

International Ernest Bloch Society

President Steven Isserlis CBE

Associate musicians: Natalie Clein, Danny Driver, Rivka Golani, Jack Liebeck, Malcolm Singer, Raphael Wallfisch, Benjamin Wolf

www.ernestblochsociety.org

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Ernest Bloch Anniversaries 2019 and 2020

July was a significant month for Swiss-American Composer, Ernest Bloch. He was **born in Geneva on 24 July 1880** and **died in Portland, Oregon, on 15 July 1959** aged nearly 79. That means that two fairly significant anniversaries are coming up: 2019 will mark the 60th anniversary of his death and 2020 will mark the 140th anniversary of his birth.

The International Ernest Bloch Society, based in London, and our international partners in **Switzerland, Oregon USA, France and Israel**, will be marking both these anniversaries with a two-year programme 'Out of the Wilderness'. It will highlight outstanding artists in their performances of Bloch works and endeavour to bring some lesser known works to attention and to introduce Ernest Bloch and his music to students and musicians young and old.

Anniversary Events:

Wigmore Hall: Natalie Clein

Sunday 23 September 2018, 11.30am

The opening event heralding the celebration of these anniversaries is on Sunday 23 September this year, 2018 at 11.30am, when renowned cellist Natalie Clein, International Ernest Bloch Society (IEBS) Associate Musician, includes Bloch's first Solo Cello Suite as well as his suite 'From Jewish Life' in her programme at the Wigmore Hall. She will be accompanied on the piano by Yeol Eum Son. They will also play music by Frank. Bridge and Vaughan Williams. The concert lasts approximately one hour without an interval. Tickets are £16 (£14 Concessions). The price includes a programme and a drink (coffee, sherry or juice).



Wigmore Hall: Raphael Wallfisch 25 September 2019

A significant anniversary event also at the Wigmore Hall will be when **Raphael Wallfisch**, also an IEBS Associate Musician and longstanding admirer of Ernest Bloch, will perform with his regular musical partner **John York** at the piano. This concert is scheduled for **25 September 2019**, the very day of the 100th anniversary of the exciting and controversial rivalry between Ernest Bloch and Rebecca Clarke, who were the finalists in the Coolidge Chamber Music Prize, Berkshire, USA. Raphael will perform Bloch's winning Viola Suite of 1919 in a later arrangement for cello and piano.



Raphael recently performed Bloch, Ravel and Korngold at the **Bundestag in Berlin** where his **mother Anita Lasker Wallfisch** had been invited to speak for Holocaust Remembrance Day. This programme was repeated at the Wigmore Hall in July 2018 by special request of the Director, John Gilhooly. This can be seen and heard on the Wigmore Live Streaming page here <https://wigmore-hall.org.uk/news/anita-lasker-wallfisch-at-wigmore-hall> .



Raphael will also be playing Bloch's Vidui and Nigun with the Dresden Philharmonic and Michael Sanderling on Thursday 8 November 2018.

Other musicians planning Bloch's works in the coming years



Steven Isserlis

During the anniversary years, the President of the International Ernest Bloch Society, **Steven Isserlis** pictured left (who has in recent years recorded Schelomo – as have Natalie and Raphael) will turn his thoughts to Bloch performances and recordings, as will other like-minded musicians - pianists **Piers Lane** and **Danny Driver**, violist **Rivka Golani** and violinist **Jack Liebeck**, who performed Bloch's Violin Sonata No 1 at the Wigmore Hall for the 50th anniversary of Bloch's death in July 2009.

Czech cellist František Brikcius

will be performing Bloch's solo cello suites and his cello and piano compositions in 2019 and 2020 in the 4th and 5th Bach Festivals in Gers in France <http://Festival.iKosik.com> and in the Festival Brikcius - the 8th and 9th Chamber Music Concert Series in Prague (November) <http://Festival.Brikcius.com>

Any musicians planning Bloch performances

or recordings in the coming years should please inform the International Ernest Bloch Society so that we can include the details on our website and in our promotions.

info@ernestblochsociety.org

Photo Gallery of Bloch

For those who look at 'Pinterest', I found this very interesting collection of pictures of Ernest Bloch and several members of his family here: <https://www.pinterest.co.uk/cdinolt/ernest-bloch-legacy/?lp=true>

International Partners

IEBS collaborates with Bloch Societies and Bloch enthusiasts in many parts of the world.

