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music : Julien Joubert

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Main voice

Mademoiselle Louise and the Flying Yankee

a commission of the Académie Musicale de Villecroze work dedicated to Anise Postel-Vinay

A corridor, in a boarding school. Pupils are lined up in twos; they're about to go to class. Some have their bags on their backs, others have left them at their feet. They're impatient and look around them.

A few pupils move downstage (or to one side of the stage) as if they were looking through a window.





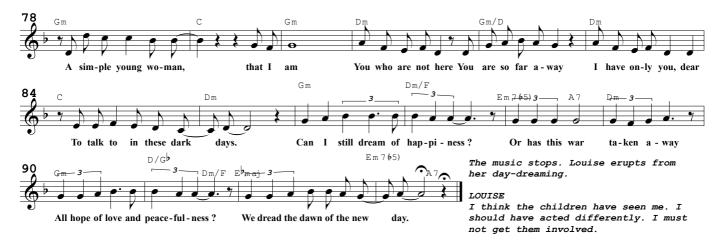
The children sit in a semi-circle on stage, lights dimmed. Centre stage, Louise walks, looking thoughtful. She stops, her gaze on the horizon (or she goes to her table to write: it must be understood that she writes not a letter, but in her private journal).

Louise (spoken, on the music)

René, my little brother, my brave little soldier... I feel so weak tonight, I'm sorry. Rescuing the pilot has been quite a task. I have hidden him in the attic. I don't know if it was the right thing to do. I think the children suspect something. I struggle with those decisions. Since the principal has left, I'm alone, responsible for the whole school, and there's a war going on at the same time.... I've had to gather all the pupils together in one class. The children are so brave: they receive the odd bit of news from their families, if they're lucky. Our parents are far away too, and you... you're a prisoner of war in Germany.



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They're in class. The pupils are seated on their benches and listen attentively to snippets of a conversation taking place in the corridor.

Mademoiselle Louise's voice is heard.
'Yes, Herr Major. As you wish.'
The children look at each other fearfully.

Louise enters. She seems worried. She looks at the pupils and finally speaks:

LOUISE

You will most probably be interrogated by the Germans. They are most probably going to ask you questions. They will want to know whether I left the classroom yesterday. I cannot ask you to lie, but... I know you saw me go into the barn. I should have... I'm sorry to put you in such a difficult position. I've always told you to behave appropriately, and not to lie ...

A PUPIL

Don't worry, Mademoiselle!

LOUISE (spoken)
But I've always told you...

ALL

Yes, you have always told us: They start singing, mimicking Louise.

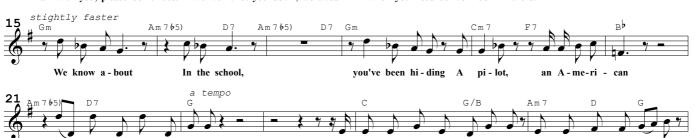








all with you, please don't fuss. We won't let you down, we swear When you need us we'll be there.



Who crashed on Thurs-day mor-ning.

The Ger-mans, they won't know a thing, They won't know we're ly - ing

LOUISE (rhythmically spoken)
But I've always told you...
ALL



LOUISE (spoken)

Thank you, thank you all so much. The pilot whose plane crashed the day before yesterday is called Mister Fabrizi. A member of his crew was killed but the others were able to parachute safely and they're hiding in the vicinity. But Fabrizi has hurt his leg, so I had to call a doctor and pretend that I was unwell. But now, back to class, and don't be distracted!

don't wor-ry, have no fear! When you need us we'll be here!

To lie to show your loy-al

At the end of classes, in the yard.

What will we say to the American pilot if we meet him?

CHILD 1 (spoken)

