more localized, this personality perhaps appears less picturesque or original, or, as they say "modern," to those who judge by the surface.*

"I would simply say, then, that in none of my works have I been preoccupied with being original or modern. Theories like novelty pass away so quickly. And what remains of them? My only desire, on the contrary my sole effort, has been to be faithful to my Vision, to be TRUE."

This symphony was submitted to the Victor Company Symphonic Contest in 1930. Bloch was chosen one of the five equal winners of this competition.

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SACRED SERVICE
AVODATH HADOKESH
FOR BARITONE (CANTOR), CHORUS AND ORCHESTRA
(1930-1933)

When Bloch left America in 1930 to isolate himself in a tiny hamlet lost in the Italian Swiss Alps, it was to immerse himself completely in the writing of *Avodath Hakodesh*. Having a limited remembrance of the Hebrew taught him in his childhood, he spent many months studying the text, seeping himself in its subtleties, sonorities and the deep meanings he found in every word and inflection.

He drew his text for the *Sacred Service* from the Union Prayer Book for Jewish Worship. It is in Hebrew that the *Sacred Service* is written. The only exception is a section in the concluding part, where the Cantor sings in English. (This also has been translated into French and Italian.) *Hakodesh* embodies the liturgy of the *Sabbath Morning Service*. But the composer omitted some passages from the text, substituted a few passages from the *Sabbath Evening Service* and replaced some responsive readings with brief instrumental preludes and interludes.

Regarding the texts, Bloch said that they "*embody the essence of Israel's aspirations and its message to the world. Though Jewish in its roots, this message means to me above all a gift of Israel to the whole of mankind. It symbolizes for me more than a Jewish Service, for, in its great simplicity and variety, it embodies a philosophy acceptable to all men.*"

This work would be the culmination of what he had sensed in 1906 when he wrote to his friend and collaborator, the poet Edmond Fleg, a letter expressing his first realization of his Hebraic heritage. Until then he had not much thought about it, having been brought up in a milieu that was not involved in the Jewish religious life of Geneva. He had absorbed, though, the atmosphere of Jewish family life, the lighting of the candles on Friday evening, the Seder celebration. Yet in 1906, it burst upon him: "*It is important that we express, show the greatness and destiny of this race . . .*"

It would be only in 1911 that he would fulfill these words. During the intervening years he had to complete the opera Macbeth, for which Fleg had written the libretto. Bloch was obliged to support his family by helping to run the family business, a store selling Swiss tourist goods. He also gave lectures and courses, conducting series of concerts.

After the performance of his opera in Paris, he went through a phase where he was sounding himself in the search for the right idiom to use for another libretto sent to him by Fleg, dealing with the story of Jézabel. He didn't feel happy with the French text:

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> *"But, nom de Dieu, how the French language bothers me! On a beautiful theme I mumble some 'Boruch atoh Adonoi' or 'Schema Yisroel,' then it all goes by itself. A noble poignant declamation shapes*

itself, affirms itself. The syllables call for the expression. I am more and more convinced that it is for nothing that I could never write Lieder. The language bothers me; Hebrew would be better for me, I am certain."

But when Fleg sent him his text on Psalm 137, he was deeply stirred. This was closer to his heart. Explaining to Fleg his reasons why he at that time was not producing, he wrote:

"I note here and there themes that are, without my willing it for the greater part, Jewish, and which begin to precise themselves and indicate the instinctive and also conscious direction in which I am going . . . I do not search to give them a form. I am producing nothing so far, but I feel that the hour will come and I await it with confidence respecting this present silence imposed by the natural laws that know. There will be Jewish rhapsodies for orchestra, Jewish poems, dances mainly, poems for voice for which I have not the words, but I would wish them Hebraic. All my musical Bible shall come, and I would let sing in me these secular chants where will vibrate all the Jewish soul in what it has profoundly national and profoundly human. New forms should be created, free and well defined, also clear and sumptuous. I sense them without seeing them yet before me. I think I shall write one day, songs to be sung at the Synagogue in part by the minister, in part by the faithful. It is really strange that all this comes out thus slowly, this impulse that has chosen me, whom all my outer life have been a stranger to all that is Jewish. One would almost say that no exterior barrier could be found, so that the soul even would be freer, and could surge out without constraint."

Nothing could have been more prophetic. In the next three and a half years, he wrote -- in spite of all his other commitments -- the *Psalms 137, 114, 22*; the *Three Jewish Poems*, *Schelomo*, and *Israel Symphony* and his *First String Quartet*.

These are the works which, when premiered in New York in 1917, brought him a spectacular success. With his fame came numerous articles about him quoting his music, which used over and over in the following years often had little to do with his later music which was not specially intended to be Hebraic. Bloch, after this initial success, had no intention of capitalizing on it, and indeed his particularly-designated Jewish works are only a part of his total output.

When he set out to write Avodath Hakodesh, there again he lived and absorbed the essence of what he read in the words. He wrote to his good friends and co-directors of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, Ada Clement and Lillian Hodgehead:

"I am still studying my Hebrew text . I have now memorized entirely the whole ***Service*** *in Hebrew. I can write it in Hebrew from memory. I know its significance word by word. I have discovered the grammar without grammar! But what is more important, I have absorbed it to the point that it has become mine and as if it were the very expression of my soul. It far surpasses a* ***Jewish Service*** *now. It has become a cosmic poem, a glorification of the Laws of the Universe . . . It has become the very text I was after since the age of ten . . . a dream of stars, of forces . . . the Primordial Element . . . before the worlds existed -- I declaim out loud, amidst the rocks and forests in the great silence, and the music slowly elaborates itself . . . I intend, besides the Service, to write a great orchestral, choral work with it . . . I do not care any more what people will say . . . I do not wish it for Jews --- who will probably fight it . . . not for the critics, nor for the 'Tradition!' It has become a private affair between God and me.*"

For the music, Bloch expressed the essence of each section in varied ways. Parts are completely Hebraic, and he used one authentic Jewish melody, the *Tsur Yisroel* twice, feeling that this expressed the oppressed faithful of all times; these voices rising up were those of the true Jews. He had been deeply impressed in his first years in New York when he witnessed a service given in the poor section of the city on the Lower East Side. He never forgot it. Also, one day he made a statement which impressed me deeply even though a child, saying how he loved to go down to this section on a Saturday to watch the old Jews,

the poor ones, walking in their black coats, almost greenish from age, lost, absorbed, emanating in their persons "the dignity of the Sabbath."

In other sections of the *Service*, one finds the influence of the studies of sixteenth-century counterpoint he re-started at the age of forty-eight, when he felt he had never gone deeply enough in it. Thus, in spots the texture has a transparency he wanted, making a contrast to the rest. The unifying material that binds the work was a fragment in the mixolydian mode. After his death, it was found on one of his little counterpoint books as a four-page basso ostinato above which Bloch had jotted down, "*for possible Jewish Service*." This fragment (G A C B A G) is the thematic foundation upon which the entire *Service* rests.

In the last section, Bloch brought his own personal interpretation:

> "The Service has progressed; it is almost finished, save the last chorus which was almost done, but did not satisfy me, too tame, too much like a chorale; and the Hebrew words are so stupendous that I could not leave it so. They mean about this:

> "Lord of Eternity . . . before all forms were created . . . and after the whole disappear . . . vanish . . . into nothingness . . . He alone will reign terribly . . . and He is One . . . no second.
>
> *"Some text! And this comes after the stupendous text for the dead ones. I put the whole text of the book in English this time . . . and (it) can be done in French or German or Italian, wherever it will be given. The cantor recites the text on a background of veiled music where I used corresponding motifs of* ***Schelomo****, the* ***Jewish Poems****, all saturated with my initial motifs transformed (as it permeates the whole* ***Service****). Then as I could not recite it, I wrote the rhythms of the text to have it concord with the music! Then as I still could not recite it on indifferent notes, I discovered that I had to note the sound, too, of the speaking voice. Thus it will not be sung! But spoken on certain changing notes sometimes quite dissonant with the music but frightfully impressive.*
>
> *"The end of the* ***Service****, using the text I quoted, will be a stupendous thing! Suddenly, I began howling the music. It is no more music anyhow. It is like hoarse sounds coming through the ether, from inhuman voices, thousands of years back -- before the Earth existed, or was only of fire or gas or nebula."*

This "cosmic" sense was expressed in Bloch's last request a week before his death, that of enlargements of photos he had seen of the galaxies, the Milky Way, giving an idea of the immensity of the universe and of the small, unimportant size of our planet!

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PIANO SONATA
(1935)

The ***Piano Sonata*** was written while Bloch lived in the Swiss-Italian Alps, in the little hamlet of Roveredo high up above the city of Lugano. This is the first work written after he spent three years writing his ***Sacred Service***. He had come to America in 1934 to conduct the ***Sacred Service*** in New York, and returned to his mountains to recuperate from the active life he had spent there; and, to "lick his wounds" as a composer, something he was accustomed to doing. The ***Sacred Service*** had been received with mixed reactions, for it had not been Jewish enough for many admirers of Bloch who expected to find either a second ***Schelomo***, or something full of traditional liturgical material. It hadn't been modern enough for those who expected something like his ***Piano Quintet***. Perhaps what had hurt him more than anything else was the very harsh article by an old friend, the critic Paul Rosenfeld, who in 1916 had enthusiastically jumped on the Bloch bandwagon. Rosenfeld now wrote that the ***Service*** was a proof that Bloch had deteriorated completely and the work would never live.