From Israel, Dalia Atlas says:

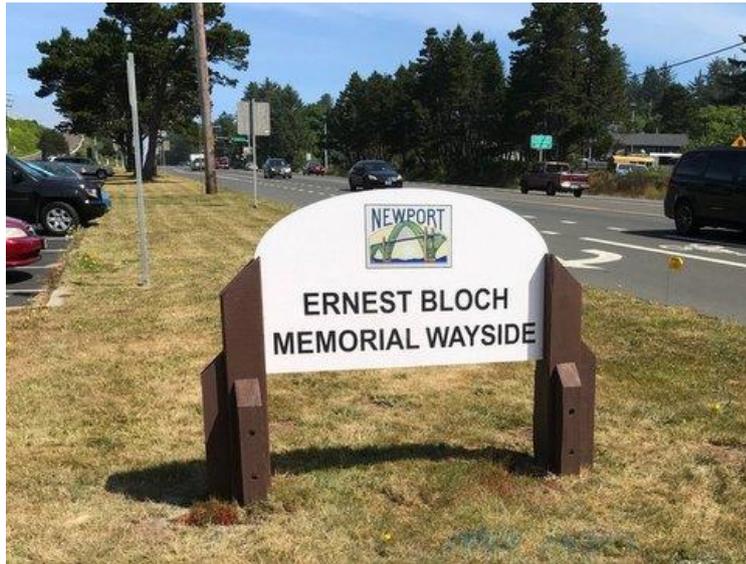
You will be interested to know that I conducted Schelomo with the Mariinsky Orchestra in St. Petersburg with a wonderful young Russian cellist. It was played there for the first time! I hope to meet you all when I will come to London. I plan to record a new Bloch CD. I am glad to tell you that all my Bloch recordings are frequently performed now on the Israel radio, so my aim to bring Bloch back to the podium comes to fruition. I also gave some lectures in Russia. You can read reviews of Dalia's Bloch recordings here: <http://www.dalia-atlas.com/Reviews.html>



From France, Claude Torres says:

It's my pleasure to contribute to your anniversary programme by putting all my discography at your disposal. I would be willing to answer any questions and provide any musical excerpts in so far as I have most of the recordings of Ernest Bloch's works. <http://www.musiques-regeneeres.fr/Bloch/index.html>

Bloch Memorial dedicated at Newport, Oregon:



Alexander Knapp, who was invited to participate in the proceedings over four days in July 2018, reports on the moving dedication of a memorial near the composer's home in Agate Beach, Oregon.

An imaginative Memorial to Ernest Bloch has been installed at Ernest Bloch Place by dint of the dedication and determination of **Dr Frank Geltner**, Chairman of the Ernest Bloch Legacy Project. This Memorial is at the southern end of the newly named **Ernest Bloch Memorial**

Wayside, a short stretch of open land (in Agate Beach just north of Newport) that is located between Highway 101 and the house that Bloch and his wife Marguerite lived in from 1941 until his death in 1959. Visitors to Newport will now be able to stop at the Wayside and learn about the composer.



The Memorial, pictured left, comprises an obelisk with an image of Bloch on one side and some quotations from Bloch's writings on the other. It stands a few feet away from a smaller Ernest Bloch Memorial stone (to the left) that was dedicated nearby in

1976. Then in 2008, it was moved to the entrance of the Newport Performing Arts Center and is now back, beside the new taller memorial. Surrounding the obelisk are five low-lying stone benches, dedicated to individuals who have been active in promoting Bloch's legacy at home and abroad. One carries the name of Frank Geltner and his family; and I was overwhelmed and very honoured to find that one of the benches bears my name. In the photo you can see the benches, and behind them, between the two memorial stones, you can see the informative noticeboard which offers the visitor salient details about the composer in words and pictures.



