

Play It Again, Yvonne: Lefébure and Radio Performance as an Embodied Technology of Resistance, Hope, and Friendship During World War II

JILLIAN C. ROGERS

Abstract

This article reveals how virtuoso French pianist Yvonne Lefébure employed radio as a socio-emotional and a political technology during and after World War II. I examine letters, contracts, and radio broadcast scripts in Lefébure's vast but virtually untouched Parisian archive at the Bibliothèque Musicale LaGrange-Fleuret that show that Lefébure, her friends, and family members understood her radio performances as means to remain close to her despite the war's disruptions. Analysis of period and secondary sources frame radio as not only a highly politicized media technology, but also a deeply imaginative, connective, and embodied one. In addition, study of Lefébure's performance choices provides additional context for reading Lefébure's acrobatic performance style—often described as “risky” by her contemporaries—as a manifestation of her French Resistance politics. My reading of Lefébure's wartime and immediately postwar radio performances draws on trauma studies as well in suggesting that these performances offered Lefébure opportunities to “do something”—to complete a “survivor mission,” in the words of Judith Herman—during World War II's years of upheaval and trauma. Ultimately, the attention paid to Lefébure in this article highlights the political and social significance of radio-broadcast piano performances during the war, while also locating a musical modality for performing resistance and survival that goes beyond the performance of “musical contraband” that has come to be how many musicologists have identified French Resistance musicians and their politics.

In 1943, Suzanne Cherbonnel-Prel wrote to her teacher, the virtuoso French pianist Yvonne Lefébure, declaring that “your radio broadcasts of the last two weeks give us the great joy of works splendidly performed and of your dear presence from afar.”¹ This letter is one of many in Lefébure's vast and largely unexplored archive in Paris's Bibliothèque Musicale LaGrange-Fleuret that emphasizes how the pianist's radio broadcasts functioned as a way for her students, family, and friends to stay in touch with her during the turbulent years of World War II. As I worked through these archival materials a story began to emerge: Lefébure fled occupied Paris in 1940, travelling to a small town near the Spanish border, Perpignan, where she lived with her Dutch-born French-Jewish partner—musicologist and conductor Fred Goldbeck—and her mother. Further occupation of France necessitated Goldbeck's exile in Spain and Lefébure's in the small, southeastern French town of Dieulefit. Throughout these years, Lefébure continued to perform at home, on the radio, and very occasionally in public performances.

While little-discussed today, Lefébure was one of the most distinguished musicians of her time, as well as an outspoken critic of the Nazi Occupation of France, although this has never been addressed in existing scholarship. This lacuna is due in part to the fact that, during World War II, many French

¹ Suzanne Cherbonnel-Prel, letter to Yvonne Lefébure, dated January 1, 1943, Bibliothèque Musicale LaGrange-Fleuret [hereafter BMLF], Fonds Yvonne Lefébure, Correspondance.

Resistance musicians argued for the importance of what they called “musical contraband”—composing pieces that included quotations of French nationalistic songs or performing banned music in small, clandestine concerts. As a result, the study of musical contraband has been one of the main modes of scholarly analysis of French Resistance musicians’ wartime activities and politics.² The relative erasure of Lefébure’s performances and wartime activities as expressing resistance politics mirrors the larger, more general erasure of French women’s contributions to the Resistance, as numerous feminist historians have pointed out.³ Taking these historians’ observations about the everyday, often surreptitious ways that French women contributed to resisting the occupation, I argue in what follows that Lefébure’s performances, and particularly her very public radio performances, offer another window into how French musicians performed their resistance and simultaneously offered hope and communion to listeners.

In this article, I demonstrate that Lefébure and those in her social circle understood her radio performances as both political and embodied socio-emotional enactments of resistance, hope, and connection, amidst the uncertainty and often traumatic circumstances of World War II. Analysis of Lefébure’s extensive correspondence during the war provides a window into her emotional life during the war, as well as the emotional lives of her friends, colleagues, family members, and students. Lefébure’s correspondence and writings, as well as guides to radio programming, read alongside primary and secondary sources that theorize and contextualize the political, embodied, and affective aspects of radio in interwar and wartime contexts, also demonstrate the fraught nature as well as the importance of radio for a wide range of people, including Lefébure, during these distressing years. Lefébure’s performance choices are especially important to understanding her role as a resistance musician. In addition to analyzing where and when she chose to perform publicly, whether live or on the radio, I examine the repertoire that she performed and the performers with whom she collaborated, both of which demonstrate her resistance to Nazi occupation, if understood within the broader context of her political affiliations. Moreover, Lefébure employed an idiosyncratic, acrobatic, and challenging approach to performance at the keyboard—a performance style that has been described by colleagues and students as “risky”—that can be conceptualized as a performance of risk, survival, and, ultimately, resistance and hope. Although, in his preface to *La vie musicale à Paris sous l’Occupation*, historian Henry Roussio states that “In fact, it is not sure that there has been an interpretation ‘pétainiste’ or ‘résistante’ [sic] of Chopin”—a reference to the

² Jane Fulcher, *Renegotiating French Identity: Musical Culture and Creativity in France during Vichy and the German Occupation* (Oxford University Press, 2018), <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190681500.001.0001>; Fulcher, “French Identity in Flux: The Triumph of Honegger’s *Antigone*,” *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 36, no. 4 (2006): 649–74, <https://doi.org/10.1162/jinh.2006.36.4.649>; Leslie A. Sprout, *The Musical Legacy of Wartime France* (University of California Press, 2013), <https://doi.org/10.1525/9780520955271>; Sprout, “Messiaen, Jolivet, and the Soldier-Composers of Wartime France,” *The Musical Quarterly* 87, no. 2 (2004): 259–304, <https://doi.org/10.1093/musqtl/gdh012>; Colin Roust, “Towards an Aesthetic of Resistance: George Auric’s *Quatre Chants de la France Malheureuse*,” *Ars Lyrica* 18 (2009): 157–72; Nigel Simeone, “Messiaen and the Concerts de la Pléiade: ‘A Kind of Clandestine Revenge Against the Occupation,’” *Music & Letters* 81, no. 4 (2000): 551–84, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ml/81.4.551>; Simeone, “Making Music in Occupied Paris,” *The Musical Times* 147, no. 1894 (2006): 23–50, <https://doi.org/10.2307/25434357>; Yannick Simon, *Composer sous Vichy* (Symétrie, 2009).

³ Margaret Collins Weitz, *Sisters in the Resistance: How Women Fought to Free France, 1940–1945* (John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1995); Dorothy Kaufmann, *Edith Thomas: A Passion for Resistance* (Cornell University Press, 2004), <https://doi.org/10.7591/9781501727368>; Célia Bertin, *Femmes sous l’Occupation* (Stock, 1993); Paula Schwartz, “Redefining Resistance: Women’s Activism in Wartime France,” in *Behind the Lines: Gender and the Two World Wars*, eds. Margaret Randolph Higonnet, Jane Jenson, Sonya Michel, and Margaret Collins Weitz (Yale University Press, 1987), 141–53; Rita Thalmann, “L’oubli des femmes dans l’historiographie de la Résistance,” *Clio: Femmes, Genre, Histoire* 1 (1995): <https://journals.openedition.org/clio/513>; Thalmann, “Une lacune de l’historiographie,” and Sabine Zeitoun, “‘Résistance active,’ ‘Résistance passive,’ un faux débat,” in *Les Juifs dans la résistance et la libération* (Editions du Scribe, 1985).

inability of instrumental music and its performance to have been political in World War II-era France—I would disagree.⁴ Lefébure’s wartime activities and performances suggest that it is indeed possible to understand instrumental musical performance as politically inflected.

Ultimately, I contend that Lefébure’s radio performances were multi-faceted experiences for her as well as for her listeners: as has been the case for many people who have experienced trauma, these radio performances enabled her to *do something*—to enact what trauma theorist Judith Herman has called a “survivor mission”—with the fear and anxiety she was experiencing that might help her, her loved ones, and her resistance-aligned listeners survive the Second World War’s years of upheaval, uncertainty, trauma, and loss.

Lefébure and Her Loved Ones: Turmoil and Trauma

Although the Holocaust has rightly been the focus of trauma studies scholars working on World War II—especially since trauma studies as a subfield emerged from and remains deeply connected to Holocaust studies⁵—numerous aspects of the conflict in France contributed to cultural and collective, as well as individual and psychological trauma. Henry Rousso has written about what he terms the “Vichy syndrome”: “a diverse set of symptoms whereby the trauma of the Occupation, and particularly that trauma resulting from internal divisions within France, reveals itself in political, social, and cultural life.”⁶ For Rousso, the collective trauma expressed in his idea of “the Vichy syndrome” has to do with collective historical memory of the events and circumstances of the occupation: “the civil war, and particularly the inception, influence, and acts of the Vichy regime, played an essential if not primary role in the difficulties that the people of France have faced in reconciling themselves to their history.”⁷

For many people living in France in the 1930s and 1940s, the internal divisions Rousso details were but a part of an especially traumatic era. In their testimonies and memoirs, French citizens who were not deployed but living in France report that the first days of the German Occupation of Paris were extremely distressing.⁸ Everyday wartime circumstances resulted in cultural, collective, and personal trauma as well. Food shortages were a fact of daily life for just about everyone (except farmers living in rural areas), which many people mention as one of their most prominent memories of the war years.⁹ Jews and members of the Resistance lived in near-constant states of fear for much of the war; being the target or witness of violence against Jews and *résistant(e)s* was a fact of life for many.¹⁰ Those who were sent to prisons and concentration camps in France like Drancy, Gurs, and Fresnes, or in Germany and Poland, such as

⁴ Henry Rousso, “Préface,” in *La vie musicale à Paris sous l’Occupation*, eds. Myriam Chimènes and Yannick Simon (Fayard, 2013), 8.

