

The Piano Recital

By Liesl R. Shurtliff

(Based on a true story)

“Pray unto the Father in the name of Christ, that he will consecrate thy performance unto thee” (2 Nephi 32:9).

Nathan slid around in his hard wooden chair, trying to get comfortable. He yanked at his tie and scratched his neck. His clothes were so itchy. It was boiling in this room! This was no time for a piano recital.

“Welcome,” Mrs. Kendall said to the audience. Nathan’s piano teacher was nice. He didn’t mind playing for her, but for all these people? Nathan sat stiff in his seat. He cleared his mind and tried to imagine the room empty.

“We’re so pleased to have such a large audience . . .” Mrs. Kendall’s voice drained out of Nathan’s head. When did he have to play? He looked down at the program. He had to go second! Now he *really* didn’t want to play his piece anymore.

“Hey,” Mom leaned down and whispered in Nathan’s ear. “Are you nervous?”

“Not really,” Nathan said. Somehow he thought saying he was afraid would make it worse.

“Good. You’ve practiced really hard. You’ll do great.”

Nathan slumped down in his seat. What good would all his practice do if he froze up now?

“And remember,” Mom said, leaning down again, “it always helps to say a little prayer and ask Heavenly Father for help.”

Mrs. Kendall announced the first performer, and the audience clapped as Cassie sat down at the piano. How

could she look so calm? Her fingers glided through her song.

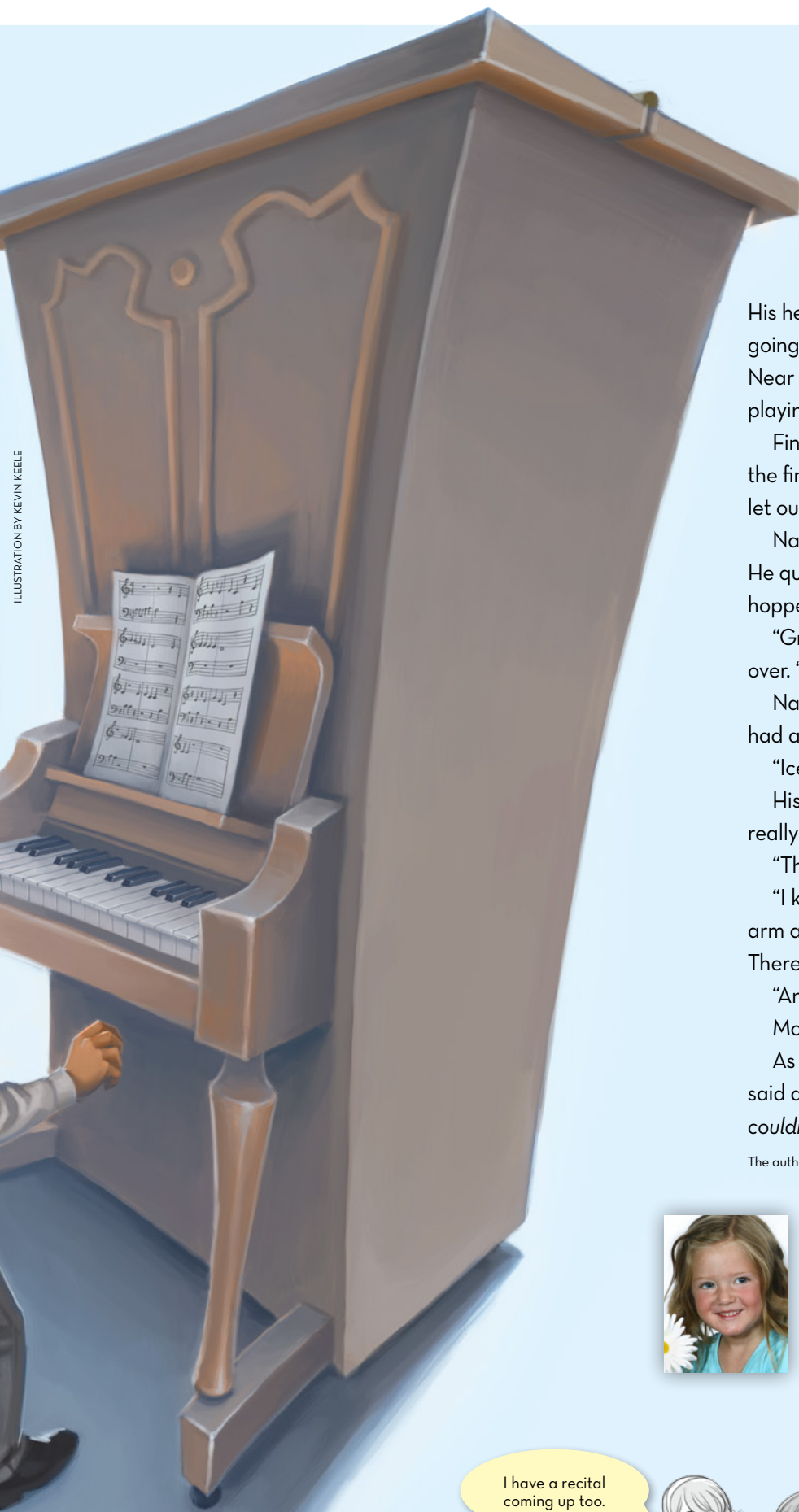
Nathan’s heart was pounding, and his hands felt cold and stiff. How could he play the piano if his fingers were numb?

Cassie lifted her hands off the piano keys. The audience clapped, and Cassie bowed.

“And now we’ll hear from Nathan Gibbs, playing . . .” Nathan’s heart skipped a few beats. He rubbed his hands together, trying to warm them up. He walked like a zombie to the piano. It looked so much bigger than before. Was it bigger? What was it his mom had told him to do? Oh, right. Nathan sat down on the bench and closed his eyes for a moment. *Heavenly Father, I’ve practiced really hard. Please help me perform the way I practiced. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.*

He took a deep breath, positioned his fingers for the first notes, and pressed down. Nathan couldn’t even think what came next, but his fingers remembered. His hands glided through scales and chords as if they had a mind of their own. *Oops!* One wrong note in that scale.





His heart did a little jump, but his fingers kept going, just as he had practiced so many times. Near the end, he felt almost as calm as if he were playing in an empty room.

Finally he reached the last chord and held out the final notes. He slid his hands off the piano and let out a long breath as people began clapping.

Nathan beamed as he slid off the piano bench. He quickly lowered his head for a bow and hopped down the stairs.

“Great job,” Dad said after the recital was over. “I knew you’d be awesome.”

Nathan felt his cheeks go a little red, but he had a warm feeling inside.

“Ice cream for everyone!” Dad said.

His sister gave Nathan a high five. “You were really good.”

“Thanks.”

“I knew you’d be fine,” Mom said. She put her arm around Nathan. “And you played beautifully. There’s nothing a little practice can’t do.”

“And a little prayer,” Nathan said.

Mom squeezed him tight.

As they walked out of the recital room, Nathan said another prayer. *Thank you, Heavenly Father. I couldn’t have done it without Thee.* ◆

The author lives in Illinois, USA.



On the first day of school, I was really nervous. My father and I said a prayer together. I went to school with a warm feeling in my heart. I knew that was the Holy Ghost helping me. I had courage throughout the year. If I had not prayed, I would have felt really scared. I know Jesus lives and we are never alone because He is always there for us.

I have a recital coming up too.

Make sure you say a prayer first!