The Dedication took place outdoors on Saturday 21 July at 2pm. Short speeches were given by Master of Ceremonies Frank Geltner, Ernest Bloch II (the composer's grandson) and Lucienne Bloch Dimitroff (Bloch's great-granddaughter). Dignitaries from the City of Newport and the State of Oregon also spoke, as did Dr Greg Steinke and Sharon Morgan (Founders of the Ernest Bloch Music Festival in Newport). I was delighted to have been invited to participate as 'Resident Bloch Scholar' and had the enormous pleasure of conveying warmest greetings from the International Ernest Bloch Society in London. I spoke about some of the major developments in the dissemination of Bloch's music in Western and

Eastern Europe, Israel, and the Far East, over the past decade – as well as outlining plans for the future.

The actual Dedication Ceremony had been prefaced by four days of celebratory events. On Tuesday 17 July, Frank and I were interviewed live on 'Arts Talk Radio' at the Oregon Coast Broadcast Center, Newport. On Wednesday, Thursday and Friday (10.00-12.00 each morning), informal, interactive talks were given near the Memorial by Frank, Greg and myself, on the story of 'The Man from Agate Beach': his life, his passions and his work. The three of us gave presentations at the formal Dinner at the Sylvia Beach Hotel, Newport, on the Friday evening, where Erin Adair (flute) and Ramona Martin (piano) gave a beautiful performance of Bloch's *Suite Modale* (1956). They played the same work the following morning at the Pacific Maritime Heritage Center in Newport, prior to my fully illustrated lecture entitled: 'Musical Style in Ernest Bloch's Agate Beach Works'.

The formal events were attended by eleven family members: grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and great-great-grandchildren (and spouses/partners) of Ernest and Marguerite!

Dr Frank Geltner, Flamekeeper of the Ernest Bloch Legacy Project, has been the driving force and prime mover behind this effective Memorial and the inspiring programme of dedication. He has worked tirelessly over many years to promote a greater interest in, and a deeper understanding of, Bloch's life and music.

A special booklet entitled *Ernest Bloch: Composer in Nature's University* by Nancy Steinberg was made available to all the guests. This biographical booklet, first published in 2006, has been re-edited by Frank and myself several times since then – most recently in July 2018. In its present extended form (40 pages), it incorporates new material and a complete, chronological list of all of Bloch's published and unpublished works, as well as an insert comprising the programme of the Dedication Ceremony and Frank's background history of the Ernest Bloch Memorial Wayside. If anyone would like a copy, please email Frank at info@ernestbloch.org. You can see more about the great work being done by Frank and his team by visiting the Ernest Bloch Legacy Website www.ernestbloch.org

Alexander Knapp (Consultant, IEBS)
August 2018

In Memoriam Ernest Bloch II

Alexander Knapp, (Consultant, IEBS) August 2018

It is with great sadness that I report the passing of Ernest Bloch II ('Ernie' - known also as 'Jody') – grandson of composer Ernest Bloch - on Friday 10 August at the age of 79, following a severe stroke. He and his partner Judy had recently returned to their home in Portland, Oregon, from the Ceremony of Dedication of the Monument to his grandfather's memory at the Ernest Bloch Memorial Wayside, Agate Beach, Newport, Oregon, in which he had participated. He had the pleasure and satisfaction of meeting with numerous family members and friends, some of whom he had not seen for some years; so there was a tangible feeling of reunion which everyone present at this event was able to observe and enjoy.

Ernie was born to Ivan (the eldest child of Ernest and Marguerite Bloch) and Marianna (of Dutch-Jewish ancestry) in November 1938, and grew up in Portland. Aspects of his early family life are vividly and touchingly described in his 'Reminiscences of My Grandfather', the Foreword to *Ernest Bloch Studies* (pp. xiv-xx), in which the following biographical details also appear (p. xi): 'After graduating from Portland State University, he engaged in a business career, directing economic planning and development for the airline industry. He then joined an electric energy corporation managing government and public affairs areas. He describes his mission in life as 'To have Ernest Bloch's music heard.'