⁵ See, for example, Dominick LaCapra, *Representing the Holocaust: History, Theory, Trauma* (Cornell University Press, 1994); LaCapra, *History and Memory After Auschwitz* (Cornell University Press, 1998), <https://doi.org/10.7591/9781501727450>; LaCapra, *Writing History, Writing Trauma* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001); Geoffrey Hartman, *The Longest Shadow: In the Aftermath of the Holocaust* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2002); Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub, *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History* (Routledge, 1992).

⁶ Henry Rousso, *The Vichy Syndrome: History and Memory in France Since 1944*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Harvard University Press, 1991), 10; Rousso, “Pour une histoire de la mémoire collective: l’après-Vichy,” *Les Cahiers de l’Institut d’Histoire du Temps Présent* 18 (1991): 163–76, <https://doi.org/10.3406/ihtp.1991.2199>.

⁷ Rousso, *The Vichy Syndrome*, 9.

⁸ See Weitz, *Sisters in the Resistance*, 166.

⁹ Hanna Diamond, *Women and the Second World War in France, 1939–48: Choices and Constraints* (Pearson Education Limited, 1999), 49–70; Sarah Fishman, “Gender and Domesticity in War and Peace: France in the 1940s and 1950s,” in *War, Exile, Justice, and Everyday Life, 1936–1946*, ed. Sandra Ott (Center for Basque Studies, 2011), 377–92.

¹⁰ See, for instance, Weitz, *Sisters in the Resistance*, 121–24.

Auschwitz, Buchenwald, Dachau, and Ravensbrück, if they survived, returned extremely traumatized.¹¹ Additionally, the loss of daily ways of life, of living spaces, and of belongings was another contributor to long-lasting trauma; here again, Jews and *résistant(e)s* were especially in danger of having their apartments usurped and their belongings—including many cherished family memories—stolen or destroyed by German Occupiers.¹² Moreover, the need to flee, to hide, and to remain in exile took psychological tolls on those who were forced to leave their homes during the war.¹³ The liberation of France did not put an end to traumatic experiences: between the *épuration*—the political movement to punish those who had collaborated with the Germans—and being forced to attempt to return to “normal life” after living in camps or being involved in the *Résistance*, many people struggled emotionally, psychologically, and physically.¹⁴

Like many living in France between 1939 and 1945, Yvonne Lefébure and Fred Goldbeck lived in near-constant states of uncertainty and anxiety. Their prolific correspondence reveals that, starting in 1939, they were frequently abreast of the news of Hitler’s invasions throughout Europe and became increasingly fearful for themselves, their friends, their families, and their homelands. In a letter postmarked October 5, 1939, Lefébure wrote to Goldbeck about the emotional and physical effects of her anxiety:

Not very well going, the old Puss [Goldbeck’s pet name for her]. Recalcitrant stomach, pains that emerge dully from the lower kidneys . . . head a bit tired. Not great. Nothing worrying, simply a bout of physical depression. We wait, we’re always waiting! Sometimes I surprise myself in hoping for a “miracle” that will stop everything . . . [that] we would “wake up”!¹⁵

Later in the same letter, Lefébure made clear the source of her anguish:

We don’t want to admit that we have embarked on months, maybe years, of this same history. We don’t want to be unhappy. Oh, human egotism that goes against the most obvious rationale. Enough! Let’s wait for Saturday. They tell us that Hitler will speak of the war beginning, without a doubt, afterwards. In waiting, he continues the war of nerves.¹⁶

¹¹ For primary source accounts see Weitz, *Sisters in the Resistance*, 205–6; 212–13; 256–58; 299–300; Charlotte Delbo, *Convoy to Auschwitz: Women of the French Resistance*, trans. Carol Cosman (Northeastern University Press, 1997). See also *Femmes en déportation: Les déportées de répression dans les camps nazis 1940–1945*, ed. Philippe Mezzasalma (Presses universitaires de Paris Nanterre, 2019); Anne Grynberg, *Les Camps de la honte: Les internés juifs des camps français (1939–1944)* (Éditions La Découverte, 1991); Annette Wiewiorka, *Ils étaient juifs, résistants, communistes* (Denoël, 1986), <https://doi.org/10.3917/deno.wievi.1986.01>; *Les Françaises à Ravensbrück* (Gallimard).

¹² See Shannon L. Fogg, “Displaced Persons, Displaced Possessions: The Effects of Spoliation and Restitution on Daily Life in Paris,” in *War, Exile, Justice, and Everyday Life, 1936–1946*, ed. Sandra Ott (Center for Basque Studies, 2011), 359–76.

¹³ Jean-Pierre Rioux, “Ambivalences en rouge et bleu: Les Pratiques culturelles des Français pendant les années noires,” in *Le Vie culturelle sous Vichy*, ed. Jean-Pierre Rioux (Éditions complexe, 1990), 41–62; Virginia López de Maturana, “Exile, Identity, and Education: The Evacuation of Basque Children to the French Basque Country, 1937–1939”; Joan Ramon Resina, “Allez, Allez! The 1939 Exodus from Catalonia and Internment in French Concentration Camps”; and Fogg, “Displaced Persons, Displaced Possessions,” in *War, Exile, Justice, and Everyday Life, 1936–1946*, ed. Sandra Ott (Center for Basque Studies, 2011), 85–106; 133–48; and 359–76.

¹⁴ See Weitz, *Sisters in the Resistance*, 294–300.

¹⁵ Yvonne Lefébure, letter to Fred Goldbeck, postmarked October 5, 1939, BMLF, Fonds Yvonne Lefébure, Correspondance.

¹⁶ Lefébure, letter to Fred Goldbeck, postmarked October 5, 1939.

In referring to “this same history” in her letter to Goldbeck, Lefébure acknowledged the role that the traumas of World War I played in many French citizens’ emotional responses to German invasion in 1940.¹⁷

Even prior to Hitler’s declaration of war on France, Lefébure and Goldbeck lived with the insecurity of not knowing where they would go if, in fact, the seemingly inevitable war began. Lefébure, who, in the year immediately before the war was splitting her time between Paris and the coastal town of Les Sables d’Olonne, just south of Nantes, wrote to Goldbeck about her concerns that her aging mother wanted to live in Paris, possibly even while bombs fell on the city.¹⁸ Once Paris fell to Nazi occupation on June 22, 1940, Lefébure made the move with her mother to the small town of Perpignan, between Marseille and the Spanish border less than 40 kilometers away.¹⁹

Throughout their stay in Perpignan, the Lefébures and Goldbeck spent much time wrestling with not only whether to leave France, but also whether it would be possible for them to move to the United States, where Yvonne Lefébure’s close friend and Paris Conservatoire colleague Marthe Morhange-Motchane had moved during the war’s first year. Goldbeck’s Jewish heritage necessitated that he leave France, especially after French Jews began being deported to concentration camps in spring and summer of 1942. Thankfully, the couple was able to arrange for his mother’s travel to the United States that spring. However, travel outside of France was not as easy for Lefébure, her family—including her mother and brother—and Goldbeck. Lefébure’s letters to Morhange-Motchane from 1942 detail the challenges that Lefébure and her loved ones faced during this time: the many long visa applications with often confounding requirements, confusions, and decisions; the shortage of places available on ships travelling to the US; and the family’s lack of funding to reserve seats when they were available. The family often had to borrow money from friends abroad for visa applications and the ship reservations, only to have the application or reservation fall through at the last minute, resulting in the need to request additional funds.

On top of these logistical headaches, Lefébure confessed to Morhange-Motchane the emotional toll of vacillating between whether to go or not go, to go with Fred or to go alone, or to go with her mother or leave her mother alone in France. Lefébure details the arguing and the indecision that pervaded the household in spring 1942, writing to Morhange-Motchane in April after an altercation between Madame Lefébure and Fred about travel plans, that

I am completely stunned and upset by this return of the situation. Three days ago I thought I was going to see the big departure [of Freddy] on Tuesday and today I see myself, me, leaving. I don’t know how my nerves are keeping up still in the midst of all these emotions, these uncertainties, this suffering that I see alternately on the face of one and the other. I am not yet able to realize this departure (and in actuality it’s not a done deal yet) but I believe that I have acted as if I must do it. Despite my grief still at the idea of leaving Maman. I will still shed many tears. But it’s the fate of both of us to be torn apart.²⁰

¹⁷ For one especially evocative example of how World War I shaped French people’s perception of the Second World War, see Weitz, *Sisters in Resistance*, 129–35.

¹⁸ Lefébure, letter to Goldbeck dated September/December 16, 1939, BMLF, Fonds Yvonne Lefébure, Correspondance.

¹⁹ One of Armand Izran’s letters states that Lefebure, her mother, and Goldbeck arrived at their home on June 28, 1940. Izran, letter to Lefébure, dated May 14, 1948, BMLF, Fonds Yvonne Lefébure, Correspondance.

²⁰ Lefébure, letter to Morhange-Motchane dated April 10, 1942, BMLF, Fonds Yvonne Lefébure, Correspondance.

