STRUCTURE AND FORM IN TWO LATE WORKS FOR FLUTE AND ORCHESTRA

BY ERNEST BLOCH (1880-1959): SUITE MODALE (1956) AND
TWO LAST POEMS (MAYBE . . .) (1958) -- A LECTURE
RECIITAL, TOGETHER WITH THREE RECITALS OF
SELECTED WORKS OF J. S. BACH, JOLIVET,
MOZART, AND OTHERS

DISSERTATION

Presented to the Graduate Council of the
University of North Texas in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

DOCTOR OF MUSICAL ARTS

By

Kim E. Stirzaker, B.M., M.M.
Denton, Texas
May, 1992
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The lecture was presented on November 18, 1991. This presentation focused on the only two compositions for solo flute and orchestra by Ernest Bloch. Written during the last three years of the composer’s life, the pieces are representative of his last style period.

A short biography of Ernest Bloch was presented. A discussion of the various elements which influenced the composer’s style was included, with focus on devices found in *Suite Modale* and *Two Last Poems.* While *Suite Modale* is neobaroque in style, *Two Last Poems* is much more subjective. Together they represent a synthesis of many of the stylistic characteristics of Ernest Bloch. The musical parameters discussed included form, melody, texture, rhythm, harmony, and expressive devices.
Ernest Bloch wrote both compositions for the famous American flutist, Elaine Shaffer. Had Shaffer not met with an early death it is likely that both pieces would have received more exposure. It is hoped that more performances will occur as a result of the renewed interest generated by this study.

The lecture was concluded by a summary of Ernest Bloch’s position among composers of the twentieth century. The music of Ernest Bloch, a highly individualistic composer, includes many compositional techniques. He holds a unique position among the great composers of the twentieth century.
Tape recordings of all performances submitted as dissertation requirements are on deposit in the University of North Texas Library.
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UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS
College of Music

presents
Graduate Recital

KIM STIRZAKER, flute

assisted by:
Judy Fisher, piano
Mark Hayes, harpsichord

Monday, January 27, 1986 5:00 p.m. Concert Hall

Sonata in G Major
Jean Baptiste Loeillet de Gant
Largo
Allegro
Adagio
Gavotta

Sonatine
Henri Dutilleux

- Intermission -

Le Merle Noir
Oliver Messiaen

Sonata in D Major, Op. 50
Johann Nepomuk Hummel
Allegro con brio
Andante
Rondo Pastorale

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS

College of Music

presents

Graduate Recital

KIM STIRZAKER, flute

assisted by:
Gwyn McLean, flute
Keith Whitmore, harpsichord

Monday, June 8, 1987  5:00 p.m.  Concert Hall

Concerto in a minor
   Allegro
   Gavotte I - Gavotte II
   Allegro

Trio Sonata in G Major, BWV 1039
   Adagio
   Allegro ma non troppo
   Adagio
   Presto

- Intermission -

Romance, Op. 37
   Camille Saint-Saëns
   (1835-1921)

Chant de Linos
   André Jolivet
   (1905-1974)

Presented in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Musical Arts
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS

College of Music

presents

Graduate Recital
KIM STIRZAKER, flute
assisted by:
Rose Marie Chisholm, piano
Robert McCormick, guest marimbist

Monday, June 24, 1991 6:30 p.m.  Concert Hall

PROGRAM

Concerto in c minor F. VI. n. II
Allegro non molto
Largo
Allegro

Andante in C Major K. 315
W. A. Mozart
(1756-1791)

Second Thoughts for solo flute (1977)
Robert Helps
(b. 1928)

-W intermission -

Wave Train (1990)
Howard Buss
(b. 1947)

Grand Polonaise, Opus 16
Theobald Boehm
(1794-1881)

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts
Giege. of Music presents
A Graduate Lecture Recital
KIM STIRZAKER, flute
assisted by
Rose Marie Chisholm, piano
Monday, November 18, 1991 8:00 p.m. Recital Hall

LECTURE

STRUCTURE AND FORM IN TWO LATE WORKS FOR FLUTE
AND ORCHESTRA BY ERNEST BLOCH: SUITE MODALE (1956)
AND TWO LAST POEMS (MAYBE . . .) (1958)

Suite Modale
Moderato
L'istesso tempo
Allegro giocoso
Adagio

Two Last Poems (Maybe . . .)
Funeral Music
"Life Again? . . .

Presented in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Musical Arts
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Suite Model, composed in 1956, and Two Last Poems, composed in 1958, are two of the last compositions by Ernest Bloch. The composer died in 1959, only ten months after completing Two Last Poems. Although the two pieces are quite different in style, together they represent a synthesis of many of Bloch's compositional techniques. It is the purpose of this study to examine these pieces which are representative of the last style period of Ernest Bloch.

