

ERNEST BLOCH: A COMPOSER IN NATURE'S UNIVERSITY

If you stroll the beaches and streets of Newport, Oregon, you will hear a symphony of sounds: crashing waves, mewing seagulls, barking sea lions, foghorns, diesel engines of fishing boats. If you listen more carefully, though, especially if you are walking along Agate Beach, you might hear an entirely different symphony, one of lush melodies, soaring violins, percussive piano, resonant cellos, lilting flutes.

You are hearing strains of the magnificent music of composer Ernest Bloch, who lived and composed music in a house overlooking Agate Beach from 1941 until his death in 1959. He drew his inspiration for many of his later works from the Pacific Ocean.

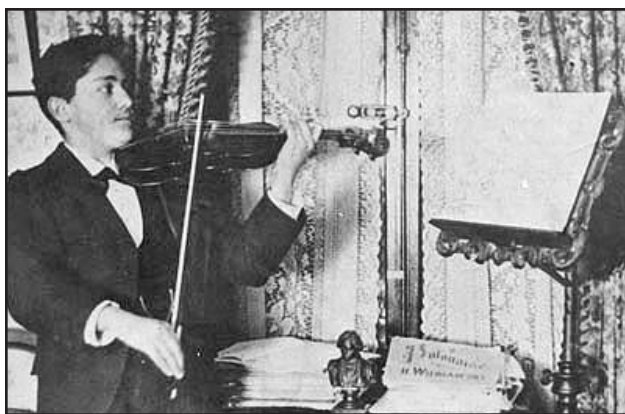


The picture was taken by Valentine Hirsch, Bloch's niece, in a small hotel where Ernest and four members of his family were staying in August 1949, in Maloja, Grisons, Switzerland.

A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY

Ernest Bloch was born in Geneva, Switzerland, in 1880. Although his parents were not particularly artistic, music called to Bloch even as a child. At the age of 9 he began learning to play the violin, quickly proving himself to be a prodigy. By the age of 11, he vowed to become a composer and then ritualistically burned the written vow on a mound of stones.¹ He started composing shortly thereafter, beginning with some violin melodies.

His earliest lectures were in Geneva in 1911, a skill that would be carried on throughout most of his life.



Self portrait (w/Beethoven), Brussels, 1897

Bloch moved to Brussels at the age of 16 to study with the noted violinist and composer Eugène Ysaÿe. He continued to compose during his three years of study with Ysaÿe, growing as a musician, conductor and composer. After he finished his studies in Brussels, he moved to Germany, then on to Paris in 1903 and back to Geneva. In 1904, Bloch married Margarethe Elisabetha Augustine Schneider (1881-1963), a piano student he had met at the Hoch Conservatory in Frankfurt in 1900. Later, she changed her name to Marguerite.

Mrs. Bloch effectively discontinued her musical activities after they were wed.

The couple had three children: Ivan (1905),

Suzanne (1907), and Lucienne (1909).

Ernest Bloch's body of important works was beginning to grow. Notable early compositions include his 1903 *Symphony in C sharp minor* and his only opera, based on Shakespeare's *Macbeth* (1909). He wrote the works of his self-styled "Jewish Cycle," including the *Three Jewish Poems* (1913), *Three Psalms* (1912-14), *Israel Symphony* (1912-16), *String Quartet No. 1* (1916), and perhaps his best-known work, the cello rhapsody *Schelomo* (1916). These monumental works, incorporating Jewish elements, were – and are today – hailed as masterpieces.



Bloch with the Flonzaley Quartet - 1916
Bloch went to the United States in 1916 with the encouragement of Alfred Pochon, second violinist of the Flonzaley Quartet, as conductor for a tour by Maud Allan's dance company.

With a move to New York in 1916, Bloch began a long westward journey that would ultimately take him to Agate Beach. Because success had eluded him in Europe, he took a job as the orchestral director for a new modern-dance company founded by Canadian-born Maud Allan. This venture folded soon after he arrived in New York. When the tour collapsed, he accepted a position at the newly established Mannes School of Music in Manhattan. Bloch was welcomed with open arms and glowing reviews by the musical community in New York. He was hailed as a genius, winning composition awards and premiering many important works. He returned to Switzerland



Bloch conducting Student Orchestra at Cleveland Institute of Music - early 1920s - Suzanne Bloch is second from left.

and brought his family back to the U.S. in 1917, crossing the Atlantic during the time of World War I submarine warfare. He was delighted to be able to share his adopted country with his family. His daughter Lucienne recalled, in a 1978 interview, a letter her father had written to her mother describing this time as having a “feeling of future and of possibilities.”²

In 1920, Bloch was named the first Musical Director of the Cleveland Institute of Music by a small group of founders. During the Cleveland years Bloch composed some of his most notable chamber music, including the Piano Quintet No.1 (1923), called by one American critic, Olin Downes (1950), as “the greatest work in its form since the piano quintets of Brahms and César Franck.”³

Bloch also composed his Concerto Grosso No. 1 (1925) to show his students that “neo-classicism,” i.e., a twentieth-century interpretation of the eighteenth-century Baroque idiom, was a dynamic, forward looking genre.

He also honed his skills as a teacher, developing his philosophy of education and speaking to groups ranging from music students to civic organizations. His daughter Suzanne played in the student orchestra in Cleveland for a time. It was during this time, 1924, that Bloch became a U.S. citizen.

He remained in Cleveland until 1925, when he

continued his journey west to San Francisco.

The circumstances are discussed briefly in David Z. Kushner's *The Ernest Bloch Companion*:

“When Bloch’s outspoken comments about what he regarded as a proper approach to musical education in a conservatory setting were challenged by the very trustees of the Cleveland Institute who had appointed him its director, it became evident that he would have to resign after five years at the helm. Fortuitously, Ada Clement and Lillian Hodghead, founders of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, offered him a position as administrator and teacher at their burgeoning institution.”⁴

Skeptical of the American education system, Bloch wanted his children (the youngest, Lucienne, was sixteen at the time) to continue their studies in Europe. The girls continued their studies in Paris, while Ivan returned to New York. Bloch served as the Artistic Director at the fledgling San Francisco Conservatory from 1925 to 1930, during which time he composed three prize-winning works: *Four Episodes for Chamber Orchestra* (1926), *America: An Epic Rhapsody* (1927), (a patriotic homage to his adopted homeland) and *Helvetia* (1929). *America*, with a closing choral anthem, was written for a competition sponsored by the magazine *Musical America*.⁵

The judges, a panel of five of the nation’s most eminent conductors - Walter Damrosch (New York), Alfred Hertz (San Francisco), Serge Koussevitzky (Boston), Frederick A. Stock (Chicago), and Leopold Stokowski (Philadelphia) - unanimously chose Bloch’s composition as the winner. It was premiered simultaneously by the five orchestras represented by the judges during the weekend of December 21-22, 1928. During the ensuing year more than fifteen other orchestras presented the work across the U.S.

BLOCH'S RHAPSODY WINS AWARD

Of \$3,000 in
Musical America's
Prize Contest



AMERICA,
Symphonic Epic,
Judges' Choice

ERNEST BLOCH has been awarded *Musical America's* three thousand dollar prize for the finest work submitted in its symphony contest.