Now in the Alps and away from the musical world, Bloch regained his energy by taking long trips in the mountains, hunting for mushrooms of which he was an expert; and he started his ***Sonata for Piano***.

This work has been rightly described as having "a tang of iron and wormwood" for in it are passages of heavy, brutal poundings that seem to prophesy world events to come. The work is dedicated to the brilliant Italian pianist, Guido Agosti, who premiered it.

It is in three uninterrupted movements. The first, *Maestoso ed Energico*, is full of brief, tense rhythmic themes which come after an introduction of rich ascending and descending broken chords. The music moves onward steadily with no break until it reaches a sort of re-introduction which is in itself a cadence where the repetition of the introduction, this time very soft piano, leads to the slow movement which is a *Pastorale*, expressing the serenity of nature.

The third movement that follows, has a story connected with it. In the last years of his life when Bloch had settled in the state of Oregon, he had a file box in which he collected documents illustrating what he saw as the "utter stupidities of our times." There were grotesque clippings, inept questionnaires he often received for special surveys, and pathetic queries for someone's thesis. In addition, he also had a section he called "Americana" full of items sometimes touching or beautiful, that to him described this many-faceted country. Into the grotesque file, he had put the clipping of a photo taken at a banquet of some American Legion group. On top of the table is a prancing drum majorette in full regalia, surrounded by admiring members of the gathering. The pretty girl is high-stepping, wearing high boots and twirling her baton. Clipped to this photo, Bloch had added a photograph of an ancient Chinese sculpture called "God of War." This terrible looking creature is high stepping in the identical pose of the drum majorette. but under his high boots lie groveling figures of his victims trampled under his feet. Bloch would say that the last movement of the ***Piano Sonata***, barbaric in character, depicts this brutal aspect. The high stepping, the heaviness of the material used, with its large dynamics reach a summit where this brutality breaks, reaching final passages that are mysterious and questioning.

In 1938, Bloch received a letter from a musicologist requesting information about the *Sonata*'s harmony, wanting to know whether Bloch was using traditional principles of the 18th or 19th Centuries with respect to both chord and key relationships. Bloch commented in detail on the margins of this letter, probably for use in his later courses at the University of California at Berkeley. Some of the remarks are full of irony.

In answer to questions about certain chords, whether dominant sevenths of this or that key he wrote: "I do not understand . . . . . later: "Does it matter?" Clipped to the letter are six pages of criticism of the questions, too long to reproduce, but his final conclusion is worth giving:

"The trouble with all these questions is that they refer to a viewpoint mostly harmonic which is situated on one obsolete period of history as if this conception was an absolute truth, valid for all times! It is not. I would not apply such a conception to the several centuries of Gregorian chant not to any works of the vocal polyphony of the 15th or 16th Centuries . . . nor too modern music. It applies to a short harmonic period; and even so it applies more to a scholastic conception, that of treatises or theoreticians, than to the works themselves."

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VOICE IN THE WILDERNESS
FOR VIOLONCELLO AND ORCHESTRA
(1936)

Twenty years after having composed ***Schelomo***, Bloch wrote another piece for the same instrumental combination which was totally different from the earlier work in form, instrumental texture, conception and expression. **Schelomo** is in one movement closely knit by its thematic material which recurs and gives it shape. The ***Voice in the Wilderness*** is divided into six short sections played without interruption but having clearcut divisions: moderato; poco lento; moderato; adagio; poco agitato; allegro.

Bloch described this work as: "*a suite of pieces in the nature of soliloquies, moods of a prophetic tint*." At first he had the idea of writing these pieces in alternation of piano (or orchestra) and cello, the latter repeating in a sort of paraphrase that which appeared before its entrance. But this plan was modified, and even though this form ("*which I believe to be new*") persists through five or six movements, the cello provides neither a variation of what precedes, nor is it, strictly speaking a paraphrase. "*It is as though the cello were meditating upon, or expressing its reaction to that which has gone before it, its utterances being based on the thematic and emotional material of that which preceded it*."

The various movements flow and link with each other quite naturally. They are sometimes bound together by a barely perceptible thematic relationship or "reminiscence" but each has its own clearly defined character. The episodes in which the orchestra speaks alone are scored as a symphonic work per se, and not a *tutti* or accompaniment. "*The cello has an expressive role, without endless displays of virtuosity,*

like the character in a drama. The sixth moment may be likened to a crowd in a joyous and somewhat barbaric mood opposed by the cello as by an individual."

The orchestral sections of this work were published also as a set of piano pieces entitled ***Visions and Prophecies***. This work, compared to ***Schelomo***, could be described as: "in tans and browns while ***Schelomo*** has colors of reds and golds opposed to the dark and somber pessimism of Solomon." Bloch hearing recordings of both works, said in his later years that in a way he felt that the ***Voice*** was a more profound work than ***Schelomo***. He then voiced his hopes of writing still another work of the sort, but this time about the very early Prophets of the desert, a primitive conception, barren, wild, and completely different from these two works. He did not live to accomplish this however.

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VISIONS AND PROPHECIES, FOR PIANO
(FROM VOICE IN THE WILDERNESS)
(1936)

This set of five pieces was taken from the orchestral sections of a work for orchestra with cello obbligato. The form of that composition is unusual since it is neither a Concerto nor a Rhapsody such as ***Schelomo***. The original six movements all begin with the orchestra alone, after which the cello comes in, as if it were meditating on what was heard before. For the piano version, Bloch uses only the first five, each of the sections as an individual piece. There is thematic unity at the end when the important opening theme is brought back again, not as an introduction but as a statement leading to the conclusion.

Bloch wrote two other brief pieces for piano: ***Nirvana*** (1923) and ***In the Night*** (1922), the latter of which was subsequently orchestrated.

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SYMPHONIC SUITE: EVOCATIONS
(1937)

The three movements, played continuously, are: ***Contemplation*** (*Andante Moderato*); ***Houang-Ti, God of War***(*Animato*); ***Revouveau-Spring*** (*Andante Piacevola*).

The first performance of ***Evocations*** took place in San Francisco at a concert of the San Francisco Symphony on February 11, 1938. The following is condensed from Bloch's own notes:

> *"As simple as it appears, this work has caused me a terrific amount of labor; sketches and infinite changes and modifications until it reached its actual concise form. . . . All artistic creation is so mysterious and complex that the composer himself may be deluded . . .*
>
> *"It was in the Spring of 1930, in San Francisco, that I wrote down two sketches. I had been looking through an illustrated book on Chinese Art which, undoubtedly, stimulated my imagination, with*

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> *these musical results. Then the sketches were abandoned for a long time. Gestation is very slow with me, and often lasts for years. I left San Francisco, and lived several years in Roveredo, Switzerland. There I composed my **Sacred Service** (1930-33), and sketched other works. Among other sketches, a reminiscence or nostalgia of San Francisco's Chinatown was laid down. In the Spring of 1937, I found the sketches for **Evocations** but had no title. My booklet of notes bears **Esquisses Orientales**.*
>
> *"A title is so precise and limiting, whereas music is vague and unlimited. I re-read parts of the Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita, the Thoughts of Buddha, and Lao Tse, went to the Musee Guimet, read books of Marcel Granet -- La Civilisation Chinoise.*
>
> *"I became conscious that these three pieces were not all descriptive or attempts to 'picture' Oriental subjects, but were really my personal*

reactions to certain Oriental stimuli. Thus they were 'interpretations,' and I was about to use that title, when a friend of mine suggested ***Evocations****. This seemed preferable to me, and I adopted it, with the subsequent subtitles*."

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CONCERTO FOR VIOLIN
(1938)

Bloch's compositions for violin are numerous. It had been his instrument, and as a young boy he had shown great talent. In the old scrapbook he left to the Library of Congress, the first clipping is one of a review of a performance he gave in Geneva at the age of eleven, full of praise but warning the young boy that all his success might be dangerous, so early.

At the age of 17, he went to Brussels to study with the great Eugene Ysaye, who after seeing some of Bloch's compositions advised him to develop what he felt were great gifts for, as he said: (this being the year 1898) "We have good violinists dime-a-dozen but not enough composers of value."

Bloch wrote several youthful works for this instrument, a *Concerto* which he wisely destroyed, and a series of *Fantasies for Violin and Piano* which he never allowed for publication. Those unpublished manuscripts are in deposit at the Library of Congress.

About 1910, when he was conductor of the Orchestra of the City of Lausanne in Switzerland, Bloch engaged a 17 year-old phenomenon whose name was Josef Szigeti. Bloch and his wife would often reminisce about that youth -- how marvelously he played, how beautiful he was, how shy and modest.

Throughout the years, a deep friendship grew between the two men which lasted until Bloch's death. When Bloch wrote the *Concerto* he dedicated it to Szigeti, who gave the World Premiere in Cleveland in 1938, Mitropoulos conducting, and later recorded it with Charles Munch and l'Orchestre de la Societé des Concerts du Conservatoire, in Paris
.