CHILD 2

It's going to be tricky if he doesn't speak French! CHILD 3 I know a few English words. CHILD 2 But not enough to talk to him. CHILD 3 Sure I do! NEW YORK ! AMERICA ! Swing! $\square = \overline{\rfloor}$ = 188 в F7/A York! New A - me-ri - ca! know how to say that 'Hel - lo, what вμ G 7 F/A If is your name?' don't sound so lame What else can sav we вЬ Gm7 F/A G 7 Boo-gie Woo-gie Bu-gle Boy does - n't speak French? I am so snaz - zy (with a strong French accent) Girls F7 G 7 My And this is my coun - try Er. is Flo-rence name is An-tho-ny my name And... A11 C 7 F F7/A do you like la France? Be bop hel - lo ba bay! I'm no fud - dy-dud - dy вβ C 7 0. I can count I'm a smar-ty Un deux trois: One Two Three! I would like to tell 37 вΡ F/A Gm7 C 7 F F/A him 'Wel-come to our vil-lage' It's the same in En - glish 'Bien - ve - nu to our vil-lage All with french accent with french accent F7 with english accent G 7 How the ac - ci - dent? It's all It's You 'ac - ci - dent' in the ac cent was say CHILD 1 (spoken, interrupts the song) Watch out, German trucks are coming! with english accent 50 CHILD 2 What are they doing at the far end of the village? CHILD 3 the ac - cent! all in They're looking for the pilot. Oi, ouch, danger, 'danger' (with thick French accent) ALL (with thick French accent) Danger, danger. For the aviators



In the yard :

Louise is agitated and has isolated herself from the group. In the meantime the children go backstage to get a few baskets and bags.

LOUISE

I don't have a choice now. If I protect the pilot, I'll put the children in a dangerous position. Still, I must take that risk... Right now, the Germans suspect nothing. They haven't even interrogated the children. We must make the most of it.

The children gather around Louise: they hold what might be picnic baskets.

LOUISE

You all have your bags? Are you ready to pretend to go on a picnic? Not too scared? Right, let's go then!





CHILD
Here, Miss, look! I've found it!
All gather around. Lights out.

In the classroom - same as in scene 3. The children are already seated when Louise enters.

LOUISE (spoken)

The school is going to be searched. They're going in every building, every room. I don't know where to move Mr. Fabrizi.

CHILDREN

At the baker's?

Or the preacher's?

Or at the barber's?

Or the doctor's?

LOUISE

Certainly not at the doctor's. He risked so much already by coming here and pretending I was sick... Hold on, that gives me an idea! (She looks around her) Pull the blinds and shut the door.

The children obey before gathering around her.

The solution might lie with the dector. But I must

The solution might lie with the doctor. But I must rely on you. You see, the Germans won't search every house, not where someone's contagious, for example... If the doctor would diagnose you with a few cases of typhoid fever, the school would be quarantined. I'm not sure it will work, but... What do you think?

CHILDREN

Yes, yes, yes!!!

LOUISE

But you'll have to fake it really well, you can't mess it up. We've gone over the symptoms before, so you know them. Go on, pretend I'm a soldier and I've come on an inspection.

The children line up and begin to cough and lose balance.

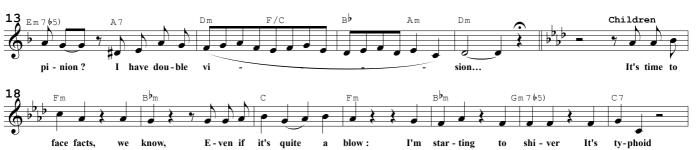
LOUISE

What's going on here?



CHILDREN (spoken, with their hands in front of them as if they were blind) Where are you?

LOUISE (smiling)
Don't overdo it now...



CHILDREN
Ah, aargh, ouh, beuh....

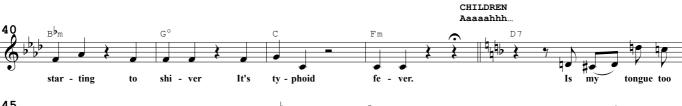
LOUISE (spoken)
Are your bellies sore?



CHILDREN

Ah, aargh, ouh, beuh....

LOUISE (checking their tongues) Say 'Ah'.





They all start to cough.

LOUISE

Stop coughing, it's not a symptom. Look feverish, haggard. Yes, that's much better.

The children position themselves in a circle around Louise and close the circle on her, walking





Night. The classroom has been turned into a dorm. Centre stage, an old wireless-radio. The children are lying down or sitting on blankets.

LOUISE

You respect the shifts, alright? I don't want you up all night listening to the radio. Anyhow, you remember the code?

ALL

 ${}^{\backprime} The \ strawberries \ are \ juicy.\ I \ repeat: the \ strawberries \ are \ juicy.\ {}^{\prime}$

LOUISE

Fetch me as soon as you hear the message. I'll be in the attic with Mr. Fabrizi.