The prize winning composition, *America*, an epic symphony in three parts, was unanimously chosen for the award among 51 works entered in the contest.

The prize winning poem is dedicated to the memory of Abraham Lincoln and Woodrow Wilson "whose names have yielded to its inspiration."

"This symphony," adds Bloch, "has been written in honor of the country in payment for its part in the life of its future."

The five judges of *Musical America's* Symphony Contest were Walter Damrosch, one of the conductors of the recently merged New York Symphony and Philharmonic Orchestras, Frederick Herlitz, conductor of the Chicago Symphony, Leonard Bernstein, conductor of the Philadelphia Orchestra, Serge Koussevitzky, conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, and Alfred Hertz, conductor of the San Francisco Orchestra.

The other entries in *Musical America's* contest included Beethoven's *Minuet*, Chopin's *Waltz*, and Liszt's *March*.

ERNEST BLOCH, COMPOSER OF THE PRIZE SYMPHONY, "AMERICA"

In writing this symphony, Bloch drew inspiration from the life of his country, and especially from the life of its future. The prize winning poem is dedicated to the memory of Abraham Lincoln and Woodrow Wilson "whose names have yielded to its inspiration."

I am particularly in honor of America for the prize. It is a work which I have written with the greatest interest and care. It is a work which I have written with the greatest interest and care. It is a work which I have written with the greatest interest and care.

to some degree arranged. It was the intention of the contest that the winning poem should be published in *Musical America* and that the author should be invited to visit the United States and to give a series of lectures on his work. The author of the winning poem is invited to visit the United States and to give a series of lectures on his work. The author of the winning poem is invited to visit the United States and to give a series of lectures on his work.

Musical America
(June 9, 1928, Volume 48, Number 8)
First paragraph reads: "Ernest Bloch has been awarded *Musical America's* three thousand dollar prize for the finest work submitted in its symphony contest."

"In 1930, fortified by the interest from a trust fund established by the family of Rosa and Jacob Stern, patrons of the arts in San Francisco, and by a commission from that city's Temple Emanu-El to create a Sabbath morning service based on texts drawn from the Union Prayer Book, the Swiss-American resigned from his post at the San Francisco Conservatory and returned to his native country. This enabled him to work undisturbed by demands of academia for eight years. In his retreat at Roveredo-Capriasca, he immersed himself in a study of Hebrew."⁶

His epic *Sacred Service (Avodath Hakodesh)* actually had its debut in Turin, Italy, in 1934, followed by performances in Naples, New York's Carnegie Hall, and Milan. Ironically, it was not performed in the Temple that had commissioned it until 1938. Many further compositions were created during this period: Piano Sonata (1935),

Voice in the Wilderness (1936), *Evocations* (1937), and *Violin Concerto* (1938).

The Stern trust fund for Bloch was administered by the University of California at Berkeley. Upon his return from his eight year sabbatical, Bloch was to occupy an endowed chair at the university in fulfillment of the terms surrounding the Stern fund. The artist returned to teaching each summer as professor of music at UC Berkeley, a position he retained until his retirement in 1952.⁷

THE ERNEST BLOCH SOCIETY

To give a sense of Bloch's place in the musical world upon his retreat to Agate Beach, it is important to note the creation of Ernest Bloch Societies in New York and London in 1937.

Dr. Joseph Lewinski and Dr Emmanuelle Dijon, in their "Petite chronique de l'année 1936 à la manière d'Ernest Bloch," based on Ernest Bloch's correspondence, noted that Albert Einstein agreed to be President of the proposed English Ernest Bloch Society in June 1936.⁸

The Ernest Bloch Society was eventually founded in New York in March 1937 (with some of the same honorary officers as the English Ernest Bloch Society that was founded in November 1937) and offered his chamber music



*Ernest Bloch, right, with Ada Clement and Lillian Hodghead at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, 1927.
(Photo by Ernest Bloch.)*

in five successive concerts from March 19 to April 16, 1937, featuring the Gordon Quartet and the pianist Gertrude Bonime. Lewinski and Dijon include a copy of a 1937 announcement of an Ernest Bloch Society being founded in London with Albert Einstein, Sir Thomas Beecham, Serge Koussevitzky, Havelock Ellis, Bruno Walter, Sir Arthur Bliss, Mary Tibaldi Chiesa, Sir Arnold Bax, and Sir John Barbirolli among others, as honorary officers.

The English Ernest Bloch Society gave three concerts of Bloch's chamber music in December 1937. Also included in Lewinski's book is a copy of "The Aims of The Ernest Bloch Society," and the "Programmes" on December 10 and 16, 1937, featuring among others, The Griller String Quartet, who were prominent among those who promoted Bloch's chamber music. The English Ernest Bloch Society presented Bloch festivals on January 27 and April 12, 1938, featuring the Griller Quartet. In December 1938, Bloch spent four days in London where the English Ernest Bloch Society organized a large reception in his honor on December 3: Sir Arthur Bliss gave the welcoming speech and, with the assistance of Louis Kentner, the Griller Quartet played Bloch's Piano Quintet No.1.

"In December 1938 . . . , the composer set sail for the United States, after an almost unbroken absence of eight years. The Second World War affected Bloch very profoundly, plunging him into despair. Upon his return, he stayed in New York, during which period he conducted two concerts of his own works in Boston."⁹

In the United States, invited by Koussevitzky, Bloch directed a Bloch festival in Boston made up of two programs, March 16-18, (American premiere of *Two Symphonic Interludes from Macbeth*, *Three Jewish Poems*, *Schelomo*, and *America*) and March 20-21 (*Two Symphonic Interludes from Macbeth*, *Three Jewish Poems*,

Schelomo, and the Boston premiere of *Helvetia*) – resulting in great success.

“There was also an evening performance during which a part of his *Sacred Service* was played with an organ, so introducing an element of worship. It was extremely moving. Bloch felt as though he were already dead and that his efforts and his ideas continued after him... He left Boston with regret... but as a different man, with courage, a desire to create, confidence and a clearer vision, thanks to this musical contact, of what he must do.”¹⁰



Marguerite and Ernest Bloch, Suzanne Bloch Smith, Paul Smith, Jean Bedetti and Lucienne Bloch Dimitroff at the Boston Symphony in 1939.
(Photo by Lucienne's husband, Stephen Pope Dimitroff, courtesy Old Stage Studios.)