The *Concerto* is based on a motif which Bloch jotted down from American Indian music he heard in New Mexico. This theme ends typically as do many Indian themes -- on a descending third and in typical syncopation. However, the *Concerto* in itself is not at all Indian in character nor does it have to do with Indian music. Bloch was struck with the theme, retained and absorbed it, had empathy with it, so he assimilated it and used it as he saw fit. Though it is close to the Bloch idiom, it is not Hebraic. Some sections are modal, some seem in part Oriental. But it is the opening theme that unifies the entire work.

Composed while he lived in Europe, it may be that this American Indian theme reflected Bloch's nostalgia for the American Southwest. Bloch has always missed the country he had left. When in a period of his life he tried to paint watercolor landscapes, we found that he had painted Swiss landscapes while in America, and during a stay in the Swiss Alps, surrounded by magnificent views, he told us he had painted a lovely vision of the California Redwoods!

Bloch finished the *Concerto* in a small village called Chatel in the Swiss French alps. He had difficulty with the long cadence for the violin, and at times would pick up his old fiddle which had lain untouched since the days in 1923 when he had stuck it under my chin and taught me a little. At the time of the *Cadence's* composition in Chatel, that violin was a bit "husky and rusty." Bloch planned to practice seriously, and as during this period I happened to be there, it was great sport to hear him work. He would start on finger exercises, scales and etudes. Though he would begin with the grand virtuoso approach, the results would be not up to it. What happened would be that, after a while, impatient and irritated with his poor showing, he would lose his discipline and enjoy himself by improvising for a long time. Mother would shake her head and sigh and say, "Why doesn't he practice properly" (which was what she would say about me when I was a child). According to mother, Bloch had been a brilliant violin performer, but cold and unlike his beautiful piano playing, which was warm and orchestral though he had very little technical training. Bloch understood the violin instrument, thanks to his contact with it, and for his *Concerto*, brought out all its intense lyricism and resources.

Quoting from the late English critic, Ernest Newman, in his review "Form and Matter in Music" from the London Sunday Times of March 1939:

"The listener to Bloch's fine work will find himself flung headlong into a sea of pure

fourths and fifths in the opening phrase of the *Concerto*, and kept there from first to very last; for very often when these one-time outcasts from respectable musical society are not being openly displayed at this point or that in the harmony of the *Concerto*, they are subtly implicit as 'joints' in the melodic structure. The plain musical man, however, who (happily perhaps) knows no more about theory than his music-loving ancestors for the last two thousand years, but only knows what he likes and what he doesn't like, is no doubt by this time sufficiently used to the innovations of modern harmony, not to be perturbed by any amount of fourths. He will find himself liking the Concerto without quite knowing why . . . .

"Anyone who would try for instance to analyze Bloch's *Concerto* in terms of subjects would have a hard time of it. One big arterial motive is there indeed -- the theme given out at the commencement of the first movement. This theme takes several shapes during the course of the work, and it is entrusted to the farewell gesture of the soloist. But apart from this motive, there are so many smaller ones, each of which keeps recurring at the most unexpected moments and in the most unexpected company, that quotation and elucidation of them would take up almost as much space as the score itself."

The work is in three movements: *Allegro Deciso* in which appears the *Cadenza* which caused Bloch to pick up his violin after almost forty years. The *Andante* follows, in which there come moments when a pastoral theme comes in which might have been once called "off key," but gives a magical mysterious atmosphere. The *Finale* brings in livelier, almost spring-like freshness, with the main theme as the final word.

* * * * *

TWO PIECES FOR STRING QUARTET
(1938-1950)

Using sketches written earlier, these pieces are different from Bloch's other sets. They are closer to his last quartets having do descriptive intentions and being abstract in style. He dedicated them to the devoted members of the Griller String Quartet, who performed all his *Chamber Music* and recorded his first four *Quartets* in England. The Griller Quartet musicians worked with Bloch at his home in Oregon.

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CONCERTO FOR VIOLIN
(1938)

[NOTE: The material on the ***Concerto for Violin*** on pages 82 and 83 is identical to the material found on pages 79 through 81.]

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[NOTE: The material on the ***Concerto for Violin*** on pages 82 and 83 is identical to the material found on pages 79 through 81.]

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SUITE SYMPHONIQUE FOR ORCHESTRA
(1944)

Bloch, on his own notes sent to Pierre Monteux for the premiere of the work in Philadelphia in 1945, gave the following descriptive information:

> *"This work, the several parts of which were sketched years ago, was completed in Agate Beach, Oregon, in May 1944.*
>
> *"The **Overture** starts with a **Maestoso**, followed by a quicker Fugato, rather free, as the several entrances occur in the variations of the theme, then a return of the **Maestoso**. It dies out and connects immediately with the **Passacaglia**, not a fancy one but a quite regular **Passacaglia**, on a motif of eight measures, starting in the Dorian mode, introducing the*

*Neapolitan sixth, and ending in the true minor . . . There are about twenty-two variations, ending in all kinds of canons, motif inverted and a great climax of lyrical character, in major. After a little pause comes the **Finale**, a kind of moto perpetuo, of exuberant character, constructed in the regular 'sonata form,' the second theme being a grotesque sardonic fugue.*

*"I could not tell you, even if I wanted to, what was the source of my 'inspiration' . . . The initial phrase of the **Overture**was -- perhaps -- influenced by Orlando di Lasso (!) but is completely different in texture and harmonization. The theme of the **Passacaglia** I found driving from San Francisco in Cloverdale on my way to Oregon 1941, I think -- in its primitive form. But it was modified a little later. The theme of the fugue (second theme of the **Finale**) originated in this way: My daughter Suzanne was with us in Roveredo-Ticino (1932-33?) and we studied again together the 48 themes of the Well-Tempered Clavichord. I wanted then to show her how one could create motifs of fugue based on similar, logical principles, but totally different -- and there, both of us sitting on the little stone steps in the garden, I wrote, just like that, two pages of fugue motifs on all characters. The last one -- which irritated her! -- bears the inscription un peu grotesque, and this is the one I used in my **Finale**, why, I do not know. Nor do I 'know' why the Dies Irae intruded when, years late, after long maturation, I decided to give shape at least to this 'classical' work. It simply seemed to fit."*

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QUARTET NO. 2
(1945)

Twenty nine years would elapse between Bloch's ***First and Second Quartet***. He had begun a few sketches for it in 1940 but abandoned it during his long period of silence caused by the second World War. When he returned to it, he wrote me about this work saying: *"It will be very dry, not easy to listen to and I doubt it will be liked."* Having been away from the musical world, living in small villages in the Swiss and French Alps, Bloch felt out of touch. Many believed that he was finished, unproductive.

To his surprise, when the ***Quartet*** was premiered in London by the Griller String Quartet, the unanimous reaction was of stupendous admiration led by the distinguished critic, Ernest Newman who wrote: *"In my opinion, it is the finest work of our time in this genre, one that is worthy to stand beside the last quartets of Beethoven."*

When the Griller Quartet performed it at the University of California at Berkeley, Bloch rehearsed with them on details of interpretation, hearing his work for the first time. In an interview, he talked about his surprise at its success. *"When I received the British reviews, I said, 'How can this be?' I didn't remember just what I had written two years ago. I am like a cat with kittens. When the kittens are born, I look ahead to the next ones. So I looked over the manuscript and I couldn't understand why they liked it. Some parts of it seemed to me rather arid. In **Schelomo**, and other early works, I opened my heart to the world and the world spat back at me. Now I have written this **Quartet** that is entirely remote from the world -- and they like it -- I don't understand . . . I am not a revolutionary composer. I believe in both tradition and evolution. Tradition is the wisdom of the past; evolution is the wisdom of the future which complements it. This **Quartet**is only thirty-eight minutes and the score occupies comparatively a few pages; but you should see the preliminary sketches. They make a high pile. I have rewritten a couple of bars sometimes twenty times before I felt that they were right."*

Four movements of the ***Second Quartet*** are: *Moderato*; *Presto*; *Andante*; and *Allegro Molto*. Bloch did not compose easily. He conscience would not allow it. The complexity of this Quartet, its freedom from set tonality yet holding together by its "organic logic" caused repeated wonder in the reviews. Amidst the descriptions of the work, all striving to give an idea of it, Ernest Newman's words are perhaps the most beautifully said:

*"Technically it is of exceptional interest; from an embryo in the second of the four movements (the Presto-Scherzo) there comes into being an entity which from that point onward moulds the whole **Quartet** from the inside into a single organic substance, differently accentuated or rhythmed. As the work goes on, it assumes on personality after another till it*

expands in the finale into, first of all, the theme for a powerful passacaglia, then, re-rhythmed yet again, into the subject of a mighty fugue. The whole work is rounded off in unexpected but inevitable rightness with a serene reminiscence, in the final bars of a tiny melisma with which the first movement had opened . .

"All this, however, is not just dazzle-book craftsmanship for craftsmanship's sake. It is the organic result, not the motivating cause of the musical thinking, which is unique in modern chamber music for its alternation of subtle contemplative beauty and torrential power."