And in May 1942, Lefébure wrote to Morhange-Motchane about how “all these complications, these alternatives—we leave, we don’t leave, put me in certain moments into a state of terrifying depression.”²¹

The angst of current separation—as well as the thought of possible separation—from loved ones only increased Lefébure’s anxiety, depression, and terror. For Lefébure, Goldbeck, and their friends and family, this separation was of various kinds: physical exile within France’s borders, the separation between loved ones in France and the United States, and separation due to the extraordinary sluggishness of the mail service, which sometimes delayed letters for weeks or months and, in other instances, prevented mail from arriving altogether. In addition to the Lefébures and Goldbeck missing their friends, family, and loved ones who had stayed in Paris or gone abroad, they also missed their surroundings in Paris, which Madame Lefébure seems to have felt acutely, according to Yvonne’s letters. Lefébure and Goldbeck became separated by the Franco-Spanish border during 1943 and 1944, when Goldbeck went into exile in Spain. In April [1943], he writes to his fiancée about his emotional state while in exile: “I cannot call this a nightmare, it’s rather a sort of moral catalepsy, with this kind of extreme nervousness that, like stage fright, slows me down rather than agitates me.”²² At around the same time that Goldbeck moved to Spain, Lefébure and her mother arrived at Les Brises—an estate in the small, largely Resistance town of Dieulefit—at the invitation of her close friend, Isabelle Brunschwig, who was exiled at the house with her family due to their Jewish heritage.²³ As Isabelle Brunschwig’s nephew, Pierre Vidal-Naquet, whose parents had been sent to concentration camps and killed after the gestapo arrested them in Marseille in 1943, remembered in 1988, “My aunt Isabelle Brunschwig had taken the initiative to move [Yvonne Lefébure] to Dieulefit with her mother. This choice saved the lives of them both.”²⁴ The slowness of the postal service was worrying for Lefébure to the point that she and her correspondents began numbering their letters to one another so that they would know which had arrived and in which order they should read them. Moreover, Lefébure frequently revealed in her letters the stress that the postal service caused her, writing, for example, to Morhange-Motchane in July 1942 that “these silences terrify me, this absence of communication.”²⁵

Analysis of Lefébure’s wartime correspondence with loved ones like Goldbeck and Morhange-Motchane reveals one reason for Lefébure’s concern regarding these absences of communication. Receiving news from loved ones offered Lefébure a powerful, intimate, embodied, and imaginative means of staying in touch with those closest to her. In letter after letter to Morhange-Motchane during and after the war, Lefébure writes to her about how much she needs *detailed* letters from her, as well as about how much letters conveying aspects of her everyday life help Lefébure to imagine her and her family in New Jersey, and to feel close to her. She wrote to Morhange-Motchane in April 1942, for instance, that

I sense you so much better and then in [your last letter] you recounted a bunch of interesting things on all subjects. One is a little with you, in your life. This brings [you] closer and lightly erases this horrible distance that separates us when I read you in this way. I hear our Marthon speak, it seems to me that you are here, very close. This is good.²⁶

²¹ Lefébure, letter to Morhange-Motchane dated May 7 [1942], BMLF, Fonds Yvonne Lefébure, Correspondance.

²² Goldbeck, letter to Lefébure dated April 22 [1943], BMLF, Fonds Yvonne Lefébure, Correspondance.

²³ Pierre Vidal-Naquet, “Si Dieu le fit . . .,” *Esprit* 134, no. 1 (1988): 3–12.

²⁴ Vidal-Naquet, “Si Dieu le fit . . .,” 3.

²⁵ Lefébure, letter to Morhange-Motchane, dated July 13 [1942], BMLF, Fonds Yvonne Lefébure, Correspondance.

²⁶ Lefébure, letter to Morhange-Motchane, dated April 10, 1942, BMLF, Fonds Yvonne Lefébure, Correspondance.

She communicates similarly with Goldbeck, writing in February 1944, while she lived in Dieulefit and he lived in Madrid, that after five weeks of epistolary silence, “it was so lovely to hear your voice that appeared to me well-disposed and happy with projects, conferences, etc.”²⁷ In a letter to Goldbeck from the same year, she writes that “from time to time I re-read your letters,” adding that, in so doing, “I am struck by the optimism that comes through in them, above all for the last three or four months.” She notes the emotional importance of such a reading in sharing with him that “this gives me again a little bit of courage.”²⁸

Lefébure also reveals in her wartime correspondence that, while she often felt overwhelmed by her professional responsibilities, she was also not sure what she would have done without these during these years of crisis, uncertainty, absence, and loss. She writes to Goldbeck in 1944,

You know nearly as much [as me] the difference between our life in Perpignan in 1940 and that of today, and between that of 1928 and the war! I am trying to practice piano in this house—this is a blessing.²⁹

In the midst of detailing the difficulties of preparing to possibly travel to the US in May 1942, Lefébure writes to Morhange-Motchane that, “If I didn’t have my piano or the broadcasts that I haven’t ever let go of, I believe that I would not have survived.”³⁰

The “War of the Waves” and Radio’s Socio-Emotional Significance

Absences of communication and of information—whether about loved ones or the events of the war—were hallmarks of World War II, and the situation in France was no different. It is within this context that radio became not only a treasured and valued space, but also a highly politicized and fraught one. The situation regarding absences of information resulting from slow or missing correspondence was mirrored by the lack of information on French national radio broadcasts during the war. This made Lefébure’s radio performances, perhaps, all the more meaningful for her, as well as for loved ones who were able to listen to them.

Lefébure was of the generation of French musicians for whom radio was a central medium for building their careers and disseminating their performances to broad audiences. As Rebecca Scales and Derek Vaillant have detailed, radio came to the fore as a popular media form in France during the interwar period. The radio technology of the time allowed listeners access to a broad range of stations, not only in their home country, but throughout the world.³¹ Although Lefébure began her career performing recitals and concerts that were not broadcast on the radio, by the mid-1930s and 1940s, her career was rather dominated by radio performances and recordings. In her letters with friends, family members, and students from the 1940s and 1950s, Lefébure frequently refers to radio performances. Some of these live radio broadcasts took place in France, strictly on Radiodiffusion Nationale (hereafter RDN)—the national

²⁷ Lefébure, letter to Goldbeck, dated February 17, 1944, BMLF, Fonds Yvonne Lefébure, Correspondance.

²⁸ Lefébure, letter to Goldbeck, dated [month unclear] 18, 1944, BMLF, Fonds Yvonne Lefébure, Correspondance.

²⁹ Lefébure, letter to Goldbeck, dated February 12, 1944, BMLF, Fonds Yvonne Lefébure, Correspondance.

³⁰ Lefébure, letter to Morhange-Motchane, dated May 26, 1942, BMLF, Fonds Yvonne Lefébure, Correspondance.

³¹ See Rebecca Scales, *Radio and the Politics of Sound in Interwar France, 1921–1939* (Cambridge University Press, 2016), <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781316258156>; Derek Vaillant, “Occupied Listeners: The Legacies of Interwar Radio for France During World War II,” in *Sound in the Era of Mechanical Reproduction*, eds. David Suisman and Susan Strasser (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 141–58, <https://doi.org/10.9783/9780812206869.141>. See also Kate Lacey, *Listening Publics: The Politics and Experience of Listening in the Media Age* (Polity Press, 2013); Claire Launchbury, *Music, Poetry, Propaganda: Constructing French Cultural Soundscapes at the BBC during the Second World War* (Peter Lang, 2012).

radio station that was, at least initially, in the Free Zone, even if somewhat under the control of the Nazi-occupied French state. In the years after the war, Lefébure was also a frequent performer on the BBC since she was then able to travel outside of France.

As scholars of French radio like Christian Brochand, Jean-Louis Crémieux-Brilhac, and Hélène Eck have detailed, the “guerre des ondes,” or “war of the waves,” was a central feature of World War II’s political landscape, in which both Radio-Paris and RDN were instruments of Nazi and collaborationist propaganda, beginning in 1940.³² In 1940 and 1941, as Crémieux-Brilhac and Eck explain,

Vichy-controlled radio functions according to a fundamental contradiction: there is a war that it pretends to not know about. It shows its “neutrality” in neglecting the battlefields, which no longer concern the French army, but the French are deprived of news. It puts itself in the service of Vichyist nationalism, without really taking account of patriotic calls coming from the De Gaulle [i.e. resistance] camp.³³

At the same time, RDN attempted to “maintain its audience”—which was, at the time, dwindling and suspicious—“through a politics of attractive programming.”³⁴

It is within this context that the BBC’s broadcasts offered sources of hope for French residents who resisted the Nazi occupation as well as any collaboration between the French and German governments. Because state-sponsored radio was suspect for many French citizens, and private French radio stations were far more difficult to access due to weaker radio signals, many people in France who resisted the Nazi occupation turned to radio BBC, which had specific programming created for, directed at, and produced by French citizens. According to Eck and Crémieux-Brilhac, “The BBC didn’t always tell the truth, but it wasn’t afraid of bad news. . . . In addition, the BBC offered to make revelations about France itself, it breaks the wall of silence imposed as much by the Vichy government as by the Germans.”³⁵

But Lefébure couldn’t travel to England during the war to perform on the BBC, leaving her with few options for continuing her career in ways that would assist her in receiving the money so necessary for getting her fiancé, her mother, and herself out of France. Her correspondence brings to light, for instance, that she attempted in 1942 to organize a tour in Spain and North Africa, receiving a negative response from the Association Artistique, which offered various forms of support to French musicians during the war years.³⁶ This was likely especially disappointing since this tour would have offered her the opportunity to travel to Spain either with Goldbeck in tow, or to visit him after he’d already moved to Spain. Performing on the radio in France—though never on Radio-Paris, and only on RDN—seemed to offer her the possibility of maintaining some sort of income during the war years, especially since she all but ceased performing publicly in concert halls between the summer of 1940 and December 1944.