ERNEST BLOCH, THE MAN

Ernest Bloch, in his comprehensive world view, was a man of tremendous passion, an intellectual who studied and analyzed Bach manuscripts in minute detail but found equal beauty and inspiration in the simple glint of an agate on the beach. He was an ardent humanist. According to Alex Cohen, noted musicologist, “Bloch’s integrity, both as man and artist, is well-known, and equally characteristic are his fearlessness and his passion for justice. He has all his life fought in the interest of fair play as he sees it.”¹¹ His intensity is referenced in almost all writings about him. Professor Milo Wold, in a 1948 *Oregonian* article, wrote, “It

is physically and mentally exhausting for the average person to spend an afternoon in his presence. His keen and intense mind takes one through a gamut of intellectual processes and emotions that are seldom experienced in a lifetime, let alone having them condensed into the short space of a few hours.”¹² This characterization is reinforced by comments of his daughter Lucienne, who said of her father, “He was such a powerful individual that it was almost impossible not to be completely overwhelmed by his opinions.”¹³

In a statement to *Seven Arts* magazine, Bloch said of his music and philosophy, “Spiritual values can never die. The universal idea must prevail. This crucial idea has permeated all of my life and most of my works – my ultimate faith and belief in the unity of man, in spite of real racial values and dissimilarities. My faith is in justice – even delayed – on earth, in the right of each man to live his life decently and usefully and giving to the community what he can give, according to his gifts, his forces.”¹⁴ Bloch believed that his gift – composition – should be used in service to humankind, and would ultimately “save” humanity.

The Cleveland-based composer and music critic Herbert Elwell wrote of Bloch, “For Ernest Bloch is a believer in man and in the godhood of man. His music passionately affirms the majesty of man’s divine inheritance as unmistakably as do pages of [Bach’s] *B Minor Mass* or [Beethoven’s] *Ninth Symphony*. Bloch has established himself like Walt Whitman – in the company of the great. Let those, who can, follow in his enormously human and inspirational footsteps.”¹⁵

One of the people who had the most vivid and personal recollections of Bloch was Helen (McFetridge) Kintner, formerly Helen Johnston, who was from Eugene, Oregon. Helen’s parents lived in Newport while she was a young

University of Oregon composition student.

After hearing Bloch's music in class, she was determined to meet him, especially when she found out he lived a short distance north of her parents' home. After exchanging letters with the composer, she became his student and personal secretary for the last thirteen years of his life. Helen remembered Bloch as a passionate, intense man, even volatile at times. Understanding his nature, she said, is "like untangling knots." In a 2006 interview, she said, "His goal was to write music that would bring peace and love to mankind,"¹⁶ and he became deeply depressed when he felt that that goal was not being reached. Bloch's son Ivan jokingly called him "the most optimistic pessimist I ever met."¹⁷

In 2009, on the 50th anniversary of Bloch's death, Helen authored *The Ernest Bloch I Knew: The Agate Beach Years*, with editorial help from George Dimitroff, Lucienne's son. There she writes: "My goal in putting this story together is simply to offer some glimpses into the inner dynamics of those final years of Ernest and Marguerite Bloch's lives in Agate Beach, Oregon, from an insider's perspective."¹⁸

BLOCH'S MUSIC: SHADES OF ROMANTICISM

While Bloch certainly experimented with advanced techniques, much of his work is magnificently melodic, reminiscent of Wagner, Mahler, Mussorgsky, Franck, Debussy and Richard Strauss. In fact, many of Bloch's best-known works are the composer's reaction to modernism; they hearken back to the Romantic era of lush melodies and rich, textured instrumentation.

Jacob Avshalomov, the composer, and conductor of the Portland Junior Symphony (now the Portland Youth Philharmonic) said of Bloch, "In many senses he was not a twentieth-

century composer ... like Strauss, in a way, he was a holdover from the nineteenth century.”¹⁹ Herbert Elwell wrote, “It has been said that the music of Ernest Bloch bears little relation to the musical fashion of his time. This may well be as true as it is unimportant. The same might be said about Bach or Beethoven. They, too, may have been born into the wrong century. But their music still lives, as Bloch’s music will continue to live, by virtue of its cosmic awareness, its just measurement of the stature of man, and its positive concern with that part which is indestructible.”²⁰

Bloch venerated the masters and never stopped studying them. He often wrote out Bach fugues from memory as a way of getting inside the composer’s mind, and he had his students do the same, color-coding the works’ various musical elements. He once told Helen Johnston, “I regret not to be younger only to begin studying the masters all over again.”²¹

While Bloch was not an observantly religious man, many of his works pay homage to his Jewish heritage. His most famous and most-performed work is *Schelomo*, the rhapsody for cello and orchestra. *Schelomo* has been recorded by many famed cellists, including Mstislav Rostropovich, Zara Nelsova, and Yo Yo Ma.

AN ARTISTIC EYE

Bloch was truly a multidimensional man. He was a gifted amateur photographer of note whose subjects ranged from portraits to individual trees that he named after other composers, to landscapes. His photographs are catalogued and preserved in the Ernest Bloch Archive at the Center for Creative Photography at the University of Arizona. He is in excellent company: the Center also archives the works of Edward Weston, Alfred Stieglitz, Ansel

Adams (who championed his inclusion there) and Richard Avedon, among other celebrated photographers.

The guide to Bloch's collection at the Center states, "For Bloch the camera was a vehicle to record the events, the scenes, and the people in his life. He used photography as a point of departure from the taxing demands of musical composition."²²

No less an authority than photographer Alfred Stieglitz praised Bloch's photographs. Stieglitz also sought the composer's approval of some of his own cloud photographs, and was thrilled to receive it. In a letter to Bloch he 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. . . . It was a memorable hour. A very rare one."^{23, 24}

In addition to Stieglitz, whom he admired greatly, Bloch made contact with other luminaries of the visual arts, including Georgia O'Keeffe, Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera.

The Center for Creative Photography also has one of the copies of Bloch's death mask, a casting of his face made by his daughter Lucienne and her husband Steve.

It should be mentioned that in any discussion of 'photography and Bloch' the name of Eric Johnson is important. Here are his own words from his website:

"'Ernest Bloch: A Composer's Vision' was the title of the article I wrote for *Aperture* magazine in 1972 on my discovery, printing and research of Ernest Bloch's photography. . . how I unearthed this vast photographic output of over 5,000 negatives by one of the great 20th century composers. It is a story that includes W. Eugene Smith, who listened to Bloch's music and said 'somebody needs to find out about his photographs;' Alfred Stieglitz, who in 1922 was very pleased that Bloch saw music in his photographs of clouds; Minor White, who saw the connections between music and photography

and made it possible to publish my article; Paul Caponigro, who helped teach me how to print to get the most out of Bloch's negatives; Bernard Freemesser, my undergraduate instructor who said "you should do the footwork;" and Suzanne, Ivan and Lucienne his wonderful children who were so generous and supportive of me. And it was Ansel Adams who made it possible for the archive including a large selection of prints I made from Bloch's negatives, to be placed in the Center for Creative Photography."²⁵



*Ernest Bloch, the photographer
(Photo by Lucienne Bloch,
courtesy Old Stage Studios.)*

THE BLOCH FAMILY

Ivan Bloch (1905-1980), oldest of the Bloch's three children, was drawn more to the sciences than to the arts. He went to engineering school in New York, graduating in the late 1930s; and after living for a time in Washington, D.C., he took a job with the Bonneville Power Administration in Portland. He was an engineer and businessman there for many years before moving to Bend, Oregon. Ivan and his wife Mariana had two children: Ernest II and Joni. Ernest Bloch II (1939-2018) until his passing led the family effort to preserve his grandfather's legacy. Joni lives in California.