The New York Music Critics Circle Award of 1947 was given to Ernest Bloch for this ***Quartet***.

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CONCERTINO, FOR FLUTE, VIOLA AND STRING ORCHESTRA
(1948)

Commissioned by Juilliard School, this work was premiered there in 1950. Its three movements have great contrast. When Bloch started writing it, he must have thought of the young musicians for whom he was writing. The opening movement is full of what could be called "affectionate freshness," an easy going, flowing melodic and tonal *Allegro Commodo*.

The *Andant*e is modal and contrapuntal, with its two motives intertwined between the two soli and the orchestra in various ways, in *Passacaglia* style where Bloch's craftsmanship is evident. The last movement is again in contrast, as *Fugue*based on a subject he had written years before but discarded as unsatisfactory. When he took it up later, realizing why he couldn't find a good counter-subject, he sent me several pages of his studies in transforming the theme rhythmically so it would work with logic and balance. His long work on Renaissance counterpoint, on Bach fugues and on Beethoven's sketches had served him well! However academic his studies had been, in this fugue after a short stretto, (for no logical reason whatsoever) suddenly the theme appeared to him in the form of a Polka into which he went whole-heartedly with gusto ending the work rather suddenly.

* * * * *

CONCERTO SYMPHONIQUE, FOR PIANO AND ORCHESTRA
(1948)

Some of the material for the ***Concerto Symphonique*** was conceived thirty years before the work actually took shape. Amidst the innumerable piles of sketches found after my father's death in 1959, all carefully sorted and annotated for my enlightenment, I found a sheaf of yellowed material on which Bloch had written "Themes written in October 1918 at Lexington Avenue, New York City."

This was the time of the Russian Revolution. Bloch, fired by the revolt of the oppressed workers and peasants, full of idealism and enthusiasm, had sketched material, with titles such as "The Toilers" and "The Factories." He didn't realize how this sort of thing would be typical propaganda material for the future Soviet Union. Since he was against any sort of "isms" he would have recoiled from this approach.
In his early youth he had gone through the usual phases of a young European intellectual. When he was 18, in one letter to his sister, Bloch described himself as an "anarchist." Later he wrote that he had changed his mind. Some years later after his first visit to Versailles, he wrote of his "monarchistic tendencies."
He discussed Tolstoy's philosophy at length but doubted that these principles of life would work, as long as man was the sort of animal that he was. Bloch always was skeptical of new orders, saying that first man must change, and no order of society will change that. He felt the change must come within man who must realize how small he is in the face of the Universe. But Bloch was consistent in his horror of the hypocrisy and false righteousness of the ones who in the names of "Justice and Religion" exploited the innocent. In all his works, there is a certain pattern of struggles, desire for serenity, a sardonic realization that man is the victim of his own demons. There is also a desire to escape, an evocation for an exotic Utopia. Many of his finales contain the return to brutal reality of life, but ending with hope of a better world.

In a time when the writing of music has become an abstract expression, all this may seem naive and like "program music." Bloch's music can be heard without these descriptions. Yet, I think the feeling remains, and those who have never read program notes of his works will sense what he meant. In his ***Concerto***, these moods will be found. He used some of the themes that he had first jotted down in 1918, but not as Communist propaganda.

The English musician and writer Alexander Cohen, who championed Bloch's music in England, wrote for the premiere in London these program notes:

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"The first movement seems to picture the conflict in a surge and ebb of titanic pent-up forces struggling to free themselves, but held down in a fluctuating, unstable equilibrium by still greater forces. The movement pursues its mighty way through many mutations to the dramatic *Cadenza*; the orchestra comments, the piano re-enters, and the movement ends in a mood of troubled quietude, with a soft reminiscence of the opening notes.

"The second movement is a combination of *Scherzo* and *Andante*, a contrasting picture. The *Scherzo* is short leading into the slow section, a calm episode, Bloch's usual pastoral style, his escape to the contemplation of nature. The first mood returns after a spell with a heightened anguish. A brief uneasier recollection of the contemplative episode with phantasmal figures in the background ends the movement.

"The *Finale: Allegro Deciso*, contains martial motifs in which also appear the early themes composed in 1918. It is a heavy brutal movement, with the piano used as a percussive force. but at the end the music rises to heights of exaltation, as if to say that the spirit of man will prevail over his weaknesses and failings."

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SCHERZO FANTASQUE, FOR PIANO AND ORCHESTRA
(1948)

Shortly after Bloch has completed his ***Concerto Symphonique for Piano and Orchestra***, he wrote this shorter work, lasting only nine minutes. This music is completely different from the longer work. Like all his *Scherzi*, it is full of irony and sardonic explosions; but this is in good humor. There is nothing bitter about this piece, but great exuberance, brilliant orchestration, rapid and rhythmically exciting. In the middle there is a quieter section with a typical Blochian theme, wailing a little like a sad gargoyle, with rhythmical characteristics of many of his themes. This mood doesn't last long. The return to the original opening *Allegro* introduces another theme, primitive in character, that he had noted down years before, thumped broadly by the piano. It is a bright piece ending in fireworks.

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SIX PRELUDES AND FOUR WEDDING MARCHES, FOR ORGAN
(1949-1951)

The year 1949 was not a prolific one for Bloch. He spent six months traveling in Europe, conducting many concerts of his music, including the premiere in Edinburgh of his ***Concerto Symphonique***, and the recording of his ***Avodath Hakodesh*** in London. Yet, he managed to write the ***Six Preludes for Organ*** at his publisher's request. Two years later he brought out the ***Four Wedding Marches***. These pieces are short and quite simple. The ***Preludes*** have a wider scope of style, while the ***Marches*** being ceremonial, are more traditional.

Because these pieces were published with the information (With Hammond Registration), Bloch insisted on stressing the following directions: "*Registration mostly Foundation Stops (for the **Wedding Marches**); no Vox Human whatsoever; no research for 'picturesque color;' the real 'Organ' tone throughout*."

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SUITE HEBRAIQUE FOR VIOLA, OR VIOLIN AND PIANO
(ALSO WITH ORCHESTRA)
(1951)

Bloch's seventieth birthday was celebrated by a week-long festival of concerts of his music in the city of Chicago in December 1950. The leading spirit of this event was the late Sam Laderman, a music lover dedicated to Bloch's music, though he had never met him. Mr. Laderman's nephew, Ezra Laderman, is a distinguished contemporary composer.

The festival consisted of chamber music programs, performances in a synagogue, and two concerts by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Jan Kubelik. Bloch was present at these events

and at the end attended a dinner at Chicago's Covenant Club, which had been a sponsor of the festival's many activities. Bloch, deeply moved by the devotion of all its members, promised that there would be some day a token of his appreciation.

Indeed soon came a letter and a manuscript, the first work he had composed after this festival, a set of pieces for Viola which he dedicated to the Club. The work consisted of three pieces: *Rhapsodie*; *Processional*; and *Affirmation*. These pieces were later orchestrated. They are in the style of his ***Baal Shem Suite***, though of a different color as he had the viola in mind at first. Later it was suggested to him that these pieces were adaptable for the violin.

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With the *Suite*, he added two more pieces dedicated to the violist Milton Preeves, who had magnificently performed his *Suite for Viola and Orchestra* during the festival. These two pieces were entitled: *Meditation* and *Processional*.

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SINFONIA BREVE, FOR ORCHESTRA (1952)

After Bloch's death, a variety of notes written on loose sheets were found in his study mostly dealing with his music as he composed it. On a yellow sheet of paper, he wrote the following notes about his *Sinfonia Breve*:

> "1952, August 7. Completed new *Concerto Grosso* score, numbers, revisions, etc. (This was the *Concerto Grosso No. 2 for Strings*.)
>
> "August 8. Sketched *Concerto Grosso No. 3* (or *Sinfonietta*), *Scherzo*, slow movement.
>
> "August 9. 8 to 10:15 . . . Sketches 1 and 2 . . . seems to become a *Sinfonietta*, needs full orchestra.
>
> 2 to 4:30 . . . Introduction gives me trouble.
> 6 to 7 . . . Je crois que j'ai l'introduction.
>
> "Sunday, August 10. Work all day on *Sinfonia Breve*?
>
> "August 11. Introduction almost fixed . . . still a few vague passages.
>
> "1st movement takes shape . . . ideas about ***Finale***!
>
> "Slow movement seems thus far OK.
>
> "Trop d'idées . . . when too tense I stop . . . garden work.
>
> "August 12. Work on 1 . . . 2 to 4:30 -- difficulties in 1. I stopped getting too tense and confused -- looked at 2 and 3."

There was a long interruption caused by illness, and only on October 5, Bloch noted that he was copying the score, finishing his task on December 3rd.