However, there was perhaps more to her radio performances than offering her a source of income. Radio, especially at its beginnings, had been understood as an embodied sonic media that brought announcers, actors, and musicians *into* the space of the home. Jason Loviglio refers to the “new cultural space created by radio broadcasting in the 1930s that was marked by tensions between national and local,

³² Christian Brochand, *Histoire Générale de la radio et de la télévision en France*, tome 1: 1921–1944 (La documentation française, 1994); Hélène Eck and Jean-Louis Crémieux-Brilhac, “France,” in *La guerre des ondes: Histoire des radios de langue française pendant la deuxième guerre mondiale*, ed. Hélène Eck, with a preface by Jean-Noël Jeanneney (Armand Colin, 1985).

³³ Eck and Crémieux-Brilhac, “France,” 58–59.

³⁴ Eck and Crémieux-Brilhac, “France,” 46.

³⁵ Eck and Crémieux-Brilhac, “France,” 65.

³⁶ M. de Valmalette of the Association Artistique, letter to Lefébure, dated 1942, BMLF, Fonds Yvonne Lefébure, Correspondance, Boite 15/2.

inclusion and exclusion, publicity and privacy” as an “intimate public.”³⁷ Although Loviglio’s focus is on radio broadcasting in the United States, there are clear resonances between his theorization of early radio in the US and how people in France understood this new media. As French radio historian Eck has written,

[Radio] put an end to isolation and solitude. It intruded in the home, which could shock or worry people, but it brought [into the home] a completely original space/time, which integrated the individual to the world around them, all the while preserving their intimacy.³⁸

Early French radio critics, theorists, and producers like René Sudre, Paul Deharme, and Louis Lavelle addressed the effects that radio had on listeners, often using language that suggested both the intimacy and the public- and masses-shaping powers of radio. Sudre, for instance, said of radio announcers in 1929 that, “You already possess much more of him [the announcer] than you would of a writer, whose handwriting you don’t even know. He partly opens to you a small door of his unconscious; he gives you part of his personality; you become intimate.”³⁹ Another French radio critic, as Judith Coffin has noted, described radio as “like a ‘slightly indiscreet friend’ who comes into your home” that “needed to find a tone appropriate to this kind of ‘intimacy.’”⁴⁰ As late as 1951 Louis Lavelle wrote about how, without concrete visual images as in film, radio created a “‘bridge’ or a chain’ between ‘speaker and listener’ and made it possible to ‘communicate between consciousnesses.’”⁴¹ Of course, these hopeful and positive readings of radio’s abilities to intimately connect announcers to listeners took on a darker meaning during World War II, in which radio was used as a means of state propaganda.

One of the most important aspects of radio at this time involved the medium’s ability to stir the imagination of listeners—to engage them in a multi-sensorial embodied listening practice. Eck makes this clear in her understanding of interwar radio as needing to

guide the listening of ‘blind’ listeners and give rise to images, thanks to sound. Radio reconstructed the sonorous reality of the world through technical and aesthetic artifice, which was in the interest of verisimilitude and soliciting the imagination.⁴²

Paul Deharme—a notable surrealist who produced radio programs and collected his theories about radio into the volume *Pour un art radiophonique* in 1930—understood radio as a fundamentally sensate medium that, unlike film or theater, could allow listeners to create their own images. He writes that “the mind functions in different ways” when one listens to radio than when they encounter a theater piece or film. He clarifies that

to play on the word “image,” taken at the same time in its usual sense and in the sense where the terminology of psychologists oppose it to “sensation,” we can say that [on the radio], the auditor furnishes the images themselves; in the theater or at the cinema, the spectacle prepares

³⁷ Jason Loviglio, *Radio’s Intimate Public: Network Broadcasting and Mass-Mediated Democracy* (University of Minnesota Press, 2005), xvi.

³⁸ Hélène Eck, “La radiodiffusion dans l’entre-deux-guerres: l’invention d’une culture médiatique singulière,” in *Culture de masse et culture médiatique en Europe et dans les Amériques, 1860–1940*, eds. Jean-Yves Mollier, Jean-François Sirinelli, and François Vallotton (Presses universitaires de France, 2006), 234.

³⁹ René Sudre, “La psychologie de la radio,” *Bulletin de l’Institut Général psychologique*, nos. 1–3 (1929): 8; cited in Judith Coffin, “From Interiority to Intimacy: Psychoanalysis and Radio in Twentieth-Century France,” *Cultural Critique* 91 (2015): 126, <https://doi.org/10.1353/cul.2015.a597560>.

⁴⁰ Coffin, “From Interiority to Intimacy,” 133.

⁴¹ Louis Lavelle, “Un nouveau art de persuader,” *La Nouvelle édition française* 73–74 (1951): 10, 12; cited in Coffin, “From Interiority to Intimacy,” 127.

⁴² Eck, “La radiodiffusion dans l’entre-deux-guerres,” 238.

[the images] for them. This isn't what occurs on the stage or screen, but rather on the subjective image—nearly similar to the scenic “sensational” image—which works the mind of the spectator.⁴³

Further, he contends that “music, *sounds* are above all and first *producers of sensations*.”⁴⁴ Deharme is focused here on radio announcers' and performers' voices. However, his understanding of radio as a medium centered on its abilities to allow listeners to produce images and experience other bodily sensations offers an important and evocative framework for understanding how listeners may have engaged in embodied fashions with Yvonne Lefébure's radio performances during and after World War II.

Lefébure's correspondence indicates that many of her friends and family members understood her radio performances during the war as consoling. Of course, to a certain extent, radio musical performances were intended to be “distracting” by the state radio's administrators; but this does not diminish the importance that the radio medium had for French citizens. Armand Izran—a close family friend who Lefébure, her mother, and Goldbeck lived with in Perpignan during the first years of the Occupation—wrote often to Lefébure about the elation and consolation that he experienced through her radio performances. On November 11, 1944, he writes to Lefébure about “the joy that I had hearing you on the Radio,” ending this letter by telling her that “in this tormented time in which we live, music remains for us the grand consoler.”⁴⁵ Even after the war, Izran continued to tell Lefébure how important hearing her play on the radio was for him.⁴⁶ We also learn from Izran that RDN is the “only channel here [in Perpignan] that allows us to hear perfect performances”—an indication of the extent to which different radio stations had different qualities of broadcasts.⁴⁷ The mere idea or hope that Lefébure might be heard on the radio was comforting to some of her friends. A friend of Yvonne's named Edith wrote to her on March 24, 1943 that amidst her worries about Yvonne—even dreaming of her three times in a week—the only means she has to know that she's okay is “given to me by the radio programs that I often consult in the sole hope to see your name there.”⁴⁸ In November 1944, Izran's wife Loulonne writes about how she, her husband, and their children “will all be listening tomorrow night and Sunday,” noting how “we have more than ever need of all that your art brings us of stability and depth, which relieves me for a few moments from an anxiety that is more poignant every day.”⁴⁹

Lefébure's students, friends, and family felt that her radio performances—as embodied media—allowed them to feel connected to her. A Mme Beziers writes, “I had the joy of hearing you last Friday and this was well retransmitted or had nearly the illusion that you were there very close.”⁵⁰ One of her students, Jacqueline Robinson, writes to Lefébure in 1945, in response to a BBC performance: “It gave me such a joy to hear you; this also gave me the nostalgia of the days when I had much more easily the occasion to [hear you perform].”⁵¹ Robinson's nostalgia leads her to remember “this delicious soirée at Waterford, last summer, when I had the double pleasure to hear true music and to see you again after

⁴³ Paul Deharme, *Pour un art radiophonique* (Le rouge et le noir, 1930), 32.

⁴⁴ Deharme, *Pour un art radiophonique*, 33. Emphasis in the original text.

⁴⁵ Armand Izran, letter to Lefébure, dated November 11, 1944, BMLF, Fonds Yvonne Lefébure, Correspondance.

⁴⁶ For example, see correspondence from Izran to Lefébure, dated June 12, 1948, BMLF, Fonds Yvonne Lefébure, Correspondance.

⁴⁷ Arman Izran, letter to Lefébure dated May 14, 1948, BMLF, Fonds Yvonne Lefébure, Correspondance.

⁴⁸ Edith to Lefébure, letter postmarked March 24, 1943, BMLF, Fonds Yvonne Lefébure, Correspondance.

⁴⁹ Loulonne Izran, letter to Lefébure dated November 22, 1944, BMLF, Fonds Yvonne Lefébure, Correspondance.

⁵⁰ Mme/Mlle Bezier, letter to Lefébure, dated December 30 [no year], BMLF, Fonds Yvonne Lefébure, Correspondance.

