

Capacity Crowd Spellbound At Rachmaninoff Recital

In a season replete with musical thrills, Springfield had an unforgettable one last night as Sergei Rachmaninoff held a capacity crowd spellbound at the Municipal Auditorium in the final program of the Community concert series, given locally under the auspices of the Junior League of Springfield. For a time it appeared that the audience might emulate that New York group which staged a "sitdown strike" at the conclusion of his last recital there. It was not a long program, but it was a great one, and after three encores, the tall Russian whose playing belies his weary looks, was reluctantly permitted to leave.

While he is probably more famed as a composer, Rachmaninoff played but one of his own selections, the "Etude Tableau in A minor," though it was quite obvious that his listeners wanted more, even the "Prelude in C sharp minor" which he says he is sorry he ever wrote. In a sense it was an old-fashioned program, for which the exception of his own etude, nothing later than Liszt was programmed. But that label is in no sense a derogatory one, for there was an authenticity about everything he did which justified his choice.

For this reviewer the Beethoven "Appassionata" sonata really sounded as though the adjective belonged to the composition and not to the frenetic struggles of some tyro to make it sound that way. Probably the most distinguishing characteristic of his playing is his ability to make the piano sing, though to this must be added the ability to make it sing without seeming to do so.

For one whose body moves so slightly, he has an astonishing range of dynamics at his command. Power there was when needed, but it was not achieved by the piano-pounding, seat-thumping method which other virtuosi seem to find so necessary.

While his ability to make the piano sing was best expressed in his four Chopin etudes and the Liszt etudes, there was a notable transparency in

the opening selection, the Bach "Organ Prelude and Fugue in A minor," as arranged by Liszt. It was always possible to know what was going on, so deftly did he usher in new themes and let already established ones take a temporary back seat.

One takes for granted details such as pedalling which added so much to the lyric quality of his playing, his ability to color a tone, and his impeccable sense of phrasing, but ever present is that austere personality which seems to know so surely what the composer intended.

His "Impromptu in A flat minor" and the Liszt transcription of the "Trout" were delightful in their Schubertian charm. The Liszt "Liebestraum" as his first encore was magnificently played, with the accent on sentiment and not sentimentality. Two of his own arrangements followed the insistent approval of the audience, the Schubert song, "Wandering" from the "Miller and the Brook" and "Hopak" by Moussorgsky. It takes a really great performance of this sort to make other concerts seem tame and it serves as a reminder that superlatives should be reserved for an occasion like a Rachmaninoff recital.

J. D. D.

WILBRAHAM

LAYMEN TO LEAD CHURCH SERVICE

Wilbraham, March 7—Leaders for the Sunday morning service in United church at 10.45 when layman's Sunday is to be observed are Frank Auchter, A. K. Phillippi and Carlton R. Reid, with Wilbraham academy's assistant headmaster, Guy A. Tuttle, scheduled as the speaker on the subject "As a layman, use the church."

Church school sessions will be as usual at 9.30 and 12, the younger groups at the earlier hour in charge of Mrs Howard Orr and the older