Listening to Records—

Rubinstein in Concerti

By PAUL AFFELDER

ARTUR RUBINSTEIN made musical history last winter when he appeared as soloist in two piano concerto cycles, one in Chicago under Fritz Reiner's baton, the other in New York with Alfred Wallenstein conducting. The Chicago series was relatively short, but the one in New York covered no less than 17 concerti in five concerts, thereby encompassing a sizable chunk of the major piano concerto literature.

During these two marathons, Rubinstein also took time to record four of the works, two with Reiner and two with Wallenstein, and they have now been released in a two-record album by RCA Victor. All four—Rachmaninoff's Concerto No. 2 in C Minor and Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini, Liszt's Concerto No. 1 in E flat Major and the Grieg Concerto in A Minor—have been committed to discs before by Rubinstein, but all were in need of more modern reproduction; besides, continued public demand has probably worn out the old masters from which they were pressed.

Rubinstein is one of the most popular pianists before the public today, and with good reason. He infuses everything he plays with great technical strength, beautiful lyricism and intense fire. Al these characteristics are present in his traversal of these four compositions, plus firm, clear-headed support by Reiner and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra (in the two Rachmaninoffs) and Wallenstein and the RCA Victor Symphony, the latter a composite aggregation of leading New York symphony musicians. Added to this is excellent up-to-date reproduction. The total result is an altogether superior album that could well form the cornerstone of any concerto library.