Two Last Poems is of particular significance, because Bloch knew he had terminal cancer as he was writing it. The composer's daughter, Suzanne, writes, "It is Bloch giving a philosophical soliloquy." Of the two pieces discussed, Two Last Poems is given the most emphasis. The analytic procedure includes a discussion of the form, melody, texture, rhythmic practice, harmonic practice, and expressive devices.

Many factors influenced the compositional style of Ernest Bloch. The works from the last years of his life,

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the period of Agate Beach (1941-59), represent a synthesis of Bloch’s writing. Bloch’s music was a reflection of the person and as such was subject to several influences. Some of these influences include his Jewish religious background, his European heritage, and his years as an American citizen. Another influence felt strongly in his last years was neoclassicism. Although the two pieces for flute and orchestra are each quite individual, there are certain pervasive traits which they have in common. One such trait is exoticism, referring here to the use of foreign and colorful effects. In Suite Modale, this is best exemplified by the use of modal melodies; however, in Two Last Poems, there is considerably more use of exoticism, including:

1. the use of color chords, such as those with added sevenths, ninths, and the tritone; (2) quintal and quartal harmonies; (3) the avoidance of a strong metric feeling; and (4) the use of the whole tone and octatonic scales.

In contrast to the use of exotic elements is Bloch’s careful attention to elements reflecting his compositional craft, such as formal design, idiomatic treatment of expressive capabilities of the instruments, and the use of contrapuntal figures. To Bloch, melody was the single most important element in composition. His melodies resemble those of Beethoven, whom he greatly admired, in that they are often short and easily developed. In both of these
flute works, Bloch uses cyclic treatment of melodies as well as melodies which are so similar that they seem to be derived from a single idea. In *Suite Modale*, this serves to unify the four movements. In *Two Last Poems*, it also serves to help stabilize the frequent tempo and dynamic changes.

It is significant that both of these works were written for the famous American flutist, Elaine Shaffer. Shaffer’s flute playing was considered so outstanding that she was one of the first flutists to abandon an orchestral career in favor of a solo career. Although Bloch never met Elaine Shaffer, he dedicated both of his works for flute and orchestra to her. It is likely that, had she not met with an early death due to cancer, these two pieces would have been given the exposure which they merit. Currently, there is only one recording of *Suite Modale* and none of the *Two Last Poems*. Little has been written about these pieces, and they are all too infrequently performed in orchestral concerts, losing favor to pieces which display more technical virtuosity. It is also significant that the only two pieces composed by Bloch for flute and orchestra were written in the last few years of his life. When writing *Two Last Poems*, he was told he must have surgery, and this knowledge filled him with emotion and thoughts of what might come. It was only after he finished the piece that he added the word "Maybe." The note of optimism is present in the
serene ending. Because of the significance Bloch placed on Two Last Poems, it is hoped that this study will call particular attention to this work, and that more performances of both works will occur as a result of this renewed interest.
CHAPTER II

ERNEST BLOCH 1880-1959

Ernest Bloch was born on July 24, 1880, in Geneva, Switzerland, of Jewish parents. He was not from a musical family; however, his mother encouraged him by giving him his first musical instrument, a toy flute, at the age of six. He taught himself to play and later composed melodies for his flute. At the age of nine, he began formal study of the violin, and by eleven had already decided to become a musician. Bloch began violin study with Louis Rey and composition with Emile Jaques Dalcroze in Geneva at the age of fourteen. He continued his studies in Brussels with violinist Eugene Ysaÿe and composer Francois Rasse. When he was nineteen, he went to Frankfurt to study with Ivan Knorr. These lessons in harmony, counterpoint, and fugue had a profound influence on Bloch's compositional style. He also credited Knorr with teaching him the value of independent thinking.

It was in 1916, while working for dancer Maud Allen, that Bloch first came to the United States. Although the dance company tour did not meet with success, Bloch soon began to find success as a composer. In 1917, his music was
performed to critical acclaim, and he was invited to join the faculty at the Mannes School of Music in New York. Two years later, in 1919, he was awarded the Coolidge Prize for the *Suite for Viola and Piano*. From 1920 to 1925, Bloch served as Director of the Cleveland Institute of Music. It was during this time that he chose to become a citizen of the United States. Bloch held the position as Director of the San Francisco Conservatory, from 1925 to 1930. During the decade of the 1930s, however, Bloch chose not to hold a permanent position; instead, he devoted himself to composition. During this period, he also visited Switzerland, but returned permanently to the United States, partly because of the spread of Naziism. It was in 1941, while traveling from California to Portland to visit his son, that Bloch discovered Agate Beach on the Oregon coast. The resort village captured his attention and he decided to spend the remainder of his life there. It was at Agate Beach that Bloch wrote many of his finest works, among them the two pieces discussed here.