Despite having contracted polio at the age of five, and being physically restricted ever since that time, Ernie led a full and active life. In addition to his professional work in the field of philanthropy, he was a popular and highly respected chairman of numerous cultural organizations in Oregon over the years.

I first came to know him in 1995 when he and his aunt Suzanne, Ernest Bloch's elder daughter, came to London to attend the performance of Bloch's *Avodath Hakodesh (Sacred Service)*, presented in St. Paul's Cathedral by the Jewish Music Institute and conducted by Yehudi Menuhin. Ernie and I remained firm friends over the succeeding years, meeting periodically in Portland or Newport, and speaking frequently over the phone about Bloch matters and exchanging family news. I shall always remember the enormous warmth of his friendship, his ready wit, and his sparkling expression. He was an immense inspiration to everyone who came into contact with him: a role model in how to cope with adversity without complaint - and how to bring happiness to others. To have known Ernie is a true blessing, and I am so grateful to have had the opportunity to stay and spend quality time with Ernie and Judy in Portland during the last three days of my visit to Oregon last month.



We extend our sincerest condolences to Judy; to his daughter Suzanne and her family: husband Richard, children Heidi, Emily and Jackson; his son Peter; and to his sister Joni. In the picture which I took only a few weeks ago, we see Ernie Bloch (right), next to his partner, Judy Buffo. Next to her (right to left): Suzanne Bloch Boyer, Suzanne's husband Richard (behind), Jackson (in front), Emily, Heidi.

Audrey Ellison (16 March 1928 – 14 June 2018)

Geraldine Auerbach MBE writes



It is with great sadness that we report the death of J Audrey Ellison on 14 June last, aged 90. She was the revered and much-loved Secretary of the International Ernest Bloch Society (IEBS) from the time a committee was formed in 2006 to relaunch the Society until her retirement in 2017. Audrey, who was a greatly respected music agent and concert organiser, was associated with many musical societies. IEBS, which was dear to her heart, was fortunate to have her expert services.

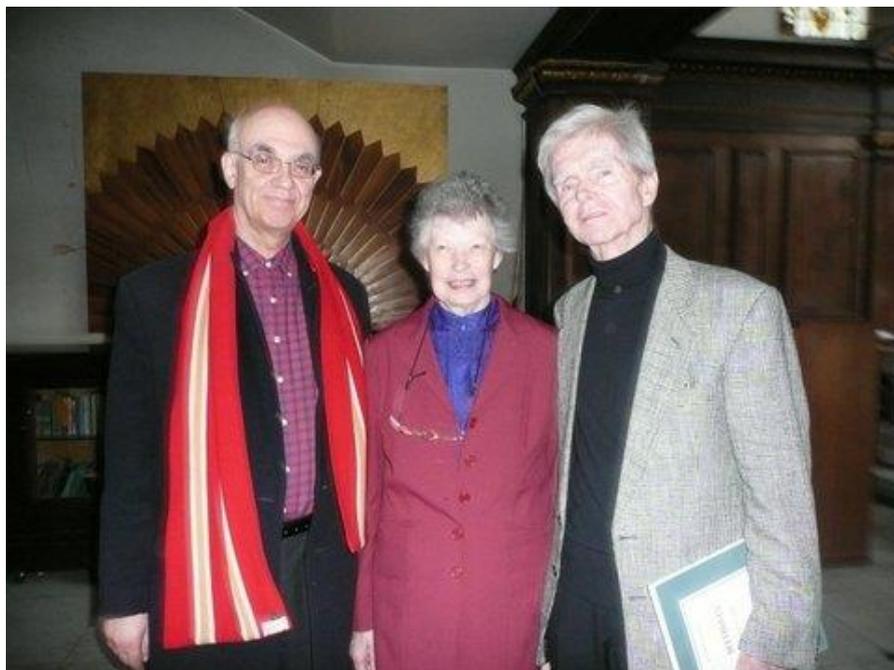
Audrey is seen here extreme right at the launch event of IEBS in July 2008 in London.

