RUBINSTEIN, SURE AND BRILLIANT AS EVER

To older members of the audience which packed the Philharmonic Hall, Liverpool last night, Rubinstein's recital must inevitably have drawn comparisons with the old pre-war days when international gladiators of the piano vied with each other in performing, interpreting or otherwise maltreating the music of Chopin to their own glory and seldom that of the composer.

Artur Rubinstein, born in Poland but long domiciled in America, is now an almost unbelievable 77 years of age, and there are few left (if indeed any) to challenge his authority.

Naturally, he conserves his energy more nowadays, and only three times last night did he rise from the piano-stool to throw the full strength of a mighty powerful left hand, but his technique is as sure and brilliant as ever.

And what, after all, do the occasional missed notes or blurred passages matter when the essential poetry, chivalry, ardour and romanticism have long since transferred themselves from

Artur Rubinstein

Chopin's printed music into the personal feeling and experience of the performer?

The outlines of the Scherzo No. 1 in B minor were neither hard nor clear enough by orthodox conceptions; two Mazurkas and the Nocturne in D flat (Op. 27, No. 2) were fussy and even eccentric, but the great Sonata No. 2 in B flat minor was wonderfully realised, its famous Funeral March differing from Rachmaninov's remorseless treatment by taking on a new and mystical quality one has not heard before.

Most profound interpretation

Though no student must copy its tempi, the Ballade in G minor was perhaps the most profound interpretation of the evening, followed closely by a penetrating and highly individual reading of the Barcarolle.

The C sharp minor waltz was an object-lesson in disproving the popular misconception that this familiar little war-horse must always indulge in a race against the clock, and the wrist-breaking octaves for the left hand in the Polonaise in A flat major were handled with a power that Mr Cassius Clay and Mr Henry Cooper might well *envy* at their forthcoming encounter.

Sprightly, alert and as obliging as ever, Rubinstein wound up a truly great recital with three encores — Chopin's A flat study, Debussy's "Ondine" and a scintillating little piece by Villa-Lobos. Not unnaturally after such a marathon, he asked only to be spared the signing of autographs!

N.B.