During the last eighteen years of his life, Bloch composed in many diverse styles. Increasingly, objectivity and absolutism replaced the overt subjectivity and emotionalism of his earlier compositions.¹ Neobaroque

titles such as Suite Modale attest to this change, and many
of the works from this period represent a synthesis of
Bloch’s best writing. Because Suite Modale and Two Last
Poems are quite different in style, they are representative
of this synthesis. Suite Modale is an example of
neobaroque, while the Two Last Poems is a much more
subjective work. Both works, however, reflect Bloch’s
interest in writing for a solo instrument, typical of many
of his works from this period.

Though Ernest Bloch was Swiss by birth, and later
became an American citizen, he is often remembered first as
a Jewish composer. Bloch’s music was a reflection of
himself and, as such, was subject to several influences,
only one of which was his Jewish background. Only about
one-fifth of Bloch’s total output uses Jewish titles or
references. The works written between 1911 and 1918 are
known collectively as the "Jewish Cycle." Many of these
works contain direct quotations from the Hebrew service,
while others merely contain references to Jewish melodies.
Other works, not from this cycle, include passages which
have no specific source, but which may be said to express a
Jewish awareness. Other influences come from his European-
American heritage: Swiss folk songs are used in the
Concerto Grosso (1925) and American folk songs appear in
America, An Epic Rhapsody (1926). Others, such as the Viola
Suite, contain pentatonic scales which are reminiscent of a far-east influence.\textsuperscript{2}

One of his greatest influences in later years, neoclassicism, was inspired by Bloch's high regard for Bach and Beethoven. He did not hesitate to borrow from the past when he felt it was appropriate. This influence is apparent in both Suite Modale and Two Last Poems. In Suite Modale, Bloch used the model of the baroque suite for the formal design. His use of short melodic cells for thematic development, found in both Suite Modale and Two Last Poems, resembles the melodies of Bach and Beethoven.

The compositions that Bloch wrote at Agate Beach comprise many of his best creations. By examining the two works for flute and orchestra, it is apparent that the view of Bloch as a Jewish or nationalistic composer is far too limited. In these two pieces, the merging of many of the elements which influenced his style can be seen. In Suite Modale and Two Last Poems, Bloch successfully combines the exotic with compositional craft.\textsuperscript{3} It is this eclectic quality which stamps Bloch as a composer with his own highly


individual style and, therefore, makes him a truly great composer of the twentieth century.
CHAPTER III

SUITE MODALE

Suite Modale is a short work, only twelve minutes in length. It was intended originally for flute and piano, but was re-orchestrated for flute and string orchestra by the composer in 1956, when Bloch was seventy-six. It was through a recording of Elaine Shaffer, that Bloch came to admire what he felt was her youthfulness, sensibility, and freshness. These qualities he expressed successfully in this work of grace and modal lyricism.¹

Form

The basic formal outline is modeled upon that of the baroque suite, and Suite Modale contains four movements which are closely linked, and usually performed, with minimal pause between movements. Phrases are delineated clearly in each movement by the use of a combination of compositional devices, including cadence, textural change, and change of mode.

The first movement, *Moderato*, contains a single melodic idea in four versions. Their appearance is as follows: a b c d a b c. The movement may be simplified by grouping the outer a b c sections together as A and A' while regarding the middle section as a transition.


The second movement, \textit{L'istesso Tempo}, contains four sections. The first two sections (A and A') each contain the same two motives. The third section (B) is a quote from the C theme in movement I. The fourth section, A'', represents a return to the opening material. Thus its design may be summarized as A A' B A''.


\begin{music}
\includegraphics{example5}
\end{music}


\begin{music}
\includegraphics{example6}
\end{music}

The third movement, \textit{Allegro Giocoso}, is ternary. The first part (A) contains two similar motives (a and b). The second section (B) also contains two motives (c and d). The movement concludes with a return to the A section in a slightly altered version. The overall design may be expressed as A B A'. The middle section is more lyrical than the outer sections and is in a contrasting meter and key.


The fourth movement, *Adagio*, has two parts and an extensive coda recalling motives from other movements. It may be expressed as follows: Introduction ab, Introduction ab, Coda. The first two sections are similar and contain
the same melodic material, which also is derived from the other movements.