The Blochs' elder daughter, Suzanne Bloch Smith (1907-2002), was a musician whose specialty was Renaissance music and instruments. In concert she played her lute, virginals and recorder and sometimes sang. From 1942 to 1985 she taught composition

and ear-training – “one of the toughest classes taught at Juilliard” – according to her niece, Sita Dimitroff Milchev, who was one of her students at Juilliard when she studied there as a vocal major. Suzanne’s husband, Professor Paul Smith, Chair of the Math Department at Columbia University, worked on the Manhattan Project alongside Albert Einstein. They had two sons, Matthew and Anthony.

Lucienne Bloch Dimitroff (1909-1999), the youngest, was a muralist and painter who, along with her husband Stephen Pope Dimitroff, was an assistant to Diego Rivera. Lucienne and Stephen had three children: George, Pencho and Sita. Lucienne had a close friendship with Rivera and his wife, Frida Kahlo, and took many famous photographs of her that have been included in multiple Kahlo biographies. Photographs can be seen @lucienne_bloch on Instagram or Old Stage Studios on Facebook.

Lucienne also took the only existing photographs of Rivera’s Rockefeller Center



*Marguerite and Ernest Bloch, Lucienne, Ivan and Suzanne,
1910s
(Photo by Ernest Bloch.)*

Plaza mural which was famously destroyed because of objections to the inclusion of Vladimir Lenin in the mural.

All of Bloch's children are deceased. Living grandchildren include Suzanne's son Matthew Smith of New York (1938), Lucienne's daughter Sita Milchev of California (1943) and Ivan's daughter Joni Metolius of California (1945). Many attended the Newport Ernest Bloch Music Festivals (1990-2005), the Ernest Bloch Symposium at Cambridge University in 2007, and the re-dedication of the Bloch Memorial at the Newport Performing Arts Center in 2008.

THE BLOCH CHILDREN REMEMBER



The Bloch Clan in 1959

(Photo by Stephen Pope Dimitroff, courtesy Old Stage Studios.)

My closeness with father at first involved sharing his love of nature; hikes, bicycling in the countryside, picnics, mushroom hunting, rather unsuccessful trout fishing in nearby small streams. We made many trips into the Salève near Geneva, sleeping in farmhouses or barns, eating the local bread and cheeses and a finger of vin du pays in my glass of water. And I remember with pleasure his reading to the assembled children from great works of literature, with emphasis on the elements of style.



When I became an engineer, a special relationship developed. Father was fascinated by things scientific, especially the earth sciences: mycology, entomology, medicine and genetics. He often said he wished he'd become a man of science or a doctor of medicine. I am certain had he chosen any of these paths, he would have achieved greatness because of his unbelievable

powers of observation, logical deduction and discipline. Much of this could be related to the voracious reading and pondering he did in philosophy, aesthetics and the basic sciences. His mind was never at rest (he was afflicted with insomnia to boot). He pursued constantly a myriad of questions about the great mystery in the logic of the universe: all in its place, all in synergetic relationship, and all veritably inexplicable. ...

He was virtually tireless, unstoppable, and endless. He wore out his listeners, no matter how devoted. He was bursting with ideas, tirades on the "mismanagement of the planet," and always questions on how society was organized and disorganized, whereas nature seemed to operate within a grand scheme.

But when walking in the woods, looking for his favorite chanterelle spot, traversing dewy meadows, climbing the gentle slopes of the Oregon countryside or Switzerland, fishing in a quiet brook or lake, then he was enveloped by a pervasive peace which bathed those who happened to be with him. I cherish those moments when he would stop to look at a flower or a leaf on a tree in silent wonder and reverence. Then he did not need to talk. He absorbed and renewed himself.

– Ivan Bloch, April 1980²⁶

Though he is remembered vividly as a teacher by his many students, the rare portraits of Bloch as a student come to us from anecdotes told by



our parents and from the letters he wrote to his sister when as a teenager he attended the classes of Eugène Ysaÿe in Brussels. He had shown definitive talent for the violin in early years and performed with success at the age of eleven. But of this he remembered little. His clearest early recollection was of the beautiful Letitia Picard, who lived across the street; he would stand by his open window practicing persistently all the brilliant passages of his repertory, hoping to impress her. She, being older, ignored him completely.

Ysaÿe had seen some of Bloch's compositions and strongly urged the youth to concentrate on writing music. When he was twenty he went to Frankfurt to study with the famed Iwan Knorr. The relationship lasted a year; they couldn't

get along. ... Yet when they parted, it was with mutual respect. Bloch never failed to express the gratitude he owed to Knorr, who showed him the path to self-sufficiency, how to use music, not textbooks. All of this would be important to his students. ... As a little girl, I received much of these ideas. When he taught me the first rudiments, the instructions he wrote in a notebook were so clear and concise that what would be considered a year's course took not very many pages. ...

Bloch at the age of seventy-one was still as much a student as a teacher. When he retired from teaching and was living quietly in the big house on the cliff overlooking the ocean, late in the evening he would shuffle off to his bedroom and lie down with a score of music – old or new – propped in front of him, his glasses slipping a bit after a while, listening as he read, conversing with his friends, grateful for what they were telling him in the silence of the night.”

– **Suzanne Bloch Smith**²⁷

Living with father was like living on top of a volcano. We were a close-knit family, but there were periods of quiet and periods of explosion, and every tremor affected us. To mention only the quiet moments would be to tell only half the story.



We lived in apartments and rental houses from the time I was born to the last twenty years of his life, when he finally found a home in Agate Beach, Oregon. Though we moved from place to place, the Bloch atmosphere was always there. Home was the sound of the music he composed played on the ever-present piano, the aroma of his pipe, the living room's shelves of precious books, the life-size crucifix and the ever-present cat, Zizi. ...

His Pastoral mood is the memory of him I cherish most. We took long hikes with “le Papa” from the time we were able to walk. With his knapsack of fruit and Swiss chocolate, his camera slung over his shoulder, he would lead us into the country. He taught us all about mushrooms. We picked berries, climbed mountains. Enjoyment of nature was part of our lives, not only in Europe, but later in America – even in New York, when we went to Central Park every day before we knew enough English to go to school.

– **Lucienne Bloch Dimitroff, April 1980**²⁸



*Ernest Bloch with Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera.
(Photo by Lucienne Bloch, courtesy Old Stage Studios.)*

THE AGATE BEACH YEARS

The composer first came to Agate Beach in 1941. In a letter to his niece, Evelyn Hirsch, dated June 18, 1941, written in Lake Grove, Oregon, he wrote: “While leaving California or



*Ernest Bloch at the piano in his Agate Beach house. Although he was Jewish, the large crucifix was a prominent fixture in the house, representing for Bloch the common suffering - and potential for redemption - of humankind. Helen Johnston Kintner remembered that Bloch often stated that “Christ was the only true Christian who ever lived.” “The Story of a Sculpture,” written by Ivan and Suzanne Bloch, from *Creative Spirit*, pp.26-28, can be found at the “Sculpture” tab on the Ernest Bloch website www.ErnestBloch.org. Suzanne Bloch brought the sculpture to the Juilliard School of Music in 1977. Juilliard returned the sculpture to Newport in 2022. It is now being cared for by the Lincoln County Historical Society.
(Photo by Lucienne Bloch, courtesy Old Stage Studio.)*



*Ernest Bloch and sister, Loulette.
(Photo by Ernest Bloch)*

rather Berkeley on May 26 very slowly driving 150-200 kilometers per day I went through a whole world. Hills, meadows, often empty, terribly small winding roads where you can only drive 20-25 kilometers per hour to get to the Pacific Ocean. It is magnificent.”

