

International Ernest Bloch Society

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News Sheet No 5 – October 2020

What can we do for Bloch during the pandemic?

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Connecting by technology: Zoom - Facebook - You Tube

IEBS already has a website www.ernestblochsociety.org – a valuable permanent repository of information, past activities and reviews. We also have an academic mailing list which includes 80 people interested in Bloch who can be informed and communicate with each other. It seems that in this age of pandemic, we should all embrace and benefit from the marvels of even more modern technology.

Facebook Group – a colourful and useful interactive platform

Today there is a superb interactive platform developed for organisations such as ours. It allows anyone (on Facebook) with an interest in Bloch to find us and connect. I have created a Facebook Group for IEBS and invite you to join. Go to Facebook and search for Ernest Bloch Society IEBS.

Zoom - Another IEBS meeting on Zoom, Wed 18 November at 5.00pm UK time.

We invite you to the next Meeting. (Clocks will have changed by then, so please work out what time it will be for you.) Contact me if you would like to attend and I will send you the zoom details at: events@ernestblochsociety.org or my personal email geraldine.auerbach@gmail.com



We conducted the first IEBS Zoom Meeting on 15 July (the 61st anniversary of Bloch's death in 1959). We had truly international participation from Beijing to the Mid-West, New York and Florida with participants in Israel, Europe and the UK. Slowly, ideas are crystallizing and projects emerging, some of which are listed on these pages. To everyone's delight Miriam Kramer (above) accompanied by her sister, performed Bloch's *Vidui* at the end of the meeting.

YouTube – to develop a series of performances and talks on Bloch

There are many opportunities that a YouTube channel will facilitate, and I intend to create a YouTube channel for IEBS.

There are several projects on the go or in the pipeline or stirring – some of which could be facilitated by these technologies.

Sylvain Frémaux's Translation Project

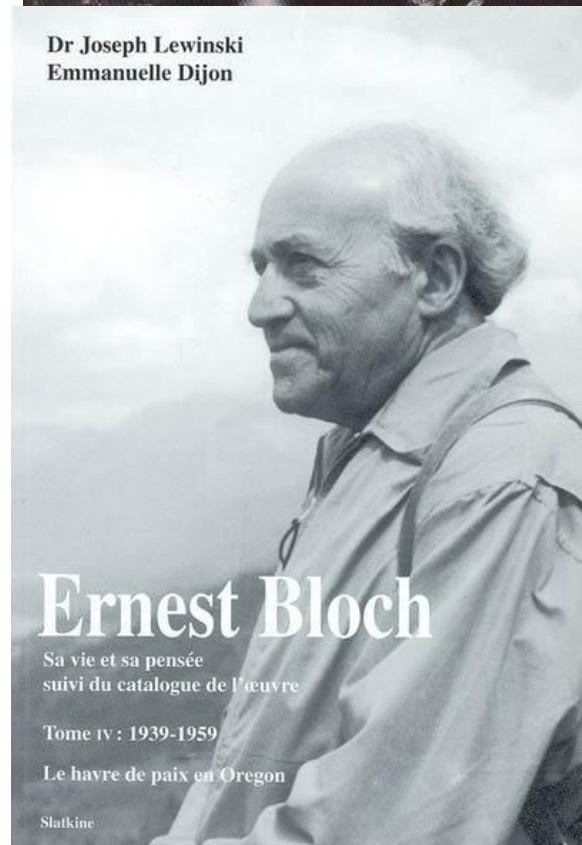
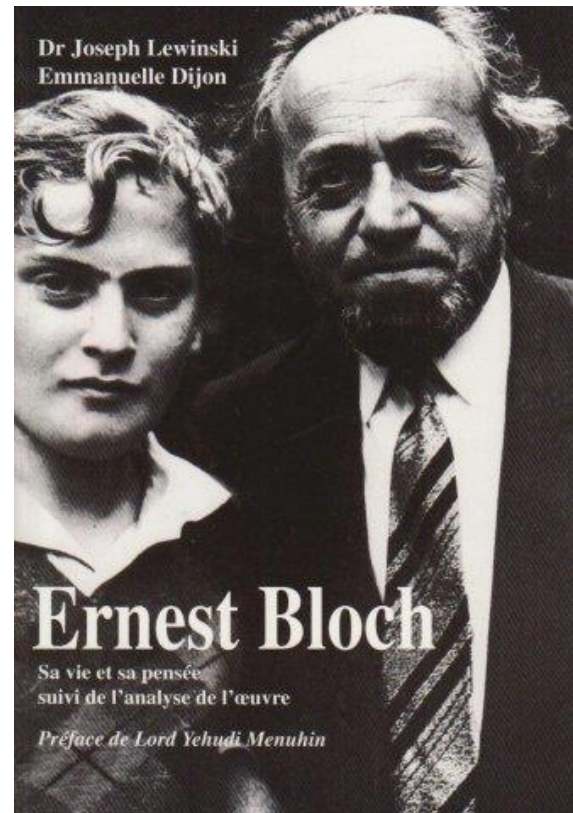
Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could read – in English, these four definitive biographical volumes of letters to and from Bloch? Well, actually, this is going to be possible – and what's more you can help to make it happen!