Movement I

Moderato

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<th>a (Dorian)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Section</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>transition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Motives</td>
<td>a b c</td>
<td>d a b c (a)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Measure No.</td>
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Movement II

L'istesso Tempo

Key area  a (Dorian)  e  a (Phrygian)

Section  A  A'  B  A''

Motives  a  b  a  b  I - C  a

Measure No.  1,  16  23,  27  33-38  39-48

Movement III

Allegro Giocoso

Key area  e  g (Phrygian)  d (Dorian)

Section  A  B  A'

Motives  a  b  c  d  a  b

Measure No.  1,  25  36,  54  65,  74

Movement IV

Adagio

Key area  e  b  C  b  b-c  e

Section  Intro.  a  b  Intro.  a  b  Coda

Motives derived from other movements

Measure No.  1-11  11,  24  36  44-62  72-97

Melody

Ernest Bloch believed that melody was supreme in his own creative thought. As the title Suite Modale implies,

the melodic line contains modal inflection. The first motive in movement I is in the Phrygian mode, and the second motive is in the Dorian mode. It was common in much of Bloch's output to use modes. He preferred Aeolian, Dorian, and Phrygian, because they most resembled the minor mode. His frequent use of these modes, which are basic to much Jewish music, is one reason why he is sometimes cited as a Jewish composer. Because Bloch denied any conscious effort at using Jewish melodies in many of his compositions, one must assume that he created his own melodies inspired by his religious background.

A look at the thematic material in this piece reveals several melodic characteristics of the composer. Each motive is short and is used for expansion later in the work, and the range of the melodic material frequently is narrow, often of an octave or less. Melodies such as these are often developed into lyrical poetic phrases, giving Bloch's music what is often described as a mystical quality.

In keeping with the character of the Baroque Period, there are numerous ornaments. The following example illustrates Bloch's use of ornaments as well as other melodic devices common to the composer, including the

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downward resolving appoggiatura and the use of a changing tone figure.


Bloch frequently reused melodic material, both within movements and as a cyclical treatment in other movements. Sometimes this results in a synthesis of themes, which is most apparent in the closing section of movement IV. Other common melodic devices are discussed in Chapter IV.

**Texture**

Although many of Bloch’s works are scored for a large and colorful orchestra, *Suite Modale* uses strings only. This is clearly in keeping with the baroque character of the work and Bloch’s knowledge of the limited dynamic range of the flute.

New motives and formal sections are accompanied by a textural change which is often quite vivid. In *Suite Modale*, the following are used to create textural change:
addition or subtraction of a string section within the orchestra, use of contrapuntal figures, and change in chord type and spacing. Although doubling of the melodic line commonly is used for emphasis in other compositions by Bloch, it is not in keeping with the neobaroque character of the piece and is not used in Suite Modale.

**Rhythmic Practice**

The rhythmic character of Suite Modale resembles Baroque style in its strong emphasis of the meter and consistent repetition of rhythmic patterns. Example 4 presents the third motive in movement I. This motive contains a dotted rhythmic figure found in many of Bloch’s works. Other common figures are found in Two Last Poems. Suite Modale, unlike Two Last Poems, is almost totally devoid of Bloch’s most typical rhythmic figures. This, combined with easy passage work, makes Suite Modale easily accessible to student flutists.

**Harmonic Practice**

Although a composition in the neobaroque style need not contain traditional baroque harmonies, there is much about the harmonic style of Suite Modale which is more conservative than the composer’s other works. Simple chordal harmonies prevail throughout much of the work; chord
types are basically tertian with compound tertian and non-
tertian chords occurring occasionally. Tonal centers are
often defined by such devices as pedal points and root
movements of a fifth at important cadence points. Quartal
harmony is used sparingly, occurring only at the beginning
of the third movement.

In *Suite Modale*, Bloch uses one type of harmonization
in a given section. For example, the opening motive in
movement I is accompanied by a pedal E in the bass with
simple triads or open fifths above. As the next motive
enters, the harmony becomes tertian, and later, at measure 28,
the texture becomes contrapuntal. The use of pedal
points throughout the work contributes to the calm and
static quality of the work. This is noticed particularly at
beginnings and endings of movements.

Bloch preferred a descending bass line of a fifth at
important cadences. This is followed by those cadences
involving a descending stepwise bass line. Those involving
a bass line descending by a minor third are next preferred.

**Expressive Devices**

Expressive devices are perhaps one of the most striking
aspects of Bloch's compositional style. Throughout, Bloch
carefully notated dynamics, tempo, and note inflection and
length. Also within each movement there are numerous subtle
tempo and dynamic changes. In contrast to many of Bloch's other works, the mood is lyrical and dynamically restrained throughout much of *Suite Modale*. Only movement III, *Allegro Giocoso*, is agitated. It also contains the first *Forte* marking in the piece. All four movements end on a quiet note, a common characteristic of the composer. In the example, the dynamic and accent of each melodic note is indicated, typical of Bloch's approach throughout the composition.