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For the premiere in America of the Sinfonia, given by the Cleveland Orchestra conducted by George Szell, Bloch sent the following notes:

> "There is not much I can tell you about the ***Sinfonia Breve***, as there is no program whatsoever, and technical questions, I feel, are of no interest to the non-professional public. The year 1952 was very productive for a man like myself, who is a slow worker, and struggles with innumerable sketches before reaching a final form. I completed my ***Third String Quartet*** about the middle of April, and started immediately a new ***Concerto Grosso (No. 2) for Strings*** and ***String Quartet Concertante***.
>
> "This work will seem very 'classical' to the superficial observer, but it is more subtle than it appears. However, I wanted to write another ***Concerto Grosso*** in a completely different

style, and what some may call modern. In fact, simply very free in its musical conception. I started work immediately after completing the ***Concerto Grosso***, but after two or three days, I saw that I required a full orchestra, and it became the ***Sinfonia Breve***. It was completed on December 3 . . . The first movement has an introduction, ***Moderato***(which main motive is heard throughout the work) followed by an ***Allegro*** that subsides to a short ***Calmo***ending with the theme in form of a ***Coda***. The second movement ***Andante***, very short, brings the theme played by the string sections, with wind instruments interpolating between the recurring theme ending with quiet passages by the winds. ***Allegro Molto*** is in ***Scherzo*** form, rhythmically strong, contrasted by the ***Trio***which is heard again at the end with the ***Scherzo*** rhythms returning, but quietly fading off into a pizzicato to immediately attack the ***Finale: Allegro Deciso***, whose vigorous sounds lead into quiet eloquent material where the theme of the slow movement is brought back in a new form. The final measures, ***Calmo*** and ***Piu Calmo*** bring back the opening motive to a peaceful ending."

In this composition as in his Third Quartet, Bloch began to use his own form of the twelve-tone idiom, but only melodically, and never out of his own particular context of style.

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Concerto Grosso NO. 2 FOR STRING ORCHESTRA
(1952)

The *Second Concerto Grosso* differs from its earlier counterpart by its modality and instrumentation. Written tweny-seven years later, it has no keyboard *Continuo* and the solo *Quartet* (*concertino*) section contains more complex material, especially in the final movement.

The style is more impersonal and abstract, though the Bloch harmonic essence is there. The opening movement follows the typical *Concerto Grosso Overture* form, with its ABA structure. An introductory *Maestoso* contains a fugal *Allegro*, returning to the opening *Maestoso*, leading directly to the second movement, *Andante*, in pastoral mood. The third movement, *Allegro*, in lively duple rhythm almost like a tuneful *Gavotte*, has an amusing middle passage (*Trio*) with triplets that shortly return to the duple time ending abruptly. The fourth movement is the most difficult and substantial part of the work, fluctuating from *Tranquillo* through *Animato Energico*, *Tranquillo* and *Allegro*. It has an ostinato motive giving the effect of a *Passacaglia*, in descending chromatic scale, taken over by different voices of the orchestra. Transformed rhythmically with Bloch's usual craftsmanship, it brings back at the end echoes of the *Andante* and also the opening themes with their characteristic octave skips. The final cadence is surprising as the last chromatic passages bring a final and unexpected major chord.

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QUARTET NO. 3
(1952)

At the age of 72, Bloch wrote a work incredibly full of vitality where for the first time he deliberately brought in a 12-tone row. His use of it was neither cerebral nor dogmatic, but the natural outlet of his own personal expression. It is the shortest of his five *Quartets*.

Allegro Deciso. This movement is full of vigor and motion, setting at once the mood with its opening theme consisting of descending fifths that are the characteristics of the entire *Quartet*. The music's great force lies in its rhythmic life, and taut thematic material that recur in various forms.

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Adagio non troppo, one of Bloch's most beautiful slow movements, give the Viola a notice that unifies its three lyrical parts. Of this *Adagio*, critic Louis Biancolli wrote: "When this *Quartet* is recorded, I shall play that *Adagio* till I know every phrase by heart. It should be good to live with that music in you."

Allegro Molto-Moderato, begins with a typical ironical Bloch *Scherzo*. He had a gift for sardonic humor in which he would laugh perhaps bitterly at himself, or at the World. This is what one senses in the movement's first section. The quieter middle part has a different mysterious mood with harmonica, pizzicati effects. The first violin gives a hint of the tone-row that will open the *Finale*. Following the conventional ABA *Scherzo* form, the first section returns with transformations of its material.

Allegro. The Finale incorporates the 12-tone material. It is made of the following notes: [graphic illustration here] also heard inverted.

The descending fifths that have been heard in the other movements are strongly accented in the introduction of the tone-row. They become an important part of what follows. There is passacaglia-like section that changes into a two-part fugue, with skillful transformations of the material heard. This leads to a brilliant Coda, ending the work with sonorous richness and a last hearing of the familiar fifths.

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IN MEMORIAM, FOR ORCHESTRA
(1952)

This short work is dedicated to the memory of the co-director of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music and Bloch's good friend, the pianist Ada Clement. When she attended Bloch's courses in counterpoint, she became particularly fond of one of his "teaching examples." It was one of the many that he composed during his detailed studies of the polyphonic masters of the Renaissance era. This musical example is incorporated into this work, honoring Ada Clement.

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QUARTET NO. 4
(1953)

The thematic material of this *Quartet* is made up of short fragments and themes that recur throughout the entire work. They are freely treated with changes of tempi, and configurations having characteristic skips of intervals stressing the tritone, melodically atonal, yet in spite of harmonic polytonality giving a sense of unity. Olin Downes, in his review of the first American performance of the *Quartet* on July 30, 1954, has given the best general description of this music: "The moods are introspective and range from those of a chip off the furious Bloch of old, to the mystical communion of his later years. There is indeed a curious combination of the old earthiness and gusto, and the later inwardness and serenity, that seems to have evolved within this passionate artist with the passing of the decades."

The first movement, *Tranquillo*, shifts shortly to an *Allegro* that is as rhythmic as the opening is diffuse, returning to a quieter mood and again to the *Allegro* leading to the movement's ending, *Moderato*, in which echoes of earlier motives are heard.

The *Andante* following is serene and dreamlike, a mood in which two themes weave in and out. They contrast yet complement each other, with subtle fluctuations of tempi, creating a curve of intensity that falls back with reminiscences of earlier fragments.

The third movement, *Presto*, has a different character from the other movements with the introduction of a theme not heard before. It is a transformed (atonal-ized) version of a primitive pentatonic melody which Bloch found in his research in 1911 for a series of lectures on esthetics given in Geneva. Bloch often used to hum it long ago; and there is a vague recollection of its even being attributed to a song by Eskimos. This theme is dispersed between different instruments, starting on different degrees, atonal, but keeping the pattern and rhythm.

With interludes and returns of this theme, there is a slowing down of the tempi where on a drone bass the first fragment of the theme is played "sul ponticello" by the second violin, giving an exotic nasal effect of short duration as the tempo and mood pick up leading to a vigorous ending.

The last Movement is extremely complex with some sotto voce reminder of the primitive theme, but also giving a review of the material of the work. It begins as in the first movement with a quiet introduction *Calmo*, followed with an *Allegro Deciso*, shifting again to slower tempi and returning to the *Allegro*, in which the instrumental writing becomes thin, enabling one to recognize earlier motives. The tempi shift back and forth, leading to the final measures where as a last thought, the Biola sighs an incomplete fragment of the primitive motive.

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SYMPHONY, FOR TROMBONE AND ORCHESTRA (1954)

In mid-1953, Bloch received a letter from the eminent trombonist Davis Shuman, of the faculty of Juilliard School, asking him whether he had ever considered writing a work for this instrument. Having great admiration for Bloch's music, Shuman was taking the liberty of sending some recordings that he hoped might stimulate the composer to write music for the trombone; and, he would be most honored to commission Bloch for such a work.

After hearing the records and impressed by the beautiful sonorities of the instrument, Bloch wrote to Shuman that he would write a composition for him. As Shuman enjoyed relating, he began to received short notes saying that the work was "in progress," until one day in June 1954, without advance warning, Shuman had a letter saying that the music was being sent to him. Needless to say, Davis Shuman at once asked Bloch what would be his fee. The answer was that there would be no fee because he wanted to write the work, (voice!) and was dedicating it to him. This resulted in the Blochs receiving, year after year, the most marvelous fruit cakes baked by Mrs. Shuman, annual gifts delighting my parents both gastronomically and spiritually.

This work, as the title suggests, places the trombone as an integral part of the orchestra, yet rising above it not as in a *Concerto* but more as an obbligato. Its main theme unifying the three movements typifies Bloch's treatment of many works. Quoting the music critic, Paul Chihara: "Its overall structure suggests a single extended arc. It begins as a lament, progresses as an heroic struggle and ends, *Calmo*, in resignation. The first and last movements are relatively short and serve as introduction and conclusion to the massive middle movement which is in the expanded sonata-allegro tradition of Beethoven. There is much unrest in this movement, in which conflicting themes and moods are juxtaposed and transformed in skillful counterpoint. The final movement (*Allegro Deciso*) begins with an orchestral outburst, as though the despair in the opening movements was returning. But by degrees the pain subsides; previous materials return in transformed, less threatening colors; and the symphony concludes quietly."

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PROCLAMATION, FOR TRUMPET AND ORCHESTRA (1955)

After having composed his ***Symphony for Trombone***, stimulated by his inner hearing of brass sonorities, Bloch wrote the ***Proclamation for Trumpet***. As the title suggest, the main theme is indeed a "proclamation," in which the Blochian augmented fourth shapes

its personality. In one movement, it is characterized by uneven rhythms, with the sound of the trumpet never overshadowed by the orchestra, clear and strong, until the end. It is a brief work, lasting only seven minutes.