⁵¹ Jacqueline Robinson, letter to Lefébure, dated December 8, 1945, BMLF, Fonds Yvonne Lefébure, Correspondance.

these long years of exile.”⁵² In January 1943, Armand Izran’s wife Loulonne writes to Yvonne about hearing her perform Ravel on the radio, noting that “we know better each time that we hear you why we need you so much.”⁵³ Loulonne’s correspondence with Lefébure reveals that she often heard her perform live in their home during the war; on May 12, 1944, she writes to say that “I haven’t ceased to desire those who enjoyed these intimate concerts born from exceptional circumstances that are, I know it, what music can express best in its most refined form.”⁵⁴ And in a telling letter from November 1944, Loulonne indicates the extent to which Lefébure’s radio performances offered a testimony of the pianist’s politics, perhaps especially notable given her decision to perform French music—Fauré’s Nocturne and Dukas’s Variations: “Thank you for remaining so essentially ‘yourself’ and for giving us such a dazzling testimony of revenge and resurrection before even the horizon has had the time to be completely illuminated.”⁵⁵

Lefébure & Musical French Resistance Politics

Indeed, as Loulonne Izran so poignantly suggested, Lefébure’s activities during and just after World War II reveal her Resistance politics, even if not in the most obvious or common ways. Amongst the most outspoken Resistance musicians were Elsa Barraine, Roger Désormière, and Roland-Manuel, who founded the Comité de Front national de la musique in September 1941, and created the French Resistance music journal *Musiciens d’aujourd’hui* in early 1942. These musicians published numerous manifestos that spoke directly to French musicians, outlining what they considered a politics of resistance vs. a politics of collaboration with the occupiers. In the fall of 1941, for example, they published “Nous refusons de trahir” (“We refuse to be traitors”) in the clandestinely-published journal *L’Université libre*. In this article they advocated the performance of pieces composed by French musicians, specifically naming musicians whose works had been banned by the occupiers—Mendelssohn, Dukas, Bry, Martinu, and Milhaud—alongside French composers of the past, like Albéric Magnard, Rameau, Berlioz, Bizet, and Debussy, noting that, while the latter composers may have been influenced by Austro-Germanic music, they at least “never received orders from abroad.”⁵⁶ In April 1942, an article appeared in *Musiciens d’aujourd’hui* advocating the expression of resistance sentiments through the performance of “musical contraband,” which included “the act of playing, as a supplement to a program, a piece in which the content glorifies France, liberty, fraternity of people, or even the work of a non-Aryan composer.”⁵⁷

Historians of World War II-era France have argued over the last several decades that the historiography of this period has been oversimplified, especially in terms of what constituted Resistance and who was involved in Resistance efforts. Gender ideologies of the mid-century, the fact that men were involved far more often than women in the armed Resistance movement, and the celebration of mostly men as part of the Resistance after Liberation all contributed to a narrative that members of Resistance

⁵² Robinson, letter to Lefébure, dated December 8, 1945.

⁵³ Loulonne Izran, letter to Lefébure, dated January 1943, BMLF, Fonds Yvonne Lefébure, Correspondance.

⁵⁴ Loulonne Izran, letter to Lefébure, dated May 12, 1944, BMLF, Fonds Yvonne Lefébure, Correspondance.

⁵⁵ Loulonne Izran, letter to Lefébure, dated November 10, 1944, BMLF, Fonds Yvonne Lefébure, Correspondance.

⁵⁶ “Nous refusons de trahir,” *L’Université libre* (1941): 2.

⁵⁷ “Le Devoir des musiciens,” *Musiciens d’aujourd’hui* 3 (April 1942), cited and trans. in Roust, “Toward an Aesthetic of Resistance,” 152.

organizations and the Resistance movement were almost exclusively men.⁵⁸ As Robert Gildea, H.R. Kedward, and Dominique Veillon—amongst others—have pointed out, historical narratives of the French Resistance have also frequently sidelined the significant roles that Jews, people born beyond France’s borders, and people in rural areas of France played in the Resistance movement.⁵⁹ In addition to understanding histories of the Resistance as shaped by the political contexts surrounding the writing of these histories and mythological narratives of the Resistance that have played out in private and public from World War II to present, Pierre Laborie has convincingly argued that the great variety of ways that one could be involved in the Resistance makes any complete historical understanding of it nearly, if not entirely, impossible:

Nothing is to be gained by deceiving ourselves about the possibility of totally mastering the concept of Resistance and successfully rendering its reality in a convincing synthesis. The phenomenon, both protean and unique, is of such complexity and such plasticity that it does not adapt well to a mode of conceptualization that resembles a poorly fitting corset.⁶⁰

These critiques of traditional definitions of Resistance activities can similarly be leveled towards musicologists, given the extent to which musical contraband has been one of the main ways that contemporaneous musicians and today’s music historians have defined Resistance music-making during the Occupation. Jane Fulcher, Colin Roust, Nigel Simeone, Yannick Simon, and Leslie Sprout have, in their exceedingly important work on French music during World War II, compellingly analyzed the compositions and activities of composers like Georges Auric, Francis Poulenc, and Arthur Honegger to reveal their Resistance politics.⁶¹ French-language studies of French music-making under German Occupation have importantly gone beyond a focus on composers in investigating musicians’ roles as collaborators, *résistant(e)s*, or other more in-between political affiliations.⁶² Although the tendency amongst musicologists has been to center research on musicians more clearly involved in the Resistance or assumed to be pro-Vichy, and to focus on music-making in Paris, Lefébure’s activities during and after the war, as well as in the south of France, underline the necessity of moving the focus beyond these figures and the centrality of Paris in researching musical acts of Resistance.

Although Lefébure certainly performed pieces considered “musical contraband,” she engaged with French Resistance politics in numerous other ways. First, she expressed hatred for the occupiers and their

⁵⁸ For more on the exclusion of women from histories of the Resistance, see Weitz, *Sisters in the Resistance*; Diamond, *Women and the Second World War in France, 1939–48*; Ingrid Strobl, *Partisanas: Women in the Armed Resistance to Fascism and German Occupation (1936–1945)* (AK Press, 2008); and Robert Gildea, *Fighters in the Shadows: A New History of the French Resistance* (The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2015), <https://doi.org/10.4159/9780674496132>; Catherine Lacour-Astol, *Le Genre de la Résistance: La Résistance féminine dans le Nord de la France* (Sciences Po. Les Presses, 2015), <https://doi.org/10.4000/cliio.13078>; Schwartz, “Redefining Resistance.”

⁵⁹ Gildea, *Fighters in the Shadows*; H.R. Kedward, “Rural France and Resistance,” in *France at War: Vichy and the Historians*, eds. Sarah Fishman, Laura Lee Downs, Ioannis Sinanoglou, Leonard V. Smith, and Robert Zaretsky (Berg, 2000), 125–44; Dominique Veillon, “The Resistance and Vichy,” in *France at War: Vichy and the Historians*, 161–80.

⁶⁰ Pierre Laborie, *Les Français des années troubles: De la guerre d’Espagne à la Libération* (Seuil, 2003), 75–76; cited and translated in Olivier Wieviora, *The French Resistance*, trans. Jane Marie Todd (The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2016), 2, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvjhzslt>.

⁶¹ Fulcher, *Renegotiating French Identity*; Fulcher, “French Identity in Flux”; Sprout, *The Musical Legacy of Wartime France*; Sprout, “Messiaen, Jolivet, and the Soldier-Composers of Wartime France”; Roust, “Towards an Aesthetic of Resistance”; Simeone, “Messiaen and the Concerts de la Pléiade”; Simeone, “Making Music in Occupied Paris”; Simon, *Composer sous Vichy*.

⁶² Karine Le Bail, *Le musique au pas: Être musicien sous l’Occupation* (CNRS Éditions, 2016); Myriam Chimènes, ed., *La Vie musicale sous Vichy* (Éditions Complexe, 2001); Laurent Feneyrou et Alain Poirier, eds., *De la Libération au domaine musical: Dix ans de musique en France (1944–1954)* (VRIN, 2018); Myriam Chimènes and Yannick Simon, eds., *La musique à Paris sous l’Occupation*, with a preface by Henry Rousso (Fayard, 2013).

politics, sometimes in ways that reduced her performance opportunities. For example, in March 1937, Lefébure received a letter from Ernest Denis in Prague, who told her that he was in the process of organizing a series of concerts for her in Prague and that he had spoken with the director of the Agence Bel Canto, Charles Kiesgen, about “my intention of orienting you towards Germans here [i.e., in Prague], due to your critiques of the Reich; but he strongly advised me against doing this given the rivalry of the two nationalities.”⁶³ In addition, Anne Vallaëys, in her book detailing life in the southwestern French town of Dieulefit—well-known for its Resistance politics and practices—relays that Lefébure gave piano lessons and occasionally performed for a closed and intimate public during the years she lived there since she “had forbidden public performances as long as France was under the boot.”⁶⁴ Although this is not entirely true given a handful of performances that newspapers report occurred in Avignon and Perpignan during the war, her live concert hall performances were indeed few and far between during this time.⁶⁵ And in March 1945, Lefébure wrote to Morhange-Motchane about her and Freddy’s efforts to work only with Resistance musicians, for instance in relation to Fred Goldbeck’s new music journal, *Contrepoints*:

I will participate in the *comité de direction* as well as [Marc] Pincherle (who has said of you many things, he has been perfect during the entirety of the occupation) and several others, good people. We will try to work only with [these kinds of people].⁶⁶

Indeed, *Contrepoints* was understood as deeply connected to the Resistance: it was published through the Resistance press Éditions du minuit and the journal’s editorial board and most frequent contributors all identified as or came to be known as Resistance musicians.⁶⁷

Even if Lefébure was perhaps less outspoken about her political views during the war, after the war she came to be more well-known for her resistance to the Nazi regime and their occupation of France. In a March 1945 article in *Les Lettres françaises*, well-known Resistance musician Georges Auric wrote of Lefébure’s “exemplary firmness of attitude through the difficulties and uncertainties of so many of our former comrades.”⁶⁸ Auric was responding in part to a speech that Lefébure had given on BBC radio in February 1945.⁶⁹ She began this speech by noting how moving it was for her to “speak before a microphone of the BBC . . . the BBC that has been, during the hard years of the occupation of France, the only source of our comfort, to which we had attached all of our hope”⁷⁰ Throughout the speech, Lefébure centers on the cellist Pablo Casals—with whom she became close friends during their mutual exile in Perpignan in the south of France. She sees Casals as a musician whose behavior in relation to the war—centered on refusal as resistance—was, for her, politically ideal. In her BBC speech, she pronounced that:

Throughout the war he has never wavered. He believed in France, in the real France. He would

⁶³ Ernest Denis, letter to Lefébure, dated March 10, 1937, BMLF, Fonds Yvonne Lefébure, Contrats et correspondance.