Left to right: **Geraldine Auerbach** MBE Director of the Jewish Music Institute and member of the IEBS UK committee, **Oliver Margulies** Head of the Swiss Ernest Bloch Committee, **Dalia Atlas**, conductor of Bloch's works and Head of the Israeli Bloch Committee, **Alexander Knapp**, Bloch Scholar and instigator of the Bloch Jubilee Conference and Festival, **Frank Geltner** of the Ernest Bloch Legacy Project in Portland, Oregon, and **J Audrey Ellison**, Secretary of the International Ernest Bloch Society.

Without Audrey, the Society might not have come into existence again, or been so effective. She readily shared her contacts and standing in the musical world for the benefit of Ernest Bloch and his music. It was Audrey who attracted distinguished musicians to become Patrons of the International Ernest Bloch Society, including as President, first Sir Charles Mackerras AC CH CBE and after his death, Steven Isserlis CBE. She led the organising team for the Cambridge University Bloch conference in 2007 and planned the relaunch event for the Society, which included speeches, a film from Ernie Bloch and a performance by cellist Iosif Feigelson accompanied by Malcolm Miller. The prestigious event in 2008, took place at the home of Bob Boas and was attended by several members of the Bloch family and international partners.

The two Wigmore Hall concerts that Audrey arranged in 2009 with superb artists, for the festival celebrating the 50th anniversary of Bloch's death, were outstanding in their field. In the first one, the pianist Piers Lane and the Goldner String Quartet performed Bloch's Piano Quintet no 1 (1921-3) and his *Paysages* String Quartet (1925) together with Mahler and Beethoven String Quartets. In the second concert, the violinist Jack Liebeck and pianist Bengt Forsberg played Bloch's Violin Sonata no 1 (1920) and his Baal Shem (1923) along with sonatas by Debussy and Franck. Audrey's knowledge and experience really shone through. These concerts, with their very fine programming, will remain two of the most significant events of the 50th anniversary year.

Audrey wrote to us when she stepped down from her role in 2017: 'It gave me particular joy to suggest the UK staged premier performance of Bloch's only opera, *Macbeth*, to Charles Peebles, Artistic Director of University College Opera. Charles conducted several performances of *Macbeth* at the Bloomsbury Theatre in London in March 2009. I shared attending the premier performance with our then President, Sir Charles Mackerras, as he was also President of University College Opera at the time.'

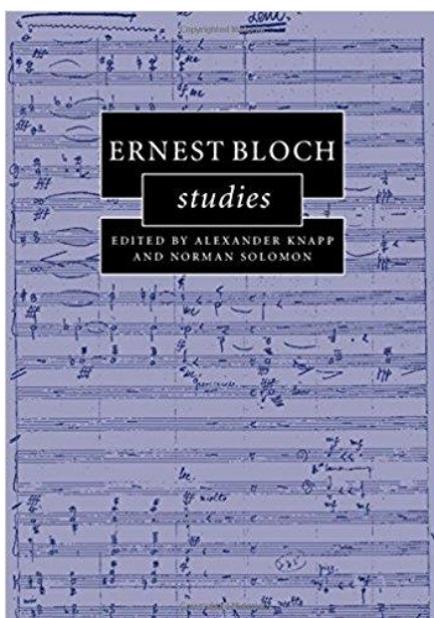


Pictured here between Dr Alexander Knapp, Bloch Scholar and Consultant to IEBS, and Professor Malcolm Troup, past Chairman of IEBS, Audrey will be remembered as one who made things happen. She managed her committees and musicians with charm, astuteness and a discreet understanding of people's foibles and characters. Audrey will be sorely missed by us all, and by the many musicians and the

countless audiences who benefited from her efforts.

