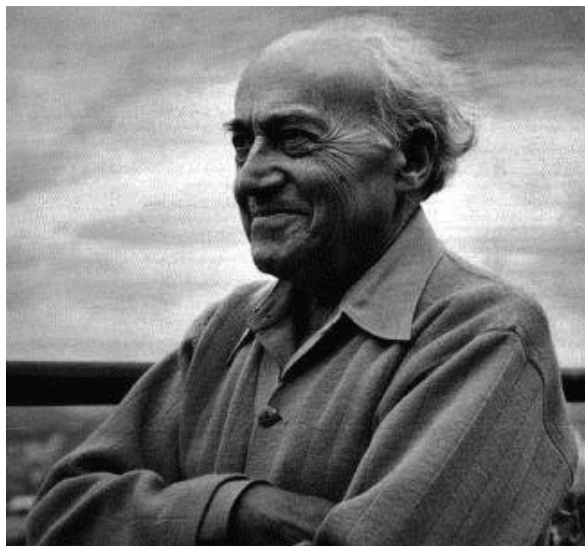


## **The World of Ernest Bloch** *Masterclasses, Discussion, Gala Concert*

**Miriam Kramer** (violin) **Rivka Golani** (viola) **Raphael Wallfisch** (cello)  
Celebrating the 140<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Ernest Bloch's birth



**Sunday 19 April, 10.30am-9.30pm**  
**Brunei Gallery Lecture Theatre, SOAS**  
University of London,  
Thornhaugh Street, Russell Square, London WC1H 0XG

**The music** of Swiss-American composer Ernest Bloch is **remarkably diverse** and was regularly performed in his lifetime. It revealed influences of Swiss, Chinese, Native American, American immigrant and Jewish musics. He also embraced Gregorian Chant, Renaissance, Neoclassical and Neoromantic idioms.



Three internationally acclaimed musicians, violinist **Miriam Kramer**, violist **Rivka Golani** and cellist **Raphael Wallfisch**, all recognised as fine exponents of his works, will lead the celebration of the 140<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth.

They will conduct masterclasses during the day for advanced students and also young professional players. They will each perform one of his **major works** in the evening Gala Concert. They will also invite the most outstanding masterclass participants to perform alongside them in the concert.

Audiences and masterclass participants will be enlightened by talks led by Bloch authority **Dr Alexander Knapp** and former BBC presenter **Rob Cowan** in discussion with Kramer, Golani and Wallfisch.

The event is organised by the **International Ernest Bloch Society** and presented in association with the Jewish Music Institute at SOAS, University of London. This event will offer the chance to experience a wider repertoire beyond Bloch's most frequently performed works.

In the evening Gala Concert, Miriam Kramer will perform Bloch's serene **Violin Sonata no. 2, 'Poème Mystique'**. The single-movement sonata draws contrasting sections from the haunting unaccompanied eight-note phrase that opens the piece. Kramer's recording of Bloch's *Violin Sonatas Nos. 1 & 2* was named Editor's Choice in Gramophone Magazine.

Bloch's **Viola Suite** will be played by Rivka Golani of whom the Financial Times said "*a supreme viola virtuoso - white-hot in delivery, kaleidoscopic in tone colours, electrifying in rhythmic attack.*" This is a work that won the famed Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge prize of 1919 over an entry by Rebecca Clarke.

Alongside contributions from the day's masterclass participants, the concert is completed with Raphael Wallfisch, who performs Bloch's **Symphony for Cello**. This work was written alternately for trombone as the solo instrument. Wallfisch, who has made several highly regarded performances and recordings of works by Bloch, recently recorded this cello concerto with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales conducted by Łukasz Borowicz.

Ernest Bloch is one of the most original composers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and his music is both intellectually challenging and accessible to a wide audience. The composer's music has recently appeared twice on superstar cellist Sheku Kanneh-Mason's chart-topping album, and is performed at the Wigmore Hall by Joshua Bell and Alessio Bax (23 April).