⁶⁴ Anne Vallaëys, *Dieulefit ou le miracle du silence* (Fayard, 2008), 188.

⁶⁵ See J.M., “Chronique du Midi: Le récital Yvonne Lefébure à Perpignan,” *L’Emancipation nationale*, April 3, 1943; and K. Dence, “Un grand récital,” *Les Tablettes du soir*, February 17, 1943.

⁶⁶ Lefébure, letter to Morhange-Motchane, dated March 13 [1945], BMLF, Fonds Yvonne Lefébure, Correspondance.

⁶⁷ For more on Éditions du minuit as a Resistance publishing house, see Weitz, *Sisters in the Resistance*, 74–75. See also, for information regarding *Contrepoints*, Sara Iglesias, *Musicologie et Occupation: Science, musique et politique dans la France des ‘années noires’* (Éditions de la Maison des sciences de l’homme, 2014), 359, 363,

<https://doi.org/10.4000/books.editionsmsmh.10613>; and Cécile Quesney, “Les revues d’après-guerre: notes sur *Contrepoints* et *Polyphonie*,” in *De la Libération au domaine musical: Dix ans de musique en France (1944–1954)*, eds. Laurent Feneyrou and Alain Poirier (VRIN, 2018), 455–67.

⁶⁸ Georges Auric, “La Musique; Strawinsky ou l’éternel renouvellement,” *Les Lettres françaises*, March 24, 1945, 5.

⁶⁹ Lefébure, letter to Morhange-Motchane, dated February 20, 1945, BMLF, Fonds Yvonne Lefébure, Correspondance.

⁷⁰ Yvonne Lefébure, Texte d’une émission de la BBC “Les années Durant la 2eme Guerre,” BMLF, Écrits d’Yvonne Lefébure, Boite 6/3, YL 80.

have no dealings with Nazi Germany and refused to play in Paris or wherever the Germans were in control. And so Casals maintained a silence so eloquent that it became the living soul of the resistance. He would only give concerts in what was then unoccupied France. When the Germans occupied the whole of France in November 1942 Pablo Casals disappeared completely from the public eye. Only in the houses of friends a few privileged people were able to hear him.

She closed her speech by saying, “To those French musicians who in spite of defeat refused to give up their claim to be free people, Pablo Casals will remain a noble example—such an example as England gave to the world during the years of darkness.” This speech demonstrates that, like many musicians during the war, Lefébure understood the radio as a politicized technology and space, and that refusal—to perform in particular places, with certain repertoire, or even to perform at all—offered one means of Resistance political expression for French musicians. Lefébure’s focus on Casals’s refusal in her BBC speech may have also been a subtle nod to her disappointment that her former collaborator and friend Alfred Cortot had made decidedly different decisions during the war years, such as continuing to perform in Germany and working with the Vichy government as the president of the Comité professionnel de l’art musical et de l’enseignement libre de la musique—decisions that had already led to a breach in the friendship between Cortot and Casals.⁷¹

Lefébure’s radio performances during and just after World War II further reveal her Resistance politics through various kinds of refusal. According to *Les Ondes*—a guide detailing radio programming in France published between 1940 and 1944—during the war Lefébure refused to perform on Radio-Paris, the most obviously Nazi-controlled state radio station (see Table 1). However, she performed on RDN at various times throughout the war. From July 1941 through June 1942, she appeared in a variety of radio concerts—chamber music, recitals, concerto performances with orchestra—a total of nineteen times, at least once per month for every month in this time frame except December 1941 and January 1942. It is notable, however, that Lefébure stopped performing on RDN between July 1942 and November 1942, at a time when the station had become virulently and overtly anti-Semitic. After performing three concerts for RDN in December 1942, Lefébure did not appear in a performance on the channel again until May 1943, for just one performance, and then not again until August 1943. *Les Ondes*’s published programming suggests that she did not perform on RDN again in 1943; perhaps tellingly, the Resistance music journal *Le Musicien patriote* emerges in September 1943 with a manifesto that urges French musicians to interfere with any Vichy projects and so at this point, Lefébure may have decided to stop performing on French radio altogether. As soon as Lefébure was able to travel to England and perform on the BBC—then a station associated with the French Resistance movement—she did: first in February 1945, when she played Ravel’s Concerto in G Major and gave the speech cited above, and then with some regularity for the next

⁷¹ For more information concerning the complex situation of Cortot’s musical, administrative, and political actions during World War II, see Limore Yagil, “Alfred Cortot, entre mémoire et oubli: le destin d’un grand pianiste,” *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains* 246, no. 2 (2012): 117–36, <https://doi.org/10.3917/gmcc.246.0117>. The breach in the friendship between Casals and Cortot is detailed in François Anselmini and Rémi Jacobs, *Le Trio Cortot-Thibaud-Casals* (Actes Sud, 2014), 180–96. Although I have not yet located Lefébure discussing Cortot directly, several letters in her archive suggest that her feelings about Cortot were complex and may have changed over time. For example, Marthe Beruson writes to Lefébure in April 1944, after a soirée the previous evening, making an impassioned argument about why she disdains Cortot and his political actions during the war; see Marthe Beruson, letter to Yvonne Lefébure, dated April 3, 1944, BMLF, Fonds Yvonne Lefébure, Correspondance, Additif 1. On the other hand, Cortot’s wife Renée writes to Lefébure in December 1944 asking her “not to abandon him [Cortot],” even though “you have the right, both of you [Yvonne and Freddy] to benefit from a moral situation, hard earned” and “understands . . . that you won’t want to see us often.” See Renée Cortot, letter to Yvonne Lefébure, dated December 17, 1944, BMLF, Fonds Yvonne Lefébure, Correspondance (Budan).

fifteen years; the BBC Radio Archives reveal 28 unique live broadcasts of Lefébure's performances between 1945 and 1966 (see Table 2).

Date of Broadcast	Station	Title/Type of Performance	Music Performed	Source
October 28, 1939	Radio-Paris			
January 21, 1940			Chromatische Fantasie	
March 5, 1941	Radiodiffusion nationale		Bach-Liszt Fantaisie et fugue en sol mineur	<i>7 jours: grand hebdomadaire d'actualité</i> , 2 mars 1941, p. 2
March 7, 1941	Radiodiffusion nationale	Récital de piano	Partita en si bémol de Bach; Sonate de Beethoven	<i>7 jours: grand hebdomadaire d'actualité</i> , 9 mars 1941, p. 2
March 21, 1941	Radiodiffusion nationale	Récital de piano		<i>7 jours: grand hebdomadaire d'actualité</i> , 23 mars 1941, p. 2
April 16, 1941	Radiodiffusion nationale		Sonate en ré mineur, de Schumann, par Mlle Yvonne Lefébure et M. Roland Charmy	<i>7 jours: grand hebdomadaire d'actualité</i> , 13 avril 1941, p. 6.
May 21, 1941		Musique classique et romantique	Concert with Lefébure, Maurice Maréchal, and Lélia Gousseau	<i>La Patriote des Pyrénées</i> , 21 mai 1941, p. 4
June 21, 1941		Concert de solistes	Lefébure on piano, melodies with M. L. Lovano	<i>Le Radical de Marseille</i> , 23 juin 1941, p. 2
July 23, 1941	Radiodiffusion nationale	Récital de Piano par Mme Yvonne Lefébure, Les Transcriptions	Bach-Liszt, Prélude et fugue en la mineur; Vivaldi, Concerto; Bach-Busoni, Final Chorals: "Je t'invoque, Seigneur" and "En toi est la joie"	<i>Les Ondes</i>
July 25, 1941	Radiodiffusion nationale	Solistes: Les grandes sonates romantiques	Schumann, Sonate en ré mineur pour violon et piano [with Roland Charmy]	<i>Les Ondes</i>
July 28, 1941	Radiodiffusion nationale	De Bach à Chopin	Bach, Fantaisie chromatique et fugue; Chopin, Barcarolle; Chopin, Deux études posthumes; Chopin, Valse en la bémol	<i>Les Ondes</i>
August 4, 1941			Piano (Mlle Yvonne Lefébure), mélodies (Mme Marthe Bréga)	<i>Le Petit Dauphinois</i> , 4 août 1941, p. 3
August 6, 1941	Radiodiffusion nationale	Concert de solistes		<i>Les Ondes</i>
August 8, 1941	Radiodiffusion nationale	De Mozart à Roussel avec Mlle Yvonne Lefébure (pianist) par M. Yvon Le Marc'Hadour (chant)		<i>Les Ondes</i>
August 10, 1941	Radiodiffusion nationale	Concert symphonique sous la direction de Jean Clergue	Mozart, Concerto en ut majeur pour piano et orchestra	<i>Les Ondes</i>

