

PROUD OF SOVIET BAN, SAYS PIANIST

Rachmaninoff Replies to Russian Criticism After His Recital Here.

Wrestling with a pair of rubbers, a woolen scarf and an overcoat, Sergei Rachmaninoff, the great Russian pianist and composer, flung out a brief "Proud of it!" when questioned yesterday on what he thought of having his compositions banned by the Soviet government, and thereupon beat a hasty retreat from his dressing room after a brilliant recital at Constitution Hall. "Why shouldn't I be?" he added.

"Have you anything else to say about the ban?"

"No!" He called back, having run partway down the hall. "No!" And he was gone—leaving many admirers knocking vainly on an outside door to get a view and perhaps an autograph from the most distinguished of modern Russian composers.

In the fleeting "proud of it" which Rachmaninoff volunteered to an interviewer yesterday, he seemed to give way to an impulse to say something which he had denied all questioners since he first learned that the Soviet Union had taken him to task for being over-reactionary and not musically attuned to the class struggle going on in his country.

It was rumored after yesterday's

concert that Rachmaninoff had been distinctly surprised when he heard of the action of the Soviet government, and that the first he had heard of it was when he read it in the newspapers. That he evidently was pleased, however, by what he seemed to think a distinction was apparent yesterday. And far from shrinking from playing the compositions which had aroused so much wrath in his native land, he chose to include work of his own amongst the encores—the famous "Prelude in C Sharp Minor"

This great Russian artist, justly famous for the magnificence of his technique as a pianist as well as his work as a composer, seemed in fact very much at his ease yesterday and not at all subdued by the verbal scourge imposed on him.

He played the Bach-Taussif "Organ Choral" with dignity and much warmth of tone, bowed at the tumult of applause that greeted this and with scarcely a pause, turned to the slow and rather nostalgic Beethoven "Sonata, Opus 31, No. 2." Again barely waiting for the thundering approval to subside he began the four selections of Chopin which he played with consummate skill.

Although the greatest excitement, musically, of the afternoon came when he played his own two compositions, it seemed as if the Liszt "Voices of the Wood" and the Balakireff "Islamei," from the point of view of rendition, deserved easily runner-up honors. And, of course, the encores which his vast audience insisted upon were also played with impressive ability.

As in the memorable Paderewski recital—so as to insure the artist being able to catch a reasonably early dinner—a man at this point walked out upon the stage and closed the piano—and told the audience in unspoken words, "That's all there is—There isn't any more!" and vanished.

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