The volumes were published in French, compiled by Joseph Lewinski and Emmanuelle Dijon. The bilingual music scholar Sylvain Frémaux who lives partly in Portland, Oregon and partly in France and who is close to the Bloch family (and used to be involved with the Ernest Bloch Music Festivals when they happened in Newport Oregon) says this, in answer to the questions on your lips:

The English translation of Lewinski's monumental 4-volume biography of Ernest Bloch, published in French by Slatkine in Geneva, is now in progress. I hold the exclusive rights as translator from the French authors and publisher.

This project is endorsed and supported by Bloch's heirs and many scholars including Alexander Knapp. It will be published, as we go along as a comprehensive website with a rich array of supplements, appendices and illustrations.

It will become searchable and conveniently available to the broadest English readership, worldwide. It will take from 2 to 4 years. We are looking for contributions to help fund the project. Contributors will be listed on the website for posterity.

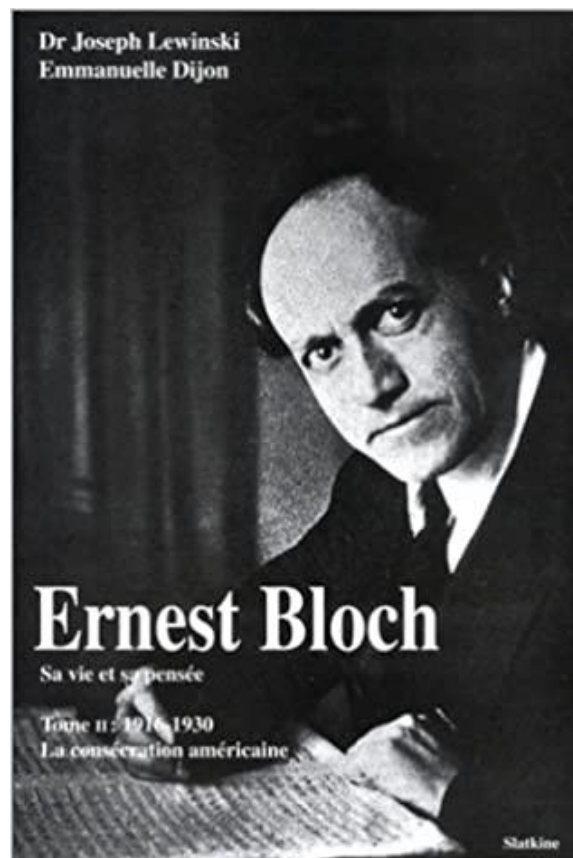


This is great news. We can all feel confident that Sylvain is the perfect person to do this job. Ernie Bloch II's daughter Suzanne Bloch Boyer is in charge of the project financially.