Table 1: Lefébure's Performances on French Radio

Date of Broadcast	Station	Title/Type of Performance	Music Performed	Source
September 23, 1941	Radiodiffusion nationale	Solistes	Mozart, Pièces pour piano; Fantaisie en ré mineur; Bach, Partita en si bémol	<i>Les Ondes</i>
October 21, 1941	Radiodiffusion nationale	Concert de l'Orchestre National sous la direction de M. Henri Tomasi	Beethoven, Concerto en ut majeur no. 1	<i>Les Ondes</i>
October 28, 1941	Radiodiffusion nationale	Concert de solistes: Avec M. Marcel Reynal, Mlle Reine Gianoli, Mlle Yvonne Lefébure, M. Yvon Le Marc'hadour		<i>Les Ondes</i>
November 2, 1941	Radiodiffusion nationale	Quatuors	Fauré, Thème et variations	<i>Les Ondes</i>
November 4, 1941	Radiodiffusion nationale	La demi-heure du poète: Gérard de Nerval; Présentation de M. Kléber Haedens	Partie musicale: Chopin, Deux études posthumes; Chopin, 2e scherzo	<i>Les Ondes</i>
November 17, 1941	Radiodiffusion nationale	Concert de solistes	Mozart, Sonate posthume en ut mineur	<i>Les Ondes</i>
February 21, 1942	Radiodiffusion nationale	Musique de chambre	Mussorgsky, Mélodies; Ravel, <i>Valses nobles et sentimentales</i>	<i>Les Ondes</i>
February 27, 1942	Radiodiffusion nationale	Musique de chambre	Magnard, Sonate pour piano et violoncelle [with Maurice Maréchal]	<i>Les Ondes</i>
March 29, 1942	Radiodiffusion nationale	Musique de chambre	Bach, Fantaisie chromatique et fugue; Chopin, Scherzo en si bémol mineur	<i>Les Ondes</i>
April 24, 1942	Radiodiffusion nationale	Musique de chambre	Vivaldi, Concerto; Schumann, Variations posthumes	<i>Les Ondes</i>
May 17, 1942	Radiodiffusion nationale	Musique de chambre	Vivaldi, Concerto	<i>Les Ondes</i>
May 29, 1942	Radiodiffusion nationale	Musique de chambre	Beethoven, 10e sonate en sol pour piano et violon [Roland Charny]	<i>Les Ondes</i>
June 9, 1942	Radiodiffusion nationale	Musique de chambre	Bach-Liszt, Fantaisie et fugue en sol mineur	<i>Les Ondes</i>
December 15, 1942	Radiodiffusion nationale	Solistes	Fauré, 6e Nocturne; Debussy, <i>Images</i>	<i>Les Ondes</i>
December 17, 1942	Radiodiffusion nationale	Concert de solistes	Beethoven, Sonate op. 110	<i>Les Ondes</i>
December 19, 1942	Radiodiffusion nationale	Musique de chambre	Debussy, Trois préludes; Martelli, <i>Cinq danses pour piano</i> (2e audition)	<i>Les Ondes</i>
May 4, 1943	Radiodiffusion nationale	Musique de chambre	Dukas, <i>Variations, interlude et final</i>	<i>Les Ondes</i>
August 29, 1943	Radiodiffusion nationale	L'orchestre de Lyon, sous la directions de M. Jean Matras, avec Mme Lefébure		<i>Les Ondes</i>
August 31, 1943	Radiodiffusion nationale	Solistes		<i>Les Ondes</i>

Table 1: (cont.)

Date of Broadcast	Title/Type of Program	Pieces Performed	Fellow Performers
February 7, 1945		Ravel Concerto	Paul Paray
February 18, 1945			
May 21, 1945		Fauré Piano Quintet No. 2	Calvet String Quartet
December 4, 1945			
November 28, 1946	Debussy & Dukas		
November 29, 1946		Schumann Piano Concerto	BBC Theater Orchestra and Walter Goehr
May 3, 1947		Roussel Piano Concerto	BBC Symphony Orchestra and Stanford Robinson
May 4, 1947		Roussel Piano Concerto	BBC Symphony Orchestra and Stanford Robinson
October 12, 1947		Rameau, Minuet in G; Ravel, <i>Valses nobles et sentimentales</i> ; Ravel, <i>Jeux d'eau</i>	
October 17, 1947 (18:00)		Debussy, Fantasia	BBC Scottish Orchestra and Ian Whyte
October 17, 1947 (21:05)	The Piano Works of Debussy		
February 27, 1948	Ravel's Piano Works 2		
April 24, 1949	Fauré		
November 19, 1949		Henry Barraud, Piano Concerto	BBC Symphony Orchestra and Sir Adrian Boult
January 12, 1950	Debussy		
March 2, 1950	Debussy [repeat performance of above, or playing of recording]		
March 1, 1951		Debussy, Fantaisie	BBC Symphony Orchestra and Sir Adrian Boult
November 11, 1953	A Century of French Piano Music	Debussy, <i>Children's Corner</i> ; Emmanuel, Sonatine No. 6; <i>Variations, Interlude, and Finale on a theme of Rameau</i>	Edward Lockspeiser as speaker
October 16, 1955	Debussy		
August 1, 1956	Recital	Beethoven, Sonata Op. 110; Bartok, <i>Six Dances in Bulgarian Rhythm</i>	
August 14, 1961			London Symphony Orchestra and John Pritchard
August 22, 1962		Debussy: <i>Hommage à Rameau, Ariettes oubliées, Préludes Book 1</i>	Peter Pears
October 28, 1962			
December 14, 1963			
October 6, 1965			
April 10, 1966			
May 10, 1966			Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, John Alldis, Norman Del Mar
May 21, 1966		Ravel, <i>Le Tombeau de Couperin</i>	

Table 2: Lefébure's Performances on Radio BBC

Notably, the people with whom Lefébure chose to perform on RDN were largely aligned with the French Resistance movement. Her frequent fellow performers in this period included Maurice Maréchal,

Roland Charmy, and Yvon Marc'Hadour. She considered touring with Maréchal and Charmy in the 1940s, as she writes to Morhange-Motchane in April 1942 after discussing logistical and financial difficulties:

In principle, I must go on tour in South America with Maréchal and perhaps Charmy. It has been decided that I will try to join you [in the US] afterwards. This is yet what will have to happen, perhaps, if I don't have time to catch Freddy's boat.⁷²

Nothing ever came of this, however, due to a shortage of funding on the part of the Service des œuvres françaises à l'étranger—the organization that had attempted to facilitate this tour.⁷³ Although little is known about Marc'Hadour, more can be said about Charmy's and Maréchal's support of the French Resistance movement. During the war, like many French Resistance musicians, Charmy lived in the south of France, rarely performing during these years and, when he did, performing programs containing much music written by French composers in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.⁷⁴ He performed in a 1944 concert funded by the Resistance group Front nationale,⁷⁵ and in 1946, performed Berg's Chamber Concerto—which had been, like all of his compositions, banned during the German Occupation—for Pierre Schaeffer's Studio d'Essai.⁷⁶ Maréchal, who sent his wife and children to the United States in the summer of 1940 and whose son would enlist in the French army in 1943, remained in France, even, according to Jean-Claude Pasteur, “hiding in his house one of his students, an active member of the Resistance, whose mother had been sent to Ravensbrück, saving him in this way from deportation.”⁷⁷ Moreover, during the war, Lefébure seems to have only performed under conductors who were not involved in collaborating with the occupiers—like Jean Clergue and Henri Tomasi, who would in 1945 become a member of the Communist party⁷⁸—or at least not aligned with the Nazi occupation.

The repertoire that Lefébure chose to perform on the radio principally resonated with French Resistance politics as outlined in the Resistance musicians' manifesto discussed above. Although many of her performances from 1941 involved the standard piano repertoire that she had built her career upon thus far—Bach, Mozart, Schumann, and Chopin—she performed works by twentieth-century French composers Albert Roussel and Fauré in the second half of the year. And in 1942 and 1943, she performed pieces on the radio by Ravel, Fauré, and Debussy that would have certainly been considered aligned with the Resistance goals of showcasing French composers. She made even clearer political statements by performing compositions by two French composers specifically mentioned in the *L'Université libre* article, “Nous refusons de trahir”: the Sonata for Cello and Piano of Albéric Magnard, who famously was killed by German soldiers outside his home in the first weeks of World War I, and *Variations, interlude et final* by the French-Jewish musician Paul Dukas, whose compositions had been banned in French concert halls

⁷² Lefébure, letter to Morhange-Motchane, dated April 1942, BMLF, Fonds Yvonne Lefébure, Correspondance.

⁷³ Limore Yagil, *Au nom de l'art 1933–1945: Exils, solidarités et engagements* (Fayard, 2015), 231–32.

⁷⁴ See Dezède, <https://dezede.org/>.

⁷⁵ See Herem, “Le festival Beethoven,” *Rouge-Midi: organ du Rayon communiste et des syndicats unitaires des Alpes-Maritimes*, November 24, 1944, 2.

⁷⁶ See Max Deutsch, “Le concerto de chambre d'Alban Berg,” *Europe* 24, no. 11 (1946): 22. On Charmy's marriage to Lily Laskine, see Marielle Nordmann, *Lily Laskine* (Association des Amis de Lily Laskine, 1997), 19; on the question of her Jewish heritage, see Le Bail, *La musique au pas*, 159–60.

⁷⁷ Lois Perkins-Maréchal, *L'Amérique avant les gratte-ciel*, ed. Jean-Claude Pasteur (Presses Sélect Ltée, 1979), 172.

⁷⁸ Frédéric Ducros Malmazet, “Un musicien dans la tourmente de la Seconde Guerre mondiale,” in *Henri Tomasi, du lyrisme méditerranéen à la conscience révoltée*, eds. Jean-Marie Jacono and Lionel Pons (Presses universitaires de Provence, 2015), 121–38. See also Henri Barraud's statement about these conductors not being collaborationists in the same article.

during World War II.⁷⁹ When she performed in a live concert in Dieulefit, she played the works of exiled Alsatian composer Fred Barlow, who was also living in Dieulefit at the time. Although it is difficult to determine the degree of agency that Lefébure and others had in their radio programming choices, Lefébure's repertoire selections for her performances on RDN during the war, as well as her choices to perform largely French, twentieth-century repertoire after the war on BBC radio, would seem to suggest her Resistance politics.