Fluctuating tempos are more restrained in this work than in others by Bloch, in keeping with the neobaroque quality of the work. Dotted rhythms, found frequently in other works, are used less in this work and are replaced by rhythmic figures more typically baroque. Because there is more restraint dynamically and rhythmically, the dramatic impact felt in many of Bloch's works is reduced. Through careful attention to the use of expressive devices, Bloch has created a work that is serene and flowing with modal lyricism.
CHAPTER IV

TWO LAST POEMS (MAYBE ...) 1958

It was after hearing a recording of Elaine Shaffer performing Suite Modale, that Bloch felt inspired to write another piece for her. At first he entitled the work "Funeral Music," without knowing that in two months he would be diagnosed with cancer. This he learned before he was able to complete the work, and he insisted on being allowed time to finish before he would agree to surgery. Upon completion, he changed the title to Two Last Poems, then added the (Maybe ...), indicating that he would optimistically face his operation. Although he died ten months later, the (Maybe ...) was an accurate prophecy, since three other works were to follow.¹

In both movements of Two Last Poems, there is a recurrence of melodic motives, and this material takes on differing expressive meanings as it is varied. An immediate feeling of sorrow is apparent in the first movement, entitled "Funeral Music," and as the movement continues, the mood becomes quieter and more lyrical. The opening rhythmic

motive appears throughout the movement as the flute and orchestra present the different versions of the theme, and the flute frequently enters in an intrusive way, with its many wandering chromatic discourses. As the movement concludes, the sombre rhythmic pattern heard in the introduction returns.

The second movement, "Life Again? . . .," opens in a moderate tempo with the flute playing a rhapsodic solo. The clarinet answers, capturing some of the exotic flavor of the flute solo, and the rhapsodic introduction is followed by a spirited Allegro Moderato, containing the same melodic material. This brighter version of the theme may suggest the composer's hope for recovery. Suzanne Bloch notes that the title could be interpreted in many ways. "With Bloch's acceptance and skepticism, it is best not to wonder about his question mark and let the music speak for itself." The coda, marked Calmo, is quiet and simple in its melodic shape. The ornamented treatment of the melodic motives ceases, and the movement ends with a feeling of serenity.

Two Last Poems is more subjective than Bloch's compositions which were to follow: Two Suites for Unaccompanied Violin, the Suite for Viola, and the Piano Quintet No. 2. Bloch's daughter, Suzanne, writes, "It is

2. Ibid.
Bloch giving a philosophical soliloquy." The thoughts which the composer may have had are all conveyed through the music: he makes no further indication other than the titles.

Form

Two Last Poems is divided into two movements or poems: "Funeral Music" and "Life Again? . . . ." Although divided into two movements, Bloch connected the two in several ways. The score indicates the movements are to be performed without break, and Bloch chose to end the first poem inclusively in the dominant of the key rather than the tonic. In addition, much use of melodic material is derived from the first poem. In this way, Bloch achieves a highly unified composition, even though sectional divisions are not always clearly demarcated.

"Funeral Music" begins with a solemn two bar introduction in the percussion and celli. This simple rhythmic pattern is used as a cell for the development of new material. Bloch's use of rhythmic cell, such as the one seen in example 16, is a technique which may have been inspired by his admiration for Beethoven. The use of a recurring pattern throughout the movement may be

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1. Ibid.
specifically found in works by Beethoven, such as the second movement, Allegretto from Symphony No. 7. In both Two Last Poems and Symphony No. 7, the dirge-like pattern reflects the sombre character of these works.

Example 16. Ernest Bloch, Two Last Poems, Movement I, measures 1-2 of the piano score.

After this brief introduction, the movement is divided into several main sections, each beginning with an introduction to the flute solo which follows. In addition to the main sections, there are three melodic motives. The first, 'a', is characterized by a half step pattern. The pitches G-sharp and A are significant pitches, occurring frequently and in prominent positions. The second motive, 'b', may be seen in example 18. It is announced by an embellishing figure and continues in a stepwise pattern. In this motive, the perfect fifth and the tritone are significant intervals that initiate the melodic line. The pitches A and E, appear frequently in this initial gesture.

![Example 17](image)


![Example 18](image)

The third motive, 'c', is seen in example 19. It is characterized by its opening perfect fifth that is followed by a descending third filled in stepwise.