How we can all help

If we all make a contribution, however big or small – it will be done. Let's make this anniversary year – that is a washout for performances and workshops – an opportunity to support the translation project instead.

This huge undertaking has been broken up into manageable chunks and a **donation of \$500 USD would cover the translation of an entire year of Ernest Bloch's life**. This seems a good deal to me. The International Ernest Bloch Society has decided to make a donation of \$500.



We encourage you or your organisation to do the same and to seek others who can contribute. Small donations from individuals will be most welcome.

Please contact Suzanne Bloch Boyer sqmboyer@gmail.com and tell her the good news of your support for the project.

Other ideas about what we can do during the pandemic:

Feedback from our last meeting threw up ideas for scholarly gatherings and performances as well as transcription activity such as

1. **Scholarly working group:** bringing scholars together sharing ideas in regular monthly presentations and discussions leading to other projects. Jesse Rosenberg would offer a paper on the Italian reception of Bloch in the 1920s and '30s, setting this in the context of the various cultural and political currents and cross-currents of the period and how he juggled his Jewish, Swiss and American identities. Jesse mentioned some younger scholars who could be invited to join as well as some established Bloch Scholars such as Klára Móricz, David Kushner, Phil Bohlman and of course Alexander Knapp. This could be run on Zoom under the umbrella of the International Forum for Jewish Music Studies (IFJMS) – and papers published in the online journal *Tekiah*.
2. **International Conference in November 2023** in Hannover: IFJMS already plans a face-to-face International Conference under the overarching title of

Migration and Transformation in Jewish Music – which could cover Bloch Studies.

3. **Translation and editing** of other monographs and scores. Walter Simmons offered to help to edit Suzanne Bloch's monograph called *Ernest Bloch – Creative Spirit* (1976) and other material.
4. **Ernest Bloch: Composer in Nature's University.** Frank Geltner has created and is now ordering 200 reprints of the July 2018 edition of the Ernest Bloch booklet. They will be delivered to three businesses which have agreed to make copies available to anyone who asks – based on a note posted on the Interpretive Sign in Ernest Bloch Place which Frank worked hard to create and was dedicated in July 2018 within the larger Ernest Bloch Memorial Wayside.
5. **Creating a chamber orchestral reduction** for Ernest Bloch's *Sacred Service* - so that more choirs can take it on. Composer and conductor Benjamin Wolf in London has completed and performed Part One and is working on the other parts.

6. **Holding virtual workshops /masterclasses virtual.** IEBS is in discussion with Miriam Kramer, Rivka Golani and Raphael Wallfisch to see whether we can run virtual masterclasses/



- workshops individually for each instrument on a separate Sunday in January. The plan is to invite the candidates to send in a performance in advance – as Zoom is not great on live sound. Then the teacher will discuss the performance and make suggestions. We have yet to work out the details, but it seems perfectly possible.
7. **Zecharia Plavin has written a play *The Return of Ernest Bloch*:** he says it was presented in San Diego in English, with Simon Ordever as Bloch. Its original text is in Hebrew, and it was presented several times in Israel, the last time with the magnificent Emmanuel Halperin.
 8. **You Tube:** Zecharia suggested he would organise cumulative gatherings of youngsters playing Bloch pieces, also his chamber music, via YouTube. He says: 'It could even be arranged in our shadowed days; it is very important that there would be not only benevolent listenings, but also culturally interesting comments. Of course, I would do the organization when I get freer from my huge current tasks and if you give me your blessing and agree to respond to my questions in process of finalising the idea.'

