ARTUR RODZINSKI OPENS 24TH STADIUM SEASON

By John Briggs

It was as much as your life was worth to stand in the sidewalk outside the field gates at Lewisohn Stadium last evening. The opening night of the 1941 Stadium season drew a crowd that choked the entrances and jammed the street outside. When the Philharmonic-Symphony began the opening notes of "The Star-Spangled Banner," 24,000 lucky ticket holders were in their seats, and Stadium officials said the number turned away exceeded anything in the history of these concerts.

The excitement of the opening carried over to the music, an all-Tchaikovsky program which was presented under the direction of Artur Rodzinski, with Artur Rubinstein as piano soloist. It's difficult to name a highlight in a program studded with memorable moments; but second to name was Mr. Rubinstein's overpowering performance of the B-flat minor concerto. Especially good listening was his treatment of the second movement, polished, sensitive, yet with none of the sentimentalizing some artists feel is indispensable.

Mr. Rodzinski's reading of the E minor symphony was a heroic one, full of true Slavic passion, aside from the andante cantabile, which seemed to have trouble getting into high gear. The conductor was at his best in the tremendous pages of the finale. The overture-fantasia, "Romeo and Juliet," was last night's curtain-raiser.

Matched against the recollection of previous Stadium seasons, the remodeled loudspeaker system seemed a tremendous improvement. There wasn't the sensation of hearing half through the speaker and half with the naked ear, which used to be like listening through a musical stereoscope. A couple of passing planes, though, proved anew that a pianissimo phrase in the Stadium is as vulnerable as the Old Bailey to air attack. Maybe next year's equipment will include a brace of pom-poms.

Sam A. Lewisohn, honorary chairman of the concerts, was the intermission speaker.

Tonight's Pro...

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