In the same letter he wrote: “I had seen a house for sale overlooking the ocean on a high cliff, among pines, with flowers everywhere.

Although isolated, it was tempting. And the price too. Unbelievably cheap. Unfortunately it was too big, not intimate, a little dark, and sinister inside. And it would cost a lot to maintain. Five bedrooms, four toilets, which would have delighted Aunt Marguerite, although you can only use one at a time!, and a huge sitting room, a dining room for 300 [actually 50] people, a high garage too, with bedrooms, shower, everything in cedar. It must have cost them \$20,000-\$25,000 twenty years ago and it is for sale, furnished, for \$8,500. But, unfortunately, it is not what we want. The day before yesterday, too, we spent two days on this coast, Marguerite and I, and again seven hours of walking on the beach absolute silence, except for the sound of the sea.”²⁹

By August 7, 1941, in a letter to his sister, Loulette, he wrote: “This is so strange that



*Bush House as Ernest Bloch might have first seen it in 1941.
(Photo courtesy Lincoln County Historical Society)*

I would like to tell it to you in detail. So, I arrive at Agate Beach Inn on July 8. The next day I hesitate to go back. I go down to the beach, a huge beach of more than 6 km. There is a battle inside me . . . the impossibility of going any further. The thought of being stuck in Berkeley is unbearable. I suffocate in this place. The bitterness poisons me. My spirit is prey to recriminations, everything that brings out the worst in me, the opposite of what artistic creation demands. And then in Portland terrible heat at the moment. And here, next to the ocean, the freshness is beneficial. And then Marguerite, who suffers so much from the heat. I pace the beach for hours. Am I staying? Am I going back? I don't think anymore of the house I visited, but it is as if a hidden force holds me back here, prevents me from going any further. All day long I am fighting within myself. Finally I decide to go and call Marguerite and I suggest that she comes here. I'll go and pick her up in Oswego three and a half hours drive from here. The next day she sends a telegraph. On the 11th I'll go and pick her up in Oswego. In the meantime I've discovered a really nice path, flat, which among wild forests leads to another beach, huge, empty, on the other side of a mountain. She will like that.

I'm welcomed! [by the owners, the Bush Family]. "We are happy that it is you who will be living in this house." (I saw papers where the price of \$8,000 was written, but they had been



*Entrance to Bloch house in Agate Beach
(Courtesy Lincoln County Historical Society.)*

offered more to make a nightclub out of it, and the Bushes refused.) These people didn't know anything about me. I'm very moved. She [Mrs. Bush] tells me: "You see it is heartbreaking to leave this place. The children grew up here. The parents lived here, welcomed their friends. It is a whole slice of life which is disappearing." Then I tell her, while the three of them [the Bush family] look at me with nice, clear, honest, eyes filled with goodness: "It is always, and it will always be your house. Property here on earth doesn't exist. We hand things down to each other. We cannot take anything with us to the grave. I need an asylum, a haven, to complete my life's works. That which I have yet to give to this poor and mad humanity. You will come when you want. You will always be welcome."

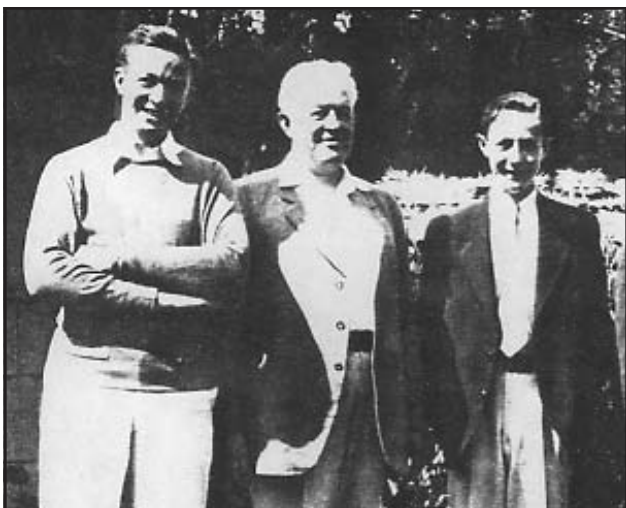
The young woman had already taken my hand. She and her husband had tears in their eyes. And now she presses me against her and she kisses me spontaneously. And for ten minutes we all have a deep and friendly conversation. This was one of the most moving moments of my life. I can hardly describe it to you. However, there is so little beauty and nobility in this world that I had to tell you all of this, even though I can't really find the right words. If you want to locate us, Agate Beach is on the coast, coming down from Portland, at about 110 miles (176 km), 3 miles from a small town of 1,000-2,000 residents, Newport, where you can find everything. No trains! Wide road with



Ernest Bloch and his grandson "Geddo," George Ernest Dimittroff. This photo shows a glimpse of the interior of the Bloch home with dark curtains on the entry door; and the ivy entering from the outdoor patio.

(Photo by Lucienne Bloch, courtesy Old Stage Studios.)

cars and buses, however. The house, of course, has electricity throughout, automatic central heating with oil, three toilets (which conquered Marguerite immediately), without mentioning the one for the maid's room (with bath too) and the one in the apartment in the garage. Wood Stove that is electric. Huge fireplace in the big living room (I will have an automatic hot water system installed) and a huge refrigerator. The people left all the dinnerware for tea, coffee, dining, the glassware, and even some linen!, and we discover new things every day! The Bush family, very rich and known for their



Asahel Bush and members of Bush family.



Bloch with string class from Eugene in 1953. This shows the southeast corner of the second floor Studio (a separate building from the main house), with stairs coming up on right and piano to the left. He could see the Pacific Ocean from the window in the background. Bloch would have spent many hours here, alone and with musicians who would come for his counsel. (Courtesy of Lincoln County Historical Society.)

philanthropy and for being good people, one of the most highly regarded families in this State, have done things in a grand manner. The house has a huge stone cellar (with sink for washing clothes and an oil tank), but all the rest, one floor, is in cedar. I embrace you all with all my heart.”³⁰ The stone cellar housed his collection of wines at the perfect temperature.

The house is perched just above Agate Beach to the south of Yaquina Head. Its expansive great room is dominated by a large fireplace and windows that overlook the surf.

Granddaughter, Sita Milchev remembered that Ernest composed on the grand piano in the studio above the garage, then played and reviewed the music for Marguerite (and whoever else was there) on the grand piano in the living room.

A trail, one that Bloch walked hundreds of times, leads to the surf and sand below. The imposing bulk of Yaquina Head and the constant beacon of the Yaquina Head lighthouse are off to the right.



Wooden footbridge marking trail to the beach.