![Example 19](image)

Three motives do not always appear in the same form; it is typical of Bloch to state a motive as a short idea with a range of less than an octave and then vary this motive by expanding the length and pitch range, by changing the
rhythm, or by inverting important characteristic intervals. Example 17 contains the 'a' motive as it first appears in the piano. The 'a' appears first in the piano (example 17), and later occurs in the flute in a varied form (example 20). In this melodic statement, the pitches G-sharp and A are reversed, and the presentation is considerably longer and expanded.

Example 20. Ernest Bloch, Two Last Poems, Movement I, measures 7-8 of the solo flute part.

The sectional divisions often are blurred by the many repetitions of these motives; however, Bloch sets off main sections by a piano interlude which acts as an introduction to the following flute solo. The following diagram indicates the main sectional divisions: A A' A'' A''' A'''' coda.

"Life Again? . . ." begins in the key of c minor with a rhapsodic introduction. The flute enters with a cadenza-like passage which is answered by the clarinet. This introduction is referred to as A. As in the first movement, there are repeated melodic motives which permeate the entire movement, and several of the motives are borrowed from the
first movement. The second section (B) is characterized by a more rhythmic pulse than the introduction. For this section, Bloch returns to the tonality of c-sharp. After only seventeen bars, the material from the introduction returns with some changes. This section is referred to as A'. Bloch uses less of the rhapsodic freedom of the introduction and, although the theme versions are almost identical, the entrances of solo and orchestra are reversed.

The fourth section (B'), is developmental in character, with more fragmented melodic material and numerous changes of key. This section also is characterized by new types of harmonization, including the use of quartal harmony and polychords. Melodically, there is greater use of the tritone, the seventh and the octatonic scale, giving this section an exotic flavor. Example 21 shows the use of the tritone and octatonic scale. At the end of this section, Bloch returns to the key area of C by means of prolonging the dominant for two bars, accompanied by a prominent descending bass line.

Example 21. Ernest Bloch, Two Last Poems, Movement II, measure 59 of the piano score.
In the fifth section of movement II, material from the first A section returns, accompanied by a triplet figure. This section is referred to as A''. As Bloch prepares for the coda, he uses the augmented sixth chord moving to the dominant, G, which then is prolonged for nine bars. The division of the beat slows, and a quarter note becomes the shortest note value. The coda is introduced with an augmented sixth chord on D-flat, moving to the tonic, C. It is significant that Bloch clearly marks the coda in the score to help the performer sense the feeling of finality. The overall form may be expressed as follows: A B A B A coda. Gradually the tempo moves from \( \frac{\text{J}}{1} = 66 \) to \( \frac{\text{J}}{1} = 60 \), and the movement ends calmly with a feeling of serenity.


**Movement I, "Funeral Music"**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Introduction</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>A'</th>
<th>A''</th>
<th>A''''</th>
<th>A''''' (Coda)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Key area</td>
<td></td>
<td>ab</td>
<td>ab</td>
<td>cb</td>
<td>ac</td>
<td>cb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measure No.</td>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>3-18</td>
<td>19-34</td>
<td>35-53</td>
<td>54-67</td>
<td>68-86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Movement II, "Life Again? . . ."**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>A'</th>
<th>B'</th>
<th>A''</th>
<th>transition</th>
<th>Coda</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Key Area</td>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C#</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Melody

As in many of Bloch's works, the melodic line takes precedence over the harmonization. The first melodic gesture of the piece is treated as a cell from which other themes are derived. Typical of the composer, a short melodic gesture is used to generate more varied forms. Often the themes consist of a narrow range, frequently within an octave, and Bloch then expands the musical space with each successive gesture. In example 23, the technique of expanding the musical space with successive gestures is illustrated. (Note that the range of the first gesture bracketed in the example is less than an octave.) The third gesture begins in measure 3 of the example, where the range is expanded to an octave. The final gestures of the phrase extend to a range of more than two octaves. Bloch also uses this technique, in example 23, to build to high points within a section or to taper the ends of phrases.

Another feature typical of Bloch's melodic writing is the use of an embellishing figure on the ends of phrases. This technique accomplishes two purposes: it assists the performer in moving to the next octave, and it helps to link phrases together. Such a figure may be seen in measure 7 of example 23. In addition, example 23 shows Bloch's use of each chromatic tone in the flute melody. Not all pitches
are treated equally, and of particular interest to the performer is the way Bloch reserves the C-sharp and B-flat. The C-sharp does not occur until the end of the phrase, and B-flat is used to begin the next statement in the flute part. These two pitches are also omitted from the accompaniment. The C-sharp acts as the harmonic goal of the first phrase and is given special emphasis by its omission until the end. The B-flat is saved for use as the first important melodic note of the following phrase and attention is drawn to these two notes with expressive markings.

