

‘Don’t Quit — Keep Playing’

Something to Think About

A mother who wanted to encourage her little boy’s interest in the piano took him to a concert by the great Paderewski. They arrived early at the majestic concert hall because there was no reserved seating. Waiting for the master’s hand was a magnificent Steinway piano centered on the long stage. The mother and her son took seats close to the stage. Before long, friends joined them and the mother was distracted talking to the person next to her. The boy slipped away.

At eight o’clock, the lights in the auditorium dimmed, spotlights struck the stage, and only then did the mother notice her son. He sat on the bench of the Steinway, innocently and with contentment picking out “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star.”

Before the stunned and embarrassed parent could retrieve her son, Paderewski appeared on stage and strode over to the piano. He leaned down to the boy and reached an arm around each side of him. He whispered to the boy: “Don’t quit — keep playing.”

With his left hand the master pianist began filling in the bass. Soon his right hand improvised obligato. Before an amused, shocked, and delighted audience the old master and the young novice filled the concert hall with unforgettable music. The crowd was mesmerized.