Performing Resistance through Embodied Risk and Survival

One way of understanding these performances in this timeframe is that Lefébure needed money to attempt to move herself, her mother, and her partner out of France. And yet, I would argue that we can understand Lefébure's radio broadcasts as representations of resistance, risk, hope, and survival for those who knew her best. Lefébure was famous for her stage fright, which she referenced in her written and spoken texts and about which her friends and collaborators had intimate knowledge. Even after decades of performing publicly, Lefébure, one of the most famous virtuoso pianists of her time, experienced "le trac," which she defined as "but a vague word for designating the complex ensemble of apprehensions that take hold of us in the moment when we are going to, even for the hundredth time, bring alive again a work in the here and now."⁸⁰ Her friend and student Henry-Louis De La Grange reported in an interview that "Yvonne Lefébure suffered her whole life from stage fright. This is to say that, I remember that before a concert, she was always quite beside herself. You couldn't talk to her. She was in a really bad way."⁸¹ One of her students, Rémy Stricker, corroborates De La Grange's recollection, saying, "All I can say is that I remember having terrible stage fright on her behalf, which was totally unjustified. But she was so modest about it all that you couldn't help feeling nervous, thinking, 'She's spent so much time telling us she's not up to this, I wonder if she is.'"⁸²

In addition to her friends, family, and colleagues understanding her performances as representative of survival through the risk of stage fright, radio performances may have also allowed listeners who knew Lefébure to imagine in a highly embodied fashion, her "risky" approach to keyboard performance, especially given Deharme's understanding of radio as a space that facilitated extra-auditory sensory experiences. Lefébure was well-known for her precarious performance style, of which many of her friends and colleagues were aware, especially if they had watched her perform publicly or while she was practicing at home. In watching a performance of Lefébure at the piano from the 1950s, '60s, or '70s, her perilous performativity is evident: she often raises her arms and hands inches if not a foot off the keyboard rather than keeping them close to the keyboard.⁸³ As one former student described,

She wasn't a "comfortable" musician. You didn't sit listening blissfully in your armchair, letting the music wash over you like warm water. You took part in it with her in the adventure that each concert represented. It was a risky undertaking. I remember that I used to say that a concert by

⁷⁹ Le Bail discusses how, though Dukas's compositions had been "erased from the programs of concert halls," his music was nevertheless performed on RDN, attesting to a "mark of relative independence" of RDN's programming choices. See *La musique au pas*, 163.

⁸⁰ Lefébure, quoted in Yvette Carbou, *La leçon de musique d'Yvonne Lefébure* (Éditions Van de Velde, 1995), 40.

⁸¹ Henry Louis DeLegrance, in "Yvonne Lefébure, Schumann . . . et le trac au concert," YouTube video, 12:58, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FoBZHQ9P6no>.

⁸² Rémy Stricker in "Yvonne Lefébure, Schumann . . . et le trac au concert," YouTube video, 12:58, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FoBZHQ9P6no>.

⁸³ A video of the recording can be found on YouTube.

Yvonne was both marvelous and frightening, because it all had to be fought for at sword-point, all the time taking risks. At times she'd use very idiosyncratic fingering, coming up with rather acrobatic arrangements, and her little hands helped a lot with that. She got the maximum possible speed and dexterity out of them, but she did take considerable risks.⁸⁴

Given Deharme's and other early radio theorists' understanding of radio listening as a multi-sensorial and imaginative medium, Lefébure's embodiment of risk in her approach to keyboard performance would have likely been intensely evocative for those who had witnessed her performances previously.

Performing on the radio involved additional risks regarding audience expectations. Lefébure divulged that, for her, radio performances brought about a change in what audiences were expecting from performers. She reported that

around 1920, the instrumental art goes without ceasing towards more technical perfection and, in parallel, towards more impersonality. The radio recordings are in part responsible for this evolution. The microphone—this magnifying and discoloring lens—encourages and demands the impeccability of the execution, while the interpretation, in what it has of the imponderable, often doesn't happen.⁸⁵

She was well-aware of the wide variety of listeners who she needed to reach in any given performance, and this would have been especially true for radio performances. Just before defining “le trac” in her essay on interpretation from 1950, Lefébure wrote:

Even the most “faithful public” is always a new assembly—or rather an assemblage of people in which it rightly falls on the musician to make an assembly out of. . . . The concert performer feels themselves penetrated by hundreds of looks—friendly looks from enthusiastic music lovers, understanding but sometimes a little less friendly looks from a few colleagues, reserved and until further notice distracted looks from those for whom the concert is as much, or first of all, a social event as a musical event, curious looks from everyone, while alone, concentrating on themselves re-assembling their physical and nervous forces, they greet [the audience] and situate themselves. These are moments intensely lived, these few seconds that precede, in the silence, the first note.⁸⁶

The idea of a large, expectant audience of listeners with various levels of experience with different kinds of music was something on which the music critic André Coeuroy focused in a 1938 essay entitled “Premiers essais de musique radiogénique.” He closed this essay with the observation that

the radiophonic public is a new public for art, it is truly, and for the first time, the masses, the anonymous and uncultivated masses, in which 25 out of 100 listeners do not have, to the letter, any idea of what art can be. The radio poses in this way the most worrying problem: to create art for the masses.⁸⁷

Although Coeuroy is mainly concerned in this essay with modernist attempts to create radio-specific compositions, his point that radio reached an incredibly large and diverse audience resonates with Lefébure's concerns about how to reach and respond to her audiences—whether in the concert hall or on the radio.

⁸⁴ See “Yvonne Lefébure, Schumann . . . et le trac au concert,” YouTube video, 12:58, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FoBZHQ9P6no>.

⁸⁵ Carbou, *La leçon*, 111.

⁸⁶ Carbou, *La leçon*, 40.

⁸⁷ André Coeuroy, “Premiers essais de musique radiogénique,” *La Revue Musicale* 11, no. 106 (1930): 22.

Conclusion: Radio Performance as Resistance Survivor Mission

By playing on the radio during World War II, Lefébure took substantial risks—in terms of her playing style, her ability to reach a (very politically) diverse and often divided audience, and her stage fright. Lefébure undertook these risks for her family, for her friends, for her students, and, I would argue, for herself as well. In listening to radio in their homes, Lefébure's audiences who knew her—and especially those who knew her politics—may have been able to read into her radio performances a message of resistance and, ultimately, hope. If one takes risks, one might also succeed—as Lefébure so often did—making those risks worthwhile, especially at a time when taking risks was an important part of Resistance efforts, musical and otherwise. And of course, for Lefébure, radio performances offered her opportunities to obtain the financial resources necessary for moving herself, her partner, and her mother out of a fascist and decidedly not-free France.

As I noted in this article's introduction, Lefébure's very public radio performances may have presented her with occasions to process the war- and exile-related trauma that she experienced between 1939 and 1945. In psychiatrist Judith Herman's watershed book, *Trauma and Recovery*, she asserts that processing trauma can involve connection with loved ones, telling one's story, mourning one's losses, and embarking on "survivor missions." Herman contends that survivor missions occur when "survivors recognize a political or religious dimension in their misfortune and discover that they can transform the meaning of their personal tragedy by making it the basis for social action."⁸⁸ She explains that "although giving to others is the essence of the survivor mission, those who practice it recognize that they do so for their own healing. In taking care of others, survivors feel recognized, loved, and cared for themselves."⁸⁹

In fact, the desire of women to "do something" in the wake of Nazi occupation has been a major theme of women's accounts of their participation in the French Resistance, in addition to being part of Resistance discourse from the very beginning of the occupation. In the first issue of the clandestine journal *Résistance* of December 1940, produced by the Musée de l'Homme Résistance, one of the first organized Resistance organizations, the following statement appeared:

Resist! This is the cry coming from all your hearts amid the distress caused by your country's disaster. This is the cry coming from all of you who will not submit, who want to do what duty requires. Yet you feel isolated, torn by confusing ideas, opinions, and organizations. To resist is to keep your heart and head. But above all, it means acting—doing something that will bring about positive results; rational and useful acts.⁹⁰

French Resistance member Sonia Vagliano-Eloy encapsulates how the trauma of German occupation informed her desire to join the Resistance in her recounting of a meeting with an American officer in France during the war:

When he asked me why I joined the army, I told him that I was in France when the armistice was signed and the Germans marched in. I was revolted and heartsick to see German soldiers walking the streets of Paris as conquerors, as if Paris belonged to them: seeing their black-and-yellow posters everywhere, hearing them singing as they marched—in short, all that. I couldn't really explain it; it would take too much time. It was a reflex. They were there, *chez nous*, and that was unbearable. I wanted to do something, to serve. That was all.⁹¹

⁸⁸ Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*, 207.

⁸⁹ Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*, 209.

⁹⁰ Unpaginated notes from Marie Granet archives; cited in Weitz, *Sisters in the Resistance*, 59.

⁹¹ Sonia Vagliano-Eloy, quoted in Weitz, *Sisters in the Resistance*, 166.

Accounts by French women involved in the Resistance like Vagliano-Eloy remind us not only that the trauma of German invasion and occupation inspired and informed the actions taken by Resistance members, but also of the fact that women were highly involved in the Resistance and in a variety of ways.

Lefébure's wartime radio performances, then, can be understood as part of a "survivor mission" in that they helped her to connect with loved ones and to tell her story—albeit surreptitiously—of trials, tribulations, risk-taking, survival, and resistance through musical performance. In a wartime culture in which speaking openly about one's politics was extremely dangerous—and in Lefébure's case, not just for herself but also for her loved ones—radio performances offered a sonic, embodied, and meaningful way to bring joy and connection to loved ones who longed to be near her, while also allowing for the pianistic articulation of resistance and hope in ways that at least some listeners would understand. Yvonne Lefébure thus played a role in the Resistance as well, although, like many French women, in ways that have not yet been fully recognized.

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