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SYMPHONY IN E FLAT MAJOR (1954-1955)

Composed in Bloch's seventy-fourth year, this work was at first conceived as a third ***Concerto Grosso*** according to his sketches. As he went along, the dimensions changed, turning the work into his ***Last Symphony***. It is at the opposite spectrum of his ***First in C Sharp Minor***. The personal earnest striving and struggles expressed in the early work are no longer there. The explanatory program notes he had thought of then, the youthful romantic approach, are no longer evident. There are no special Hebraic accents. Bloch's last phase was detached, and like his last quartets more impersonal. His use of thematic material, at times using tone-rows are only so melodically and are not meant to be "atonal" in the ordinary sense of the term. Bloch, with his deep study of the contrapuntal craft of the Renaissance masters, used these techniques in the treatment of his material.

The first movement, ***Tranquillo - Allegro Deciso***, introduces at once the four-note theme stressing minor seconds that will be the essence of the entire ***Symphony***. These minor seconds permeate the music woven into all sections. The mood is dark, but shortly changes into ***Allegro-Deciso*** whose motifs are accompanied throughout this middle section by rhythmic patterns with progressions leading to the ***Tranquillo's*** initial four-note theme.

The second movement follows without interruption, *Allegro* (*Scherzo*), bringing new material, always bound to the characteristic intervals, but with more rhythmic variety and orchestral coloring. Ascending passages from the first movement are brought back, and as the movement progresses the same material undergoes subtle changes in inflexions.

The *Andante*, third movement, consisting of only nine pages of orchestral score, however short, is the most expressive movement of the work. To the lyrical muted strings, fragments of earlier motifs are intricately woven. It is a *Cantilena* binding the *Scherzo* to the last movement, *Allegro-Deciso*. This section contains rhythmic patterns from the first movement and themes varied with elaborate treatments. There is much motion after an opening in unison, ultimately leading to a final *Tranquillo*. As the music calms down before this *Tranquillo*, Bloch introduces a short fragment from the warm and eloquent theme found at the end of his ***First Piano Quintet***, now sounded by the oboe and trumpet. As with the beginning, this ***Symphony*** ends in serenity, the voices dispersing slowly to merge into a final E flat major chord.

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SUITE MODALE, FOR FLUTE AND PIANO
(Also Orchestrated for Strings)
(1956)

This short work, lasting twelve minutes, is one of Bloch's last works. It was dedicated to the flutist, Elaine Schaffer, whose playing Bloch admired greatly though he only knew her from her recordings. He sensed her youth, sensibilities and freshness, which he expressed in this music with its graceful modal lyricism. This is not the Bloch of the special "Jewish works" but that of a "young man" of seventy-six.

The four movements are closely linked and can be played with almost no break between them. The first, *Moderato*, is almost improvisatory with flowing passages for the flute echoed by the accompaniment. The second, *Listesso Tempo* is serenely thoughtful continuing into a gigue-like *Allegro Giocoso*. The last movement begins with a very short dirge-like *Adagio*, soon changing into an *Allegro Deciso*, rhythmical and gay, returning to the *Adagio* for a few measures. Again the *Allegro* takes over, slowing down to a *Moderato*, bringing back fragments of earlier themes.

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QUARTET NO. 5
(1956)

This last *Quartet* composed when his health had deteriorated severely, gave Bloch much trouble in the final passages. Concerned that he couldn't find satisfaction with the several endings he had sketched, during the period when I was visiting him, he played for me what he had written. One ending seemed quite effective causing me to point it out to him as my favorite. Mildly he looked up and said: "*No, it is not organic to the rest of the work; it does not fit. I want everything to fall into place*." When a few days later he found what he wanted and played that version to me, I realized how correct he was.

As in all his *Quartets*, the cyclical form is used, with his thematic material returning at the end.

Grave in slow tempo, has seven different thematic parts that reach an *Allegro*, more

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rhythmic, leading back to *Grave*. The second movement, *Calmo*, moves chromatically with continuous syncopated flowing figures, giving a pastoral sound.

Scherzo, the third movement, has abrupt short fragments using pizzicato passages, skips and greater rhythmical variety. This is Bloch with his sardonic humor laughing at life, seeing the grotesque side of it. A short *Trio* gives the illusion of calm but not for long, as the Scherzo returns to end the movement, and then attacks the Finale. There with *Allegro Deciso*, for the first time one hears strong chords. Earlier themes are recalled. There is a short fugal section, faster in tempo, using inversions. The opening rhythmical chordal theme comes back with its rhythm slowly as if the breath is getting short, stopping and starting again, sometimes fading to one instrument until the sound of the four instruments seems to disperse . . . and everything falls into place.

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QUINTET NO. 2, FOR PIANO AND STRINGS
(1957)

The ***Second Quintet***, Bloch's last chamber music composition written thirty-six years after the ***First Quintet***, is bound to be over-shadowed by its predecessor. A much shorter work, this has none of the colorful aura and spectacular flair of the first work.

Bloch is no longer the forty-one year old dreamer of Java and Tahiti, hearing the wild cries of birds in the depth of a mysterious jungle he once hoped to see. Resigned, no longer having thoughts of exotic countries, he now wrote a sober and more abstract work. Yet, it teems with his personal stamp, tensions, rhythmic patterns and chromatic progressions.

The first movement creates at once the sense of conflict so typical of Bloch's first movements in his *Chamber Music*. The *Andante*, based on a four note pattern, is a pastoral poem that leads directly into the last movement, *Allegro*. The same four note motive, now transformed into various ways, is deftly inserted everywhere with Bloch's customary craftsmanship. This movement is full of motion with rising progressions in which the use of skips of fourths and fifths widen to larger intervals. After the climax, the work reaches a *Calmo*, where the instrumental texture quiets down to a peaceful ending.

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THREE SUITES FOR UNACCOMPANIED CELLO
(1957-1958)

At the end of his life, as the culmination of his musical expression, Bloch chose the simplest and yet most difficult medium, that of music for unaccompanied strings. These would be the ***Cello Suites***, followed by two for unaccompanied Violin and one (unfinished) for Viola.

The first two ***Cello Suites*** were dedicated to the cellist Zara Nelsova, who often visited the Blochs while on tour. The ***First Suite*** is the shortest and simplest of the group, closest to the *Baroque Suite* having the usual contrast between its four movements. A *Prelude* is followed by an *Allegro*. The third movement, a *Canzona*, is true to its title with a melancholic lilting melody. The last movement is 6/8 time could be heard as a *Gigue*.

The ***Second Suite*** is totally different. Much longer and more complex than the ***First Suite***, its four movements are played without interruption, lasting about 16 minutes. They are: *Prelude*, *Allegro*, *Andante Tranquillo* and *Allegro*. With a freer scope in the writing, this *Suite* is the most difficult to perform.

The ***Third Suite*** is again shorter and simpler musically. It is in five movements: *Allegro Deciso*, followed at once by an *Andante* and an *Allegro*. Another *Andante* breaks gaily into the *Allegro Giocoso*, a tuneful and dance-like *Finale*.

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TWO LAST POEMS (MAYBE . . .), FOR FLUTE AND ORCHESTRA
(1958)

During the Autumn of 1957, Bloch received the taped recording of Elaine Schaffer's performance of his ***Suite Modale***with its String Orchestra version, which he had dedicated to her. Delighted with her performance, he began to think of writing another work for her, this time with full orchestra.

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His sketches show that at first he entitled them "*Funeral Music*." At the time he did not know that in less than two months he would be told that he had cancer, and if treatments did not show results he would need surgery. At the hospital, he persuaded the doctors that he must first finish this composition, and managed to leave and return home to Agate Beach. There, he finished this work whose title he changed to "***Two Last Poems***." The day he finished copying his orchestral score, he called in my mother, and my brother, Ivan, and his wife who were there, showing them the beautifully written manuscript. Then with his everlasting sense of irony, having not too much faith in the pronouncements of the medical profession, he ceremonially added to the title the word "maybe," and meticulously put three dots after it.

His intuition was right, for after this, he wrote two ***Suites for Unaccompanied Violin***, and one for ***Viola***. He then submitted to surgery, after which he never wrote another note of music and ten months later passed away.

The two movements of this work for Flute and Orchestra are played without interruption. In both, there is a recurrence of thematic material characterized by an opening ascending fifth whose expressive meanings change through subtle treatment. The first part "*Funeral Music*," is more elegiac than funereal. It is Bloch himself giving a philosophical soliloquy. Becoming more lyrical and flowing, it quiets down to lead into the second part, "*Life Again?*," a title and its music that could be interpreted in various ways. With Bloch's acceptance and skepticism, it is best not to wonder about his question mark and let the music speak for itself. This quiet serenity is light, with a short theme and ascending fifth that returns often heard in both the solo and orchestral sonorities. Motion and dynamics reach to a peak which then slowly resolves to *Calmo* and a *Coda* bringing back the opening measures of the movement, ending in a peaceful pianissimo.