**To participate in the masterclasses**, advanced students and young professional musicians can register (free) at [www.ernestblochsociety.org](http://www.ernestblochsociety.org) and for the public **to attend on the day**, book at [www.jmi.org.uk](http://www.jmi.org.uk)

## The World of Ernest Bloch: Programme

**Sunday 19 April, 10:30-21:30**  
Brunei Gallery Lecture Theatre, SOAS

**10:30 Masterclasses**

**14:00 Talk** by Dr Alexander Knapp

**14:45 Masterclasses**

**16:45 Interviews** with Miriam Kramer, Rivka Golani and Raphael Wallfisch

**Rob Cowan** interviewer

**19:00 Concert**

**Bloch** *Violin Sonata no. 2, 'Poème Mystique'*

**Bloch** *Viola Suite*

**Bloch** *Symphony for Trombone or Cello*

And further works by masterclass participants

**Miriam Kramer** violin

**Rivka Golani** viola

**Raphael Wallfisch** cello

**Nicholas Durcan, Michael Hampton,**

**Craig White** piano

## Ernest Bloch

*"He was the musician whose speech was thunder and whose glance lightning."*

– Yehudi Menuhin, friend and admirer of Bloch



Born in Switzerland in 1880, **Ernest Bloch** was so admired in his heyday that many considered him the fourth 'B' after Bach, Beethoven and Brahms. He first studied violin and composition in Geneva, then at the Brussels Conservatoire, where his teachers included the celebrated Belgian violinist and composer, Eugène Ysaÿe. He later studied composition in Germany and France.

Ernest Bloch toured America with dancer Maude Allen in 1916. Warm reception of his compositions encouraged him to stay. He became a teacher of composition at Mannes School for Music, New York in 1917. In 1920 he was appointed the first Musical Director of the newly formed Cleveland Institute of Music. Five years later Bloch became director of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music until 1930. Amongst his pupils, were well known American composers, George Antheil, Frederick Jacobi, Leon Kirchner, Quincy Porter, Bernard Rogers, Roger Sessions and Randall Thompson. In 1930 he went back to Switzerland, but returned to America as the Nazi peril became evident, and in 1941 he moved to the small coastal community of Agate Beach, Oregon, where he lived for the rest of his life, composing and also teaching composition and lecturing at the University of California, Berkeley where he became Professor Emeritus in 1952.

His only opera *Macbeth*, was completed in Geneva in 1909 and performed in Paris later that year. It was revived in Naples in 1938, and the first complete American performance took place in 1960. In the UK, it was given a concert performance at the Royal Festival Hall in 1975, broadcast by the BBC. The UK stage premiere took place in 2009 during a festival commemorating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death.

Bloch is one of the most original composers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and his music, whilst intellectually challenging, remains accessible to a wide audience. Besides *Schelomo*, one of his best-known works, the composer also wrote major symphonic works called *Helvetia*, *America* and *Israel* using traditional materials for each, and a piano concerto called *Concerto Symphonique*.

Bloch has often been referred to as a 'Jewish' composer because a substantial number of his works carry Jewish titles, however, his repertoire incorporates a variety of influences such as Renaissance, neo-Classical, neo-Romantic, Swiss, Native American, Chinese, and Gregorian Chant. His works were regularly performed from the 1920s to the 1950s, particularly in the USA, UK and Italy.

As well as being a composer, Ernest Bloch was a prolific photographer, and his work inspired his daughter Lucienne, a muralist who worked with Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo.



## **The International Ernest Bloch Society (IEBS)**

The **Ernest Bloch Society** was originally founded in 1937, with Vice-Presidents including Sir Thomas Beecham, Sir Henry Wood and Ralph Vaughan Williams alongside Hon. President Albert Einstein. The new **International Ernest Bloch Society** was established in London in July 2008 with Sir Charles Mackerras AC CH CBE as President, in time to commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Ernest Bloch's death in July 1959. The current president is **Steven Isserlis CBE**.

The Society's aim is to promote greater awareness and appreciation of the man and his music in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, encouraging performances, recordings, and cultural events. It

brings together Bloch enthusiasts throughout the world – as far afield as China and Israel  
– and encourages scholarly research on the composer.

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**For more information on any of the above, please contact:**

**Nicky Thomas Media**

2-6 Baches St, London N1 6DN

+44 (0)20 3714 7594 | +44 (0)7768 566 530

[info@nickythomasmedia.com](mailto:info@nickythomasmedia.com)

[www.nickythomasmedia.com](http://www.nickythomasmedia.com)