As David Z. Kushner wrote in his 2002 book about Bloch, the move to Agate Beach “shaped both the personal and professional side of Bloch’s life in ways that could not have been foreseen.”³¹ Bloch suffered a severe case of “writer’s block” during World War II, brought on by his extreme depression about the events of that time. His new home provided the solace, quietude, and soothing natural beauty that helped restore his creativity as the war was coming to an end. In August 1944, he completed his first work in many years, the *Suite*



*Ernest and Marguerite Bloch with one of their cats in front of large fireplace, which has since been replaced.
(Photo by Lucienne Bloch, courtesy Old Stage Studios.)*



*Ernest, Marguerite, and Lucienne with children, Pencho, George and Sita in 1946
(Photo by Stephen Pope Dimitroff, courtesy Old Stage Studios.)*

Symphonique, a three-movement orchestral work.

His creative spirit renewed by the beauty around him, Bloch wrote some of his most magnificent and renowned works in the house at Agate Beach. Many critics have written of the distinct style that characterizes the works written during Bloch's time here. In the opinion of David Kushner, "The compositions of the Agate Beach period are, for the most part, an amalgam of Bloch's best creative impulses."³² He adds later, "The music written in Oregon reflects a general change in compositional emphasis. The works become increasingly objective, even absolutist."³³ Rather than winding his career down toward the end of his life, the last fifteen years were particularly prolific and creative. Robert Strassburg wrote, "The creative sequence of Bloch's closing years is remarkable for its unflagging vitality, spontaneity, and expressive force. Asked for the secret of his creative power during his last decade, Bloch pointed to his self-reliance and his almost child-like faith in God: 'All my life I have attended God's university. In God's university one finds many assistant instructors with Nature as the head of the family.'"³⁴

His String Quartet No. 2, written in 1945, was awarded both the prestigious New York Music Critics Circle Award as well as the very

first Gold Medal for Music of the American Academy of Arts and Letters. The New York Music Critics Circle honored him again in 1953 for two other Agate Beach works, the String Quartet No. 3 and the Concerto Grosso No. 2. The 1951 *Suite Hébraïque* for viola or violin and accompanying piano or orchestra uses a number of directly quoted Jewish themes.

His Symphony for Trombone and Orchestra, completed in 1954, took him six months to write, and has been recorded by ensembles ranging from the USSR Symphony Orchestra to the Portland Youth Philharmonic. Other works written during these years include two more string quartets, his Piano Quintet No. 2, his Symphony in E flat major, and a series of solo suites, three for cello, two for violin, and one unfinished suite for viola. The eminent viola player, composer and scholar, David L. Sills, has published a concluding section for this Suite. One of Bloch's final works is appropriately entitled *Two Last Poems (Maybe...)*, the first subtitled *Funeral Music* and the second, *Life Again?* Clearly, Bloch was contemplating the end of his life.

Bloch loved to collect mushrooms in nearby wooded areas and hunt for agates on the beach. His grandson, Ernest Bloch II, kept a collection of beautiful agates polished by Bloch himself in a workshop in the Agate Beach house's detached garage. According to Milo Wold, "Whenever he works consistently each day at his agates, the problems of composing seem to resolve themselves more fully."³⁵ Many have pointed out that he drew direct inspiration from his Agate Beach surroundings. Daughter Lucienne commented that Bloch had a "sense of *being uprooted* his entire life. The only thing that gave him a sense of belonging was nature."³⁶

Surrounded by nature, Bloch certainly would have had a sense of belonging in his Agate Beach home. As a teacher he also turned



*Ernest Bloch on the beach
collecting agates.
(Photograph by Lucienne Bloch,
courtesy Old Stage Studios.)*

to nature for
inspiration.

Helen Johnston recalls one of their many composition lessons that took place not at the piano but on a bench along the trail between the house and the beach. The subject of that day's lesson was musical repetition. Bloch

pointed to a bare tree and said, "You look at that tree and you can see the outer form; it's a tree, but within the form is a lot of diversity. On the tree the branches sometimes come out from the trunk at the same point, but in due time they're staggered a bit. And so within is the diversity and without is the form. That's why we don't want to repeat themes too often, but the human mind needs to be referred back to something that's familiar."³⁷

Although Bloch was, by his own choice and admission, fairly isolated from the musical world at the Agate Beach house, he and his wife received a number of musical luminaries as guests during their years there.

Bloch's late solo violin suites were commissioned by Yehudi Menuhin. Menuhin



*"He and I used to sit on that bench and rest after the climb up
from the beach." — Ernest Bloch II
— Agate Beach early 1950s —
(Photograph by Lucienne Bloch, courtesy Old Stage Studios.)*



Yehudi Menuhin and Ernest Bloch in 1928

Menuhin characterized Ernest Bloch, whom he met as a child growing up in San Francisco, as 'the musician as Old Testament prophet, whose speech was thunder and whose glance lightning, whose very presence proclaimed divine fire by which, on occasion, a bystander might feel himself scorched.'
(Photo by Lucienne Bloch, courtesy Old Stage Studios.)

(referred to as “Y” in the following citation)

and his wife, Diana, paid a visit to Agate Beach on January 14, 1958. “Y and Ernest sat down talking happily, discussing the solo [suites] he had commissioned, mulling over the days of old while we slowly dried off and were given glorious coffee by his wife.” Before they left, Bloch filled Diana’s pockets with rough agates gathered from the beach far below. Yehudi later described the two suites Bloch wrote for him as “expressive, melodic, classical in a manner that calls to mind latter-day Bach.”³⁸

Jacob Avshalomov stopped by for an impromptu visit and was welcomed by Bloch with open arms. Lucienne Bloch recalls that Igor Stravinsky visited her father at the house. Bloch’s dear friend Hungarian violinist Joseph Szigeti enjoyed the view; and an enduring friendship and musical collaboration was born when cellist Zara Nelsova came to Agate Beach to study with Bloch. His student Herbert Elwell came to stay as well.

Locals in Lincoln County still remember

Bloch. Many encounters took place on the beach below his house. Peggy Rariden, a community legend who passed away in 2004, had vivid memories of the composer from her childhood. She helped keep Bloch's legacy alive by serving on the Board of Directors of the local Ernest Bloch Music Festival for fifteen years. Peggy remembered an imposing cloaked figure striding the beach. The overwhelmed young girl asked Bloch, "Are you Superman?" He responded mischievously, "Oh, no, I'm somebody much more important than that!"³⁹

Jeff Hollen, an attorney in Newport, where he grew up, remembers meeting Bloch on the beach as well, perhaps a year or two before the composer died. Young Hollen and some friends were building a fire on Agate Beach, when they were approached by an old man who warned them not to play with fire. He invited them up to his house for hot cocoa, which Hollen remembers as the best he'd ever had.