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TWO SUITES FOR UNACCOMPANIED VIOLIN
(1958)

When Bloch after completing his "*Two Last Poem*s" added to the title of his manuscript the prosaic term "maybe" carefully putting three dots after, he realized that these dots were symbolic of the three works he would write in his remaining lifetime. With surgery due for a cancer, life was uncertain. Strangely throughout his life, having poor health for the greater part of it, he often wrote or spoke of "his imminent end." Now facing reality, he would write the word "maybe!"

Soon after having sent that manuscript to the publisher, Bloch received the visit of Yehudi and Diana Menuhin who would be driven for six hours to and from Portland, Oregon, in order to spend several hours with the Blochs. Delighted with their visit, Bloch brightened and showed Yehudi his latest works including the unaccompanied *Cello Suites*. Menuhin would in due time commission Bloch to write another *Suite*, something Bloch had in mind after finishing the others, even considering one for the Viola. In spite of great difficulties with various treatments which physically weakened him, he finished and sent on the Suite to Menuhin who promptly sent him a generous check. Bloch, as usual, had not discussed any fee and was deeply touched by this generous gesture. In gratitude and sincere affection, he added another Suite for Menuhin. Though only one of these Suites have been recorded, Yehudi announced lately that at the writing of these notes (1976), he has recorded both Suites.

The *First Suite* opens with a short *Prelude*. Improvisatory in style, it leads into an also short *Andante Tranquillo*. This has an eloquent quality, expressive marking and is flexible in the tempi. The next and last movement in really in three sections, starting with an *Allegro* slowing to a middle section *Andante* of just two lines, sounding like a *Canzone* of short duration. Its cadence is as that of a dominant resolving into an *Allegro Energico*, rhythmical with many skips, brining back the opening *Prelude* slightly transformed and shortened to a conventional ending and a cadence in G major.

The *Second Suite*, of about the same duration, has no interruption between its four movements. Starting briskly with an *Energico Deciso*, it is also improvisatory having many tempi changes. Leading into a *Moderato* with a gigue-like figure, it is followed by an *Andante* flowing into the final *Allegro Molto*. That is almost a <u>modo perpetuo</u> of sixteenth notes, accentuated by broken chords, repeated notes and high skips.

Bloch’s affinity for the violin, his first instrument, can be seen in these two *Suites* which violinists have found wonderfully written for their instrument. But for those who expect music in the style of his Nigun, they will be disappointed. This is the late Bloch, much less personal and closer to the classic masters of the past whom he loved so well.

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31st July 1975
London, England

Dear Suzanne,

I recorded your father’s beautiful Suites a few weeks ago. I am very pleased and only wish that he could have heard me play them . . . perhaps by now he has.

I am enclosing the notes I have written for the E. M. I. sleeve. Would this be suitable for your Manual?

Yehudi

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NOTES FOR E.M.I. RECORD SLEEVE

by Yehudi Menuhin

Ernest Bloch has always seemed to me to be one of the Seven Wonders. As a child he appeared to me so much more than a man – a Biblical reincarnation, the embodiment of human, racial history. Like Hercules, a world of ecstasy, of pain rested on his shoulders. He also seemed at one with the great vistas and jagged peaks of the Swiss Alps, against which he loved to photograph himself (He was a superb photographer, one of the first generation of Leica fanatics!) at one, as at Agate Beach, with the pounding Pacific breakers. He was cast 'by the gods' in a superhuman mould – a prophetic scale of size and vision, of strength and vitality which exceeded the common mortal's.

It is curious that I should have received the penultimate works of two of our era's greatest composers, Bela Bartok and Ernest Bloch. Both were intensely aware of a long tradition of their people's music and both spent much time with indigenous tribes and communities: Bloch with the Red Indians in New Mexico, collecting and studying their folklore. The Bloch *Suites* are latter-day Bach Partitas; and he continually perfected his contrapuntal technique, doing elaborate and complex mental contrapuntal exercises in his voluminous notebooks.

The two works which Bloch wrote for me are heart-searching, profoundly moving and noble expressions of a human soul and a human mind, which remained incredibly constant throughout his life. I had the same feeling about him, for him and for his music, when we last talked together at Agate Beach in 1958, as when in 1928 he brought me in San Francisco his beautiful piece *Abodah for Violin and Piano* – the first work ever dedicated to me. Thus, the three works of Bloch with which I am so intimately associated span a good part of his and of my lifetimes.

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SUITE, FOR UNACCOMPANIED VIOLA
(1958)

The *Suites for Violoncello* and *for Violin* were composed during 1957, in spite of interruptions caused by visits to doctors and to hospitals. His choice of one instrument shows a detachment and abstraction from external means of expression. At the end, Bloch chose to create works with the most difficult type of instrumental writing, merging at times a Bachian approach with his own expressive personal style.

Work on his last Suite for Viola was interrupted by major surgery and was never finished. Thus the fourth (last) movement ends suddenly with an unfinished phrase. Though I brought this manuscript to him often, urgin him to go on with it, he would smile and say: "Later" After his death in the hospital, I returned to his bedroom in Agate Beach, and found that manuscript on his night table.

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"I believe those pages of my own in which I am most unmistakably racial, but the racial quality is not in folk-themes; it is in myself! If not folk-themes, you might ask, then what would be the signs of Jewish music? Well, I admit that scientific analysis of what constituted the racial element in music is difficult. But it would be unscientific to deny the existence of such elements."

Ernest Bloch

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PART THREE

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"It is not my purpose, nor my desire to attempt a 'reconstruction' of Jewish music, or to base my work on melodies more or less 'authentic.' I am not an archeologist.

"I hold it or first importance to write good, genuine music, my music. It is the Jewish soul that interests me, the complex glowing agitated should that I feel vibrating throughout the Bible; the freshness and naivety of the Patriarchs; the violence which is evident in the prophetical books; the Jew's stage Loe of justice; the despair of the preachers in Jerusalem; the sorrow and immensity of the Book of Job; the sensuality of the Song of Songs.

"All of this is in us, all this is in me, and it is the better part of me. It is all that I endeavor to hear in myself and to transcribe in my music -- the venerable emotion of the race that slumbers way down in our souls."

Ernest Bloch

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DISCOGRAPHY: ERNEST BLOCH

(This is an historical listing prepared by GARY P. LETHERER, the official discographer for the Ernest Bloch Society.)

---------- (This list can be provided on request.) ----------

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SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

■ by Suzanne Bloch ■

(This is a general survey of articles on Ernest Bloch, excluding many encyclopedia entries and brief inclusions in periodicals and books. The listing presents varied sources of additional information on his life and work. It does not cover all of the existing materials about Bloch. I have chosen the most substantial articles with the purpose of giving a comprehensive outlook on the composer, the pedagogue and human being.)

BLOCH MANUSCRIPTS AND DOCUMENTS

---------- (This list can be provided on request.) ----------

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BLOCH BIBLIOGRAPHY

---------- (This list can be provided on request.) ----------

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CATALOGUE OF BLOCH'S PUBLISHED WORKS

---------- (This list can be provided on request.) ----------

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PART FOUR

"I am not a materialist. My Jewish Cycle has not the slightest trace of superficial treatment. It is my conception of Jewish music, my interpretation, and because I felt it deep within me clamoring for release, I expressed it. Artistic affiliations I have none, I hope. Certainly no voluntary affiliations. I believe devoutly in musical form Even in music drama a knowledge of form is an enormous aid. Form is all, as Flaubert says: 'It must contain all things.'"

Ernest Bloch

HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE PUBLICATION

-- by Irene Heskes

Ernest Bloch's centenary year is 1980. He was a cosmopolitan composer whose essential personality was rooted in Judaism, a universalist of highly personal individuality. Neither the actual use of Jewish *melos*, nor a Judaic "style" have made Bloch unmistakably a Jewish composer. Rather it remains the mystery of his creativity, discernible even in unprogrammatic works and music not specifically linked to Judaism.

His legacy of compositions are of world-wide cultural significance. Yet, his artistic history relates to the Jewish heritage and notably to an American Jewish context. The commissioning, and fruition in 1933, of Bloch's *Sacred Service* (*Avodath Hakodesh*) is of landmark significance in the development of 20th century Jewish music. Indeed as early as 1917, Artur Bodansky, then conductor of the Metropolitan Opera House, presented a concert program of Bloch's orchestral works of Judaic topicality at Carnegie Hall. This program, according to one then-fledgling American Jewish musician in the audience, "showed the world that the Jews can produce a composer of first rank, demonstrated to the younger generation of Jewish composers what the music of a Jewish composer would be like, and above all, convinced many people that Jewish music of high quality could take its place in the concert hall on an equal footing with the music of all nations." (A. W. Binder: Studies in Jewish Music, ed. Heskes, p. 169) Now, in the fourth quarter of this century, there <u>are</u> Jewish composers of first rank; <u>new</u> modes of expression proliferate whether for secular or for liturgical works; and a rare concert season repertoire does not include a <u>substantial</u> number of performances of music by Bloch as well as by all the many others who have since followed along Judaic creative pathways.