Example 23. Ernest Bloch, Two Last Poems, Movement I, measures 7-14 of the solo flute part.

At times, fragments from several motives are combined within a phrase. Themes also are treated in a cyclic manner: "Life Again? . . ." contains direct quotation from "Funeral Music." In addition to the opening rhythmic figure in the celli and percussion which occurs in both movements, there is a reappearance of thematic material as well. The similarity of melodic material from "Funeral Music" with
that of the example from "Life Again? . . ." is seen in examples 24 and 25.

Example 24. Ernest Bloch, Two Last Poems, Movement I measure 60 of the solo flute part. Motive c.


Two Last Poems has a more exotic flavor than Suite Modale. This may be attributed to the use of the octatonic and whole tone scales which give Two Last Poems a slightly oriental effect. The use of certain melodic intervals in distinctive ways is one of Bloch's most notable traits. Examples of this usage may be found in Two Last Poems. One distinctive interval is the augmented second or minor third used in a descending melodic line. This also helps to give the piece an exotic flavor. The frequent use of this interval may be attributed to two factors: the use of the
minor modes and of the octatonic scale. In addition to these intervals, Bloch uses the tritone so often that it loses the element of surprise. The frequent use of appoggiaturas, particularly the minor second, gives thematic material a highly expressive "sighing" quality, felt particularly in this composition with its sombre title.

**Texture**

The following types of texture are present in *Two Last Poems*: (a) homophonic with three or more voices, (2) monophonic, and (3) contrapuntal. Example 26 shows a homophonic texture as the flute plays the main melodic line accompanied by a simple triad in the orchestra.


The opening measures of "Funeral Music," with the persistent rhythmic figure in the cellos and percussion, are monophonic (example 16), and example 27 is contrapuntal, showing Bloch’s use of exact or partial doubling of the
melodic line as a means of reinforcing important material. These doublings make use of parallel or almost parallel intervals usually of a fourth, fifth, or octave. These parallel intervals are accompanied by a different melodic figure in the low strings.


![Music notation](image)

As in *Suite Modale*, Bloch uses textural change to indicate important phrases or important formal junctures. Quite often it is used in combination with other elements as it is in example 27. Example 27 represents a tempo change, change of orchestration, and arrival at the new tonal center of c-sharp. In addition, this marks the beginning of a new formal section and a different version of the theme. Throughout the work, there are interesting contrapuntal lines brought out by colorful orchestration that contribute greatly to enhancing the formal design in performance. Unfortunately, no recording has been made of an orchestrated version as of this writing.
**Rhythmic Practice**

*Two Last Poems* is more typical of Bloch’s treatment of rhythm than *Suite Modale*, which was almost totally devoid of the composer’s usual rhythmic practice. In this composition, the treatment of meter falls into one of two categories: (1) obvious presence of a strong metric pattern or (2) near absence of such a feeling. The opening of "Funeral Music" falls into the first category with its persistent funeral-like pulse in the percussion and celli, while "Life Again? . . ." is at once rhapsodic in character.

In the same way that certain melodic intervals are a characteristic of Bloch, the use of specific rhythmic patterns also are associated with Bloch’s music. Some of the more typical patterns found in the *Two Last Poems* are: (1) an accented second beat as found in the numerous appoggiaturas and (2) the use of various dotted rhythms. The latter occur as short plus long (\(\text{\textbf{\textdegree}}\)) as in the numerous *shofar* calls associated with the piece and as long plus short (\(\text{\textbf{\textdegree}}\))\(^{4}\). The frequent use of triplet figures is a contrast to the use of dotted rhythms.

Just as Bloch used a melodic cell as the basis for further melodic development, he used rhythmic gestures as

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\(^{4}\) This rhythm, also commonly known as a "Scottish snap" is associated with *shofar* calls. The *shofar* is an ancient Jewish instrument used in the Jewish service for the celebration of the New Year. It is made from a ram’s horn and produces the second and third notes in the harmonic series (a perfect fifth).
cells for expansion, as seen in example 28. The two measure introduction to this piece contains rhythmic material which is used throughout the entire composition.


The reuse of material shows Bloch's conscious desire for unity. Motives are inter-related and seem to be developed from one central cell. This unifying factor counteracts the extreme contrasts in tempo, dynamics, and texture present in the work. Examples 29 and 30 show variations on this opening material.