9. Alex has several sets of the **four-volume Lewinski-Dijon Compendium in French** and is happy to give them to whoever would like one, for the cost just of the package and postage. (Some people have already requested them. Alex is attending to it now.) We will invoice you for postage and packing to be paid to IEBS bank account details here: **HSBC Bank:** Sort Code: 400321 A/c number: 62240548 **International Bank Account Number:** GB73HBUK40032162240548 **Branch Identifier Code:** HBUKGB4106P. identify your payment with your name, followed by 'books'

Some Recordings and Performances we have heard about

1. **Pianist Zecharia Plavin in Israel** said: 'My viola colleague Zvi Carmeli and I will play either both, or one of Bloch's viola suites in Tzawta hall of Tel Aviv in June 2021 (Mit Gottes Hilfe). Furthermore, my dear life-long Lithuanian friend (almost brother) violinist Professor Raimondas Butvila (63) has played many Bloch pieces with me, including both sonatas and of course the Baal Shem suite. Moreover, he played the Bloch Violin concerto twice with the Tiffereth Israel symphony orchestra in San Diego several years ago (I played the Concerto Symphonique). Our dear friend David Amos most ably led the orchestra and allowed me to play as slowly as I wished. Raimondas was magnificent then. We will try to make sure that he plays this Violin concerto also in Lithuania.'
2. **Akinori Itoh in Japan** said that concerts are slowly resuming. 'On July 15, concerts in which Bloch's Suite for Solo Violin No.1 is performed by Mr Yasunao Ishida are held in our city Nagoya. Mr Ishida who is the principal solo-concertmaster of Kanagawa Philharmonic Orchestra and is a well known violinist in Japan, often performed Bloch in recent years. Last year he performed Bloch's Violin Concerto with Kanagawa Philharmonic Orchestra and will perform Violin Sonata No.2 *Poème Mystique* in November.' Akinori Itoh, Nagoya, Japan See Akinori's Bloch website *A Young Person's Guide to Ernest Bloch* here <http://bloch.music.coocan.jp/>
3. **Yo-Yo Ma** has included Ernest Bloch's **Jewish Song** (*From Jewish Life*, No. 3) in his new CD of 'Songs of Comfort' in the pandemic, due out in December. https://www.wfmz.com/news/pr_newswire/pr_newswire_entertainment/yo-yo-ma-kathryn-stott-announce-new-album-songs-of-comfort-and-hope-available-december/article_77cf7a21-4980-5677-8de0-82d5aeb6eded.html
4. **For the Sarasota orchestra season**, The Market Square Concert Series concludes on April 28 at Market Square Presbyterian Church. Harrisburg Symphony Orchestra's conductor, Stuart Malina, will perform on the piano alongside friends Alexander Kerr and Peter Sirotin on the violin, Michael Isaac Strauss on the viola and Julian Schwarz on the cello. They'll be playing music by Korngold, Bloch and Mozart. <https://www.pennlive.com/life/2020/09/market-square-concerts-announces-in-person-chamber-music-concert-series.html>

5. Reviews: Zena Schiff with Royal National Scottish Orchestra has recorded the Violin Concerto, *Baal Shem* and *Suite Hébraïque*

<https://www.sdjewishworld.com/2020/08/05/zina-schiff-performs-bloch-to-critical-acclaim/>

Complete list of Bloch Compositions

Alexander Knapp and Frank Geltner have worked together to revise a list of Bloch's works. It is incorporated into the latest edition of the Bloch Booklet that Frank and Alex worked on in 2018.

The complete list appears on the inside front and back covers of the booklet.

The link can be found on the International Ernest Bloch Society website

homepage. <http://ernestblochsociety.org/data/uploads/compositionslist.pdf>

For more detailed information about each of Bloch's works (name, instrumentation, dedicatee, medium, named movements, dates of composition and publication, length, publisher, expiry of copyright), please see "Alphabetical List of Bloch's Published and Unpublished Works", in eds.

Alexander Knapp and Norman Solomon (2016) *Ernest Bloch Studies* (Cambridge University Press), pp. xxvi-xxvii.

You can also see a list of works sorted by genre here.

<http://bloch.music.cocan.jp/list02.htm>

This Bloch News Sheet no. 5, Distributed October 2020

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