A group of 6 children gather around the radio. The others stay on their blankets. Louise rushes back in.

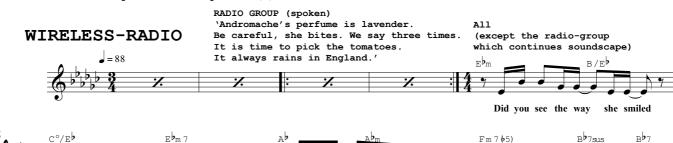
LOUISE

And be discreet! You really must be extremely cautious. You understand we're all taking great risks here... (smiling) See you later.

The children near the radio cup their hands over their ears as if they had headsets, while others look on, with a complicit smile, in the direction of the door through which Louise exited.

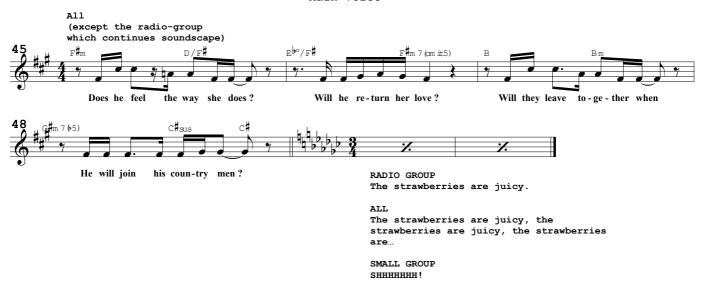
The "radio group" is divided into 3:

- 1 speaks the lines (mimicking the style of the radio during the war)
- 2 make crackling and chhhh sounds
- 3 make ascending and descending zzzzzz(i) sounds of the radio waves









In the classroom. Louise is speaking to three boys. One of them holds Fabrizi's bag (which they found in scene 5)

LOUISE

So, when you're at the baker's, you ask for 'Two buns, please, if there's no croissant'.

THREE CHILDREN

'Two buns, please, if there's no croissant'.

LOUISE

That's the code. The baker will know he can talk to you. There are people in the village who don't think like us, so we must be very careful.

CHILD

How do you know?

LOUISE

Jewish families have been deported. It's people from the village who denounced them to the Germans. (Talking to the 3 children) Right, you have the pilot's papers? Good. Show them to the baker and he'll tell you how to evacuate Fabrizi.

ANOTHER CHILD

And how do we get out of the school? The doors have been guarded since we've been quarantined.

LOUISE

Ah, yes, that typhoid fever story is making things a bit tricky. Still, it had its use. You will go through the utility, there's a fire escape...

DO NOT FALTER



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Children leave. Louise follows them, but pauses at the doorstep.

LOUISE

I told Fabrizi that you had prepared a show for him. Don't forget to stand in the middle so he can see you through the floorboards. And articulate!

Louise disappears. The children look at each other meaningfully and take position. They glance up at the ceiting, smile, and start.





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loo-king for al-lies

С

Louise.

Fa - bri - zi has been hurt

С

F/C

G sus

Ma - de-moi-selle

Flee-ing from the Ger-mans

So the vil - la-gers

land in fields near-by

He could be seized

The 3 children from scene 8 come back, panicked and breathless.

3 CHILDREN

Where is Mademoiselle Louise? Where is she? Where?

Louise appears straight away.

LOUISE

What's happened?

CHILL

The baker said you and Mr Fabrizi must leave right away.

CHILL

You've been turned in. The police will be here any minute now.

Louise grows pale. Her mouth opens, but she's speechless. She's trying to keep control of herself.

LOUISE

 I_{\cdots} (looking up at the ceiling). Go and tell Mr. Fabrizi. (To the 3 children) Did the baker tell you what I should do ?

CHILD

He'll hide you at his place tonight. Tomorrow, you'll see.

LOUISE

Children... (she struggles to keep her composure) Don't be afraid, everything will be fine. I don't know if we'll meet again when this war is over, but I wish you... I wish you the best, of course, and I hope you see your parents again, and your friends... (she's about to leave, but she stops) And I hope you won't forget what we've been through together when you're all grown up... Farewell!

CHILDREN

Goodbye! Goodbye, Mademoiselle.

The children are disconcerted by her departure. They can hear her talk to Fabrizi. A door slams. They're gone.



Mademoiselle Louise and the Flying Yankee