Because Jewish music is valid and viable, it must bear cultural and artistic relevance to general life, serving to enrich American society in totality, as do other worthy expressions of the pluralistic heritage of this country. Therefore, the encouragement of Jewish music programming -- on a high qualitative level -- for all audiences and by any performers is a public community obligation. We have arrived at the stage in our general cultural affairs, moreover, where that obligation is to program Jewish music on the basis of being <u>good music</u>, rather than usual "cliche" selections. In this respect, by constituting themselves as local information sources on Jewish music for the various communities in which they serve, Jewish Community Centers -- along with synagogues and other structured local groups -- can fulfill important American cultural roles. Therefore, the objectives of program source books, such as this one on Ernest Bloch, are to serve as an information bank and to stimulate programming service for Jewish music.

<u>Contents of this Publication on Bloch</u>

This Bloch Manual has been developed into four discreet sections. **Part One**, composed of ten articles, commences with an updated biography of the composer. Other materials in this section present varied biographical information on Bloch's creative life. His correspondence with Serge Koussevitzky adds background to the work *Schelomo*, while the extensive lecture by Bloch himself on "*My Sacred Service*" affords the reader unusual insights into the development of that significant work. Articles by two eminent music critics, Ernest Newman and Olin Downes, provide further ideas as to the nature of Bloch himself as well as his music. Both Isadore Freed's recollections of Bloch as his teacher of composition and Jacob Epstein's brief glimpse into his encounter with Bloch further enrich our storehouse of information. Two articles, one on a controversial sculpture purchased and retained by Bloch for special reasons, and another treating the composer's extraordinary gift of photographic artistry, allow the broadening of Bloch's parameters to other art forms. A final piece on Bloch, by a distinguished librarian of the Library of Congress, is particularly appropriate to the American Bicentennial celebration of 1976. Thus, these ten articles of **Part One** notably serve as foundation information. Any of these materials -- in whole or in part,

paraphrased or directly quoted -- may be effectively used for program literature. However, notice must be included pertaining to their original authors and source, citing this manual for reference and including page numbers.

Part Two of this book presents special Program Notes for all of Bloch's compositions. These materials, arranged in a unique chronology as a narrative of creativity, was prepared by Suzanne Bloch. Although some of the Program Notes have appeared previously on record sleeves and in performance programs, most of this extraordinary information was specially written or adapted for this publication. Use of these texts must be accompanied by the proper quotation marks and with adequate notice of the authorship by Suzanne Bloch and the full title of this book. These Program Notes are indeed intended for use by program builders, to choose and understand Bloch's works and to interpret this music to audiences. An additional piece in this section by Yehudi Menuhin is a particular treat.

The three topical listings presented as Part Three are of prime significance for reaching out to the actual music of Ernest Bloch. A selective bibliography enlarges upon the biographical information given in this manual. The extensive discography can be of aid in selecting and securing music for presentation with single demonstrated lectures or full courses on Bloch. With the inclusion of annotated catalogue listing of all Bloch's works and publisher sources, ample information has been included to whet the musical appetites of the performers and thereby inspire successful programs.

Suzanne Bloch has supplied some uniquely valuable materials as illustrations for this book. A holograph copy of Bloch's own manuscript (page four from the violoncello part of the orchestral score *Voice in the Wilderness*) adorns the cover. There are photographs of Bloch himself and a self-portrait with his children, as well as a page from the *Sacred Service*. Finally, the text and voice-line of Bloch's anthem *America* closes the manual. The anthem

may be utilized for group singing; it expresses with simple warmth the love of a man for the land which welcomed him with his family as a haven from the European storms of this century. Throughout, brief quotations taken directly from the writings of Ernest Bloch have been inserted. An additional reminder to include full references to authors and this publication source is intended to encourage usage of all these materials, but with the proper means of style and in protection of all this copyrighted information.

Ernest Bloch Programs

This resource has been produced in order to broaden the use of Bloch's works and therefore its emphasis is upon his musical life as composer, conductor, teacher-lecturer and writer. The wealth of materials included in each of the three sections affords the widest possible latitude in the choice of music selections. The articles and Program Notes further guide performers, lecturers and teachers, leaders of organizational activities, as well as group workers and program directors. For such program planners, the following are some additional general keynotes for action in effective music programming:

Broaden program dimensions and vary modes of presentation
Develop and integrate multi-arts events
Utilize local talent resources -- amateur and professional
Involve audience participation in programs
View projects as community-service vehicles, whether or not government funding is sought
Cooperate with other educational programs and projects as means of advancing totality of the Jewish heritage
Highlight the concept of continuity for the Jewish cultural arts
Reach out to individuals, groups, organizations of all types in the community, in cooperative cultural spirit

Music appreciation as an individual experience may be enhanced by recordings, available for purchase or increasingly accessible in local libraries. Those fortunate to be able to perform upon a musical instrument should feel encouraged to seek out Bloch's published scores, as described in that bibliography. For all, increased awareness of the scope and variety of this music should guide attendance at concert events and home listening to radio programs.

It is, however, for group experience that this manual affords a reservoir of resources to be used by schools, organizations, synagogues, music establishments, and Centers -- by amateur no less than professional musicians. Here, a range of ideas for lectures and discussion sessions can encompass broader topical areas as:

Bloch and Other Jewish Composers
Bloch and Switzerland's Jews
Bloch and the American Jewish Cultural Expression
Bloch's Music as a Mirror of This Century
Bloch and Modern Jewish Liturgical Music

With a scope beyond music and into other arts, Jewish history, sociology, or liturgy, and tied into season-long programs, projects or calendar events, full educational programs may be developed of high cultural quality and innovative outlook. The approach of the 100th birthday year of Ernest Bloch, may stimulate presentations open to community-wide participation. Such cooperative undertakings may involve planning and implementation on the part of:

Community cultural leaders, including the local Arts Councils
Various synagogues in one area
Jewish Community Center as location facility and/or as staff leadership for events and projects.
Faculties of local educational and arts institutions
Inter-faith committees

A Program Sampling

"Cello Concert Program"
Suite No. 1, for unaccompanied cello
at Alice Tully Hall of Lincoln Center of New York City

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"Jewish Music Festival Event"
Avodath Hakodesh -- Sacred Service
Rabbi-narrator and Cantor-soloist
Texas Southern University Choir
Presbyterian Church Choir
Houston Civic Symphony Orchestra
at Jewish Community Center of Houston, Texas
(With the support of the Texas Commission on Arts and Humanities)

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"New England Jewish Music Forum: Public Concert"
Concerto Grosso, for string orchestra and piano

At Temple Ohabei Shalom of Brookline, Massachusetts

[SKIP OTHER SAMPLE PROGRAMS TO BOTTOM OF PAGE 145]

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Consortium of the Arts

Ernest Bloch was a versatile artist whose creativity extended to the visual arts in a life-long devotion to photography. He was also intensely concerned with literature in all forms. The attraction to drama inspired composition early in his life of an opera *Macbeth*, based upon Shakespeare's play. Several leading writers, among them Edmond Fleg, were his close friends and collaborators. Such interrelationship in the arts is common history. Artists nourish each other's inspirations. Music, dance, literature, poetry, drama, theatre, fine arts, sculpture, graphics, architecture – all these forms interweave into the fabric of a rich and living culture. For the particular Jewish cultural expression, those dynamic artistic relationships re-enforce the distinctive expression of our heritage. Thus, as the artists interact, so ideally ought their artistry be appreciated in a multi-faceted context.

As a practical matter, visual exhibitions go well with musical presentations. By-words should be:

Use intermission for the other arts
Utilize lobbies and galleries effectively
Make every moment artistically "count" at a concert or theatrical performance
Focus on multi-arts events as communal "happenings"

Music enhances all of the other arts presentations. A concert hall can host a museum collection, and a museum nurture a concert series. Always, quality should be the hallmark. Innovative programming with the multi-arts can be a challenging but significant goal, whose objective is the expansion of cultural awareness. Such worthy commitment on the part of program planners, educators, and arts-leadership – whether volunteer or salaried – commands respect. Clearly, courage must be an inherent quality not only of the creative artists, but significantly of their "patrons." The achievements of these workers in behalf of the advancement of the arts are no less important than the arts themselves, for the business of our civilization is its artistic and intellectual product. In terms of the particular Jewish expression, this product is our heritage and central to the survival of our unique peoplehood. In musical paraphrase, the Jewish arts are inter-mingled voices whose total choral resonance constitutes the Judaic culture.

Postscript

Clearly, the achievements of Ernest Bloch are significant to our cultural agenda, not only because of his musical expression in Judaic context, but also because he was someone who struggled to be himself and to make his contribution to human society, regardless of personal circumstances and in spite of the disillusion of particular history during his own life-time. After all, beyond the arts, there is the art of life.

This publication, whose modest price hardly reflects costs and bears no monetary profit, is a philanthropically motivated enterprise on the part of all concerned with its preparation and publication. It is meant to be a program aid, and therefore the measure of its success lies in the hands of each reader.

- FRONT OF LAST PAGE – (unnumbered) 147 -
(Facsimile copy of A*nthem from the Symphony "America"*)

- **BACK OF LAST PAGE – (unnumbered) 148 –**
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(Stylized sketch of Ernest Bloch at work by his daughter, Lucienne Bloch:
signed "Lucienne Bloch, Agate Beach '57")

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[Stylized Jewish star over JWB]
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