Example 29. Ernest Bloch, *Two Last Poems*, Movement I, measure 64 of the piano score.
Harmonic Practice

Harmony plays a secondary role to melody in *Two Last Poems*. The harmonization is derived from the melody, and, therefore, is a result of the melody. Although the work is highly chromatic, Bloch maintains a sense of tonality throughout much of the work by means of several devices, including the frequent use of pedal points, root movements by fifth at important formal junctures, the use of a linear bass line leading toward the harmonic goal, and the delaying of important pitches for special emphasis.

*Two Last Poems* is characterized by greater diversity of harmonic sonority than *Suite Modale*. Sonorities which are most prevalent are tertian, compound tertian, non-tertian, polychords, and color chords such as the augmented sixth chord. The polychords and color chords are frequently the result of the simultaneous occurrence of melodic lines.
In "Funeral Music" there is one key signature change. As with many of Bloch's pieces, this coincides with other changes as well. Here there also is a meter change and textural change. Although Bloch returns to the original tonality, he concludes the movement on the dominant (G-sharp). The next movement, "Life Again?..." opens in the key of C, moves through several key areas, and then returns to C. This time there is a conclusive ending, consisting of several augmented sixth chords which serve to delay the resolution to C. Example 31 illustrates what might be described as a variation on the traditional hymn "Amen" ending. Over this cadence the flute plays a perfect fourth and perfect fifth. The feeling is optimistic, and one cannot help but sense the composer's acceptance in facing possible death.

Expressive Devices

Many of the compositional devices that have been mentioned also may be regarded as expressive devices, including use of appoggiaturas, saving of important notes for emphasis, use of particular intervals for effect, and use of strong pulse versus ambiguous pulse as in the rhapsodic sections in "Life Again? . . . ." In addition to these devices, Bloch uses a wider dynamic range than in Suite Modale, perhaps the most difficult aspect for the performer to convey. Not only is the range wide, but the instruments are required to play soft and loud in registers where to do so is difficult. Each phrase requires subtle dynamic shadings, often in the space of only a few notes, and as in Suite Modale, Bloch carefully notates each nuance. In contrast, there are many more changes of tempo, so that the feeling of a constantly changing pulse is apparent.

One of the characteristic features of the work is the use of a fanfare-like announcement to phrases, evoking the image of cries to the listener. Combined with the use of many appoggiaturas, these fanfares give the work a highly emotional character. As the work draws to a conclusion, the fanfare beginnings to phrases cease. Like many of Bloch’s other works, Two Last Poems ends calmly and softly, conveying a feeling of repose and serenity.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Ernest Bloch is considered by many to be one of the most significant composers of the twentieth century. Many of his works have received critical acclaim. In writing about Bloch, Melvin notes the following.

"I cannot understand the general neglect of Ernest Bloch," commented Sibelius. "He is a greatly gifted man whose music is both modern in the best sense and within the grasp of the contemporary mind." Leopold Stokowski said of him, "I do not know of any musician in the world with a greater knowledge or more profound understanding of music in every phase than Ernest Bloch. As a composer he is one of the few who really have a personal and individual note." Albert Einstein also paid him tribute. "I esteem the works of Ernest Bloch above those of any other contemporary composer known to me." 1

In spite of critical acclaim, there has been relatively little written about the music of Bloch. Although the two works for flute and orchestra by Bloch represent only a small portion of the composer’s output, they deserve much more attention than they have received. The pieces provide an interesting contrast as examples from the composer’s last years. It is noteworthy that although Bloch was introduced

to the flute at an early age, it was in the last three years of his life that he chose to write these pieces for flute. As may be determined from listening to these pieces, Bloch did not adhere to any one musical ideology but rather included many compositional techniques. Kushner summarizes this as follows:

Although he held himself aloof from the various "isms" that permeated the musical atmosphere of his times, he did not refrain from employing, when it suited his expressive purposes, such non-traditional techniques and devices as atonality, pointalism, quartertones, and 12-tone themes.²

**Suite Modale** and **Two Last Poems** help to identify Bloch as a composer successful in merging many compositional techniques. In both compositions, Bloch makes use of melodic and rhythmic cells that provide material which generates other material. These evolving gestures help to give both compositions a highly unified quality. The texture types used in both pieces include monophonic, homophonic, and contrapuntal. While **Suite Modale** is primarily homophonic and contrapuntal, **Two Last Poems** contains a predominantly contrapuntal texture.

In **Suite Modale**, Bloch uses a more direct, traditional approach to creating a pitch reference. In **Two Last Poems**,

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Bloch uses a direct approach combined with the gradual unfolding of a tonal reference. An example may be seen in the coda to "Life Again? . . .," in which the augmented sixth chord is prolonged and gradually resolved. These are the qualities which enable us to label Bloch as an eclectic composer of outstanding dimensions, but more importantly as a composer with his own highly individual and appealing style.
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