"It was probably good European chocolate," he says now with a smile. Hollen recalls that while he and his friends were enjoying the cocoa, his mother was looking for him and he got into trouble for wandering out of earshot that day.⁴⁰

Current Siletz resident Judy Yeager also grew up in the Agate Beach neighborhood, and recalls that she and her friends loved going to the Bloch house trick-or-treating on Halloween, because he gave out nickel candy bars rather than penny candy, a rare treat. Judy wrote in 2005, "for several years he never forgot us – and needless to say we never forgot him. I remember a kindly-looking man opening the door and treating us with such generosity we were pretty much in awe [of him]."⁴¹ Connie (Hocken) Killion of Newport, who would often deliver groceries to the Blochs with a friend, recalls the large candy bars too. She adds that the children were required to come into the house and sing

before they got the treats! Bloch and his wife looked on, smiling.⁴²

Another neighbor, Bill Bain, former Mayor of Newport lives two doors from the former Bloch home. He remembers when his mother would go to visit the house. The fact that his mother and Bloch both played the violin was their common connection.

The dedication of a Memorial plaque took place April 10, 1976. In attendance, among others, were the Governor of Oregon and Mrs. Straub, and Bloch's three children.

There was also a performance by the Portland Youth Philharmonic with Jacob Avshalomov conducting. The plaque, originally situated on Highway 101 near the Bloch house, was moved in 2008 to a more prominent location in front of the Newport Performing Arts Center.

A local group commemorated this artistic giant who lived among us with the Ernest Bloch Music Festival, which was the brainchild



Dedication of Memorial Plaque April 10, 1976 in Agate Beach wayside at 49th Street with Oregon's Governor Straub and Bloch's three children, Lucienne, Ivan, and Suzanne. The plaque reads: "Ernest Bloch, Composer; Philosopher; Humanist, Lived Nearby with his wife, Marguerite, 1939-1964. Give Me Solitude, Give Me Nature - Walt Whitman." The plaque should have read: "1941-1963. Bloch and his wife moved to Oregon in 1939 and to Agate Beach in 1941. Bloch died in 1959, Marguerite in 1963."

of Dr. Greg Steinke (then on the faculty of Linfield College); Sharon Morgan, the former Executive Director of the Oregon Coast Council for the Arts; and others. The festival honored Bloch with concerts of classical music – his compositions and the works of many other composers – and a Composers’ Symposium at which promising young composers worked with a distinguished Composer-in-Residence to prepare brand new works for performance. Bloch’s legacy as a teacher and mentor was also celebrated by the inclusion of a Young Musicians’ Program (YMP) component of the Composers’ Symposium. High-school-aged music students attended this program and took part in many of the workshops and master classes, and they also learned music theory and composition techniques. YMP participants each composed a work for performance in the space of one week, and performed each others’ pieces at a concluding concert.

Another group working to preserve Bloch’s legacy is the Jewish Music Institute, an independent organization associated with the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. They hosted a three-day International Ernest Bloch Conference at Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge, on July 29, 30 and 31, 2007. This conference was subtitled “2009 and Beyond.”

Since 2007 other groups have formed societies in the United Kingdom (International Ernest



The Ernest Bloch Conference, at Cambridge University’s Fitzwilliam College, sponsored by the Jewish Music Institute in July 2007 drew participants from many different countries. The conference was subtitled “2009 and Beyond.”

Bloch Society - www.ernestblochsociety.org), Switzerland (Association BloCH - www.ernestbloch.ch), and Israel, where Dalia Atlas has made significant contributions to Bloch's discography. Bloch has also found supporters in France, Japan, and China. Dr. Joseph Lewinski and Dr. Emmanuelle Dijon are the authors of the massive four-volume *Ernest Bloch: Sa vie et sa pensée* amounting to some 3500 pages. Claude Torres, the chief Bloch discographer, lives in Montpellier, France.

In July 2009, the Oregon Coast Council for the Arts sponsored a special 50th anniversary event at the Ernest Bloch house in Agate Beach with Dr. Alexander Knapp as the guest speaker and musical offerings by Ramona Martin and Krista Johnson.

In Portland, Oregon, in 2011, the Oregon Jewish Museum sponsored a special exhibit, featuring many of Bloch's photos, organized by Eric Johnson (see www.ericjohnsonphoto.com). This event included talks by Eric Johnson and Alexander Knapp.

Mark and Cindy McConnell served as caretakers of the Bloch house (now known as Sea Krest Lodge) for over 20 years. They were always supportive of our efforts to celebrate the composer.

Paul Brookhyser, active from the days of the Ernest Bloch Music Festival, continues to volunteer. He also purchased a large number of copies of Ernest Bloch's 1923 work entitled *Enfantines*, which were distributed to piano students in Lincoln County.

Dr. Frank Geltner and Lucienne Allen (Bloch's great granddaughter) manage and monitor the Ernest Bloch website.

They usually rely on a small network including Sita Milchev, Alexander Knapp, Geraldine Auerbach and Greg Steinke, to answer questions posed there.

REMEMBERING BLOCH

Both before and after his passing, Ernest Bloch received many tributes and awards. There are many memorials aimed at preserving the legacy of the composer. In addition, there are at least two dozen repositories of Bloch archival materials in the U.S.A., Western Europe and Israel.

In 1955 a bronze sculpture of Bloch was dedicated in the Hebrew Cultural Garden in Rockefeller Park in Cleveland, Ohio.

On December 5, 1967, Bloch's violin, made by the eighteenth-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, the instrument was loaned to a gifted artist chosen by Isaac Stern, and has since been passed on to other deserving artists.⁴³

In 1968 the family of Ernest Bloch arranged to create a memorial to their parents by donating to the Save the Redwoods League and thereby creating the Marguerite and Ernest Bloch Grove in the Prairie Creek Redwoods State Park, dedicated the following year. In 1980 nearly every living descendant of Ernest Bloch met up to celebrate the 100th anniversary of his birth at Prairie Creek.

The Ernest Bloch Memorial Park, next to the City Hall in Mill Valley California, was built in the late 1980s to recognize Bloch's writing of his epic symphonic rhapsody *America* while residing there part-time.

The dedication of the Ernest Bloch Memorial Wayside in Newport, Oregon took place on July 21, 2018. The Ernest Bloch Memorial Stone, as referenced earlier, was dedicated in 1976, moved to the Newport Performing Arts Center

in 2008, and returned to the Wayside for the dedication in 2018.

In Geneva, Switzerland, in 1988 the *Rue Ernest-BLOCH (1880-1959, Compositeur et chef d'orchestre)* was named in the composer's honor. Similarly, in 2009 in Newport, Oregon, acknowledging Geneva's decision, and marking the 50th anniversary of Bloch's death, the entry to what is now the Ernest Bloch Memorial Wayside was named *Ernest Bloch Place*.

CLOSING THOUGHTS

David Kushner, at the end of his Biographical Overview, wrote: "The music of Ernest Bloch is above all else, sincere. It would be grossly naïve to label it 'Jewish' or nationalistic; it is, rather, humanistic. As a result, it delivers a universal message. History, the final arbiter in all aspects of the human enterprise, will, in all likelihood, reserve for Ernest Bloch a place of honor in the pantheon of the music elite of the twentieth century."⁴⁴

On July 15, 1959, Ernest Bloch died at the Good Samaritan Hospital in Portland. In keeping with a special tradition, Lucienne Bloch and her husband, Steve Dimitroff, prepared several death masks of Ernest Bloch. This once-common practice was usually undertaken to create a memento or portrait of the deceased, but it is unusual for an immediate family member to make the death mask. The Center for Creative Photography and the San Francisco Conservatory of Music each have a copy of Bloch's death mask.