Ernest Bloch Studies

Ernest Bloch Studies, edited by Professor Norman Solomon and Dr Alexander Knapp, was published by Cambridge University Press in 2016. It was inspired by the International Conference 'Ernest Bloch: the Man and his Music' at Cambridge University in 2007. The book was reviewed in *Music and Letters*, Volume 99, Issue 1, 1 February 2018, Pages 136–138 by Peter Tregear. You can see the beginning of the review here: (but you need to be signed in to read the full text). <https://academic.oup.com/ml/article-abstract/99/1/136/4996151>



Ernest Bloch (1880–1959) is an exemplar of the twentieth-century composer for whom artistic and national identity were never fixed concepts. Best known today for a series of works based on Jewish liturgical and cultural themes, he also composed music in most of the major forms of Western art music (symphony, sonata, string quartet, etc.) but did so just as the centrality of those forms was dissolving under the pressures of post-tonal musical modernism. Bloch was also a significant teacher; pupils include Roger Sessions and Randall Thompson. Scholarly interest since his death has been intermittent, but now, as a more open and inclusive understanding of twentieth-century music and musical identity becomes the norm, his life and music are... (extract ends).

You can also read reports and see pictures from the 2007 International Conference on the International Ernest Bloch Society website here: <http://ernestblochsociety.org/index.php?id=bloch-jubilee-international-conference>

Bloch in Britain

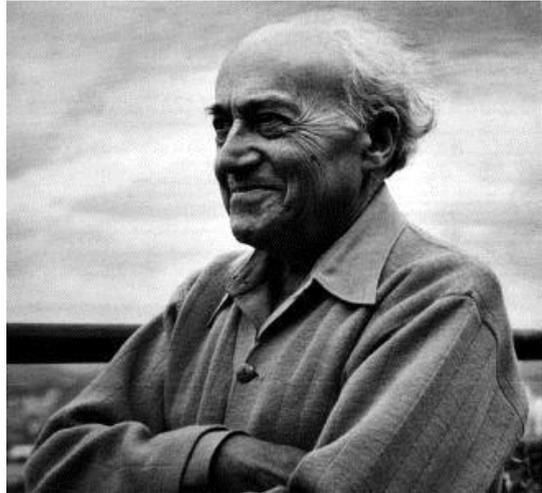
A fascinating talk on this subject was given by **Alex Knapp and Norman Solomon**, the co-editors of the book, on 22 February 2018 at University College London at a joint meeting of the Institute of Jewish Studies and the Jewish Historical Society of England. I have not seen any reviews of this talk but hope to have a summary from the speakers.

Short Biography of Ernest Bloch

Ernest Bloch was so admired in his heyday that many considered him the fourth 'B' after Bach, Beethoven and Brahms. He was one of the most original composers of the 20th century whose music, whilst intellectually challenging, was accessible to a wide audience. His works were regularly performed from the 1920s to the 1950s, particularly in the USA, UK and Italy.

Now, around the time of the 60th Anniversary of his death in Portland, Oregon in 1959, and the 140th of his birth in Geneva in 1880, it is time to rejoice in the wide range of his oeuvre and hear again the well and lesser-known orchestral, choral, chamber, instrumental, and vocal works. There will also be an exploration of his hitherto unpublished music.

Bloch has often been referred to as a 'Jewish composer' because of the substantial number of his works that carry Jewish titles. Yet his repertoire incorporates a variety of influences such as Renaissance, neo-Classical, neo-Romantic, Swiss, Native American, Chinese, and Gregorian Chant. Although he never founded a 'school' of composition, many of the most prominent American composers of the 20th century were his students.



He visited Britain in the 1930s, where concerts of his chamber music were presented. In 1949 his Concerto Symphonique for piano and orchestra was premiered at the Edinburgh Festival; in the same year, he also conducted a major concert at the Royal Albert Hall, including Schelomo with cellist Zara Nelsova and The Sacred Service with baritone Aron Rothmüller and the London Philharmonic Orchestra and Chorus. Following the founding of the American Ernest Bloch Society in 1937, an Ernest Bloch Society was founded in London later in the same year, with Albert Einstein, Sir Thomas Beecham, Sir Arthur Bliss, Sir Arnold Bax, and Sir John Barbirolli, among others, as honorary officers. Amongst his many other attributes, Bloch was an accomplished photographer, a lover of mushrooms, a collector and polisher of agates, and a prolific letter writer.

News Sheet Compiled August 2018.

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