Bloch's ashes were scattered in the Pacific Ocean at Agate Beach just below the house, along with those of Marguerite.

Helen Johnston Kintner (1927-2018) walked the trail from the beach to the Bloch home in the days leading up to the writing of her book *The Ernest Bloch I Knew: The Agate Beach*



Ernest Bloch's death mask prepared by Bloch's daughter, Lucienne Bloch and her husband, Stephen Pope Dimitroff.

Years in 2009, fifty years after his death: “In the late afternoon I decided to walk down the beach trail again for the last time. The wooden footbridge was boarded up now, the victim of time and natural decay, but I could circumvent it and reconnect with the route as I remembered it. Using a stick I had found at the head of the trail, I could make out the original path by moving aside the undergrowth. Down to the beach now, to pause and reflect. There in the distance was the lighthouse hill, from which the agates were washed out in the ‘olden days.’ The beach, once littered with agates and shells, appeared smooth and clean in the late afternoon sun. What memories! How I’d love to have had Ernest Bloch alongside to witness again the stunning beauty of this day and this place, but those years were far, far behind me now, never to be replaced or re-lived. Back up the trail now, for the last time. The grade seemed a little steeper, though it could not have been! I paused by the bench, then sat briefly to reflect on the past.

The constant motion of the waves reminded me of Ernest Bloch’s life: always in a state of ebb and flow, seldom at a point of complete rest.

Little did I dream over those years when Bloch and I were sitting together on that little wooden bench, looking down at the shoreline, that his ashes would one day be scattered there on the beach beneath us, marking his final resting place.”⁴⁵

A posthumous appreciation of Ernest Bloch written by three Berkeley faculty members summarizes Bloch's lasting contributions: "The legacy of Ernest Bloch is in two parts, the intangible and the tangible. The intangible is the impact on his friends, associates and students: the model of an exemplary musician, unswervingly dedicated to the canons of his art. The tangible is the body of his works written over a period of sixty years: music that speaks with vigor, eloquence and beauty."⁴⁶

THE ERNEST BLOCH LEGACY PROJECT

The Ernest Bloch Legacy Project is devoted to preserving the legacy of Ernest Bloch who lived the last part of his life on the Oregon coast overlooking the Pacific Ocean. The place called Agate Beach had its own post office during Bloch's lifetime, hence the designation of Bloch as "the Composer from Agate Beach." In 1979, Agate Beach became part of Newport.

A dedicated group of individuals in the U.S., U.K., France, Switzerland, Israel, Japan and many other countries have been working to preserve the legacy of this world-renowned composer, humanist, philosopher, conductor, and educator.

Support is always welcomed for the initiatives, which include work on translating some of Bloch's writings and writings about Bloch from the French, promoting the recording and performance of Bloch's work, especially his lesser-known music and celebrating Bloch's Sesquicentennial in 2030.

The Ernest Bloch Legacy Project is an informal group of dedicated individuals who are primarily located in Newport, Oregon, including Dr. Frank Geltner, Mark McConnell, Ramona Martin, Twylah Olson, Paul Brookhyser, Charlotte Dinolt, Caroline Bauman, Denise Johnson, and others who have helped along the way.

REFLECTIONS OF DR. FRANK GELTNER

As we put this publication to press in early 2023, we reflect on the past two decades and the many editions preceding this one. We again wish to acknowledge the work of my colleague Dr. Alexander Knapp in digesting material from his 2017 Ernest Bloch Studies (Cambridge Composer Studies). This gives to our readers a full chronology of Ernest Bloch published and unpublished works. With this edition, the Lincoln County Historical Society (LCHS) becomes the publisher of this booklet. We thank them for their ongoing support. During the past year Ernest Bloch's Renaissance Christ, pictured on page 19 of this booklet, has been returned to Newport and is now safely cared for by the LCHS.

In Newport we want to again thank Kelly Barker for helping to realize the central sculptural elements of the Ernest Bloch Memorial Wayside. Thanks to Casey Felton who documented the creation of Kelly's work.

Thanks to the City of Newport, the Economic Development Alliance of Lincoln County, the Yaquina Bay Economic Foundation, the Lincoln County Historical Society, Ernest Bloch II, Stephen and Christie Burns, Joella Werlin, Thomas Lauderdale and Hunter Noack, the family of Helen Johnston, Newport Signs, Georgia Pacific, Newport Symphony Orchestra, the Oregon Coast Council for the Arts, Twylah Olson, Ramona Martin, Patricia Olmsted, Michelle Geltner, Columbia Bank, Casey Miller, Sylvain Fremaux, Sandy Roumagoux.

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Frank Jo Maitland Geltner has been involved in helping to preserve the legacy of Ernest Bloch since learning of the composer upon becoming the Executive Director of the Oregon Coast Council for the Arts (OCCA) in 1999. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Oregon (1980), his Master of Arts Degree (1969) from Memphis State University and his Bachelors Degree (1967) from the University of Illinois in Chicago. Frank served as the Alumni Director of the University of Illinois, Chicago (1970-1974), as the Associate Director and University Program Consultant for the Erb Memorial Union at the University of Oregon (1977-1997), and as the Executive Director of the San Juan Community Theatre (1997-1999) before coming to Newport.

He created the Ernest Bloch website around 2005 and maintained it until members of the Bloch family took over. He commissioned the first edition of *Ernest Bloch: Composer in Nature's University* through a grant from the Oregon Arts Commission in 2005. Nancy Steinberg was the original author chosen to prepare the first version of this booklet in 2006, which has been through at least five revisions prior to this 2023 publication.

Frank and his late wife Jo Maitland attended the First International Ernest Bloch Conference in Cambridge in 2007.

Frank is known locally as the Flamekeeper of the Ernest Bloch Legacy Project. He is grateful to all those who have supported his determination to see the memory of Ernest Bloch preserved and celebrated.



Alexander Knapp is a freelance musicologist, ethnomusicologist, lecturer, consultant, teacher, composer and pianist. He graduated from Selwyn College Cambridge, UK, with MA, MusB, and PhD degrees in music.

From the late 1960s to the present day, Alex has researched, published and lectured extensively in the UK, USA, many parts of Western and Eastern Europe, Israel, Western Russia, Eastern Siberia, and China, on the subject of Jewish music, and especially on the life and works of composer Ernest Bloch. He contributed substantially to a volume entitled *Ernest Bloch Studies* (2016) that he co-edited for Cambridge University Press. Among numerous other articles, he has written entries on aspects of Jewish art music for *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians (Second Edition)*.

Alex has been appointed to academic and administrative positions at Wolfson College Cambridge; Goldsmiths' College, Royal College of Music, and City University, London. Until taking early retirement in October 2006, he held the Joe Loss Lectureship in Jewish Music at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. He organized and directed the First International Ernest Bloch Conference in Cambridge in 2007, and lectured at the First Beijing International Ernest Bloch Conference in 2010.