

Kreskin amazed

CHESSE SEEMS to have acquired a new spiritual dimension of late. During the world championship match between Viktor Korchnoi and Anatoly Karpov last year, the row over the presence of the Soviet parapsychologist Zukhar in Karpov's camp made headlines around the world.

In a recent exhibition in New York, Korchnoi joined American Grandmaster Robert Byrne in a match against an opponent who said he did not even want to be told what moves they made!

The opponent was the "The Amazing Kreskin", well known to New Zealanders

through his television show and his tour here a few years ago.

Kreskin, one of America's leading mentalists, asked to be blindfolded, and claimed he could read the Grandmasters' minds to discover what moves they were making — and reply accordingly.

This all sounded a bit dubious to me, so I went along to watch. Apart from the fact that Kreskin can barely play chess, even if he could read their minds, Korchnoi probably thinks in Rus-

sian anyway!

It transpired that Kreskin's scheme was to pit Korchnoi and Byrne against each other without their knowledge.

Playing Korchnoi with Black, Kreskin successfully guessed Korchnoi's first move and made the identical move himself as White against Byrne. Without any hints, Kreskin picked out Byrne's reply and transferred it to Korchnoi's board! If he could continue like this Korchnoi and Byrne would in effect be playing each other,

and Kreskin would draw with both or beat one of the world's top players!

Unfortunately his thoughts got muddled on move two, perhaps due to a mysterious Zukhar or someone in the audience, and Kreskin guessed a move incorrectly. He was left battling Korchnoi and Byrne simultaneously, trying to anticipate their moves and work out his own. Korchnoi mated him in 14 moves, and Byrne in 23.

Afterwards, however, Korchnoi for one was impressed with Kreskin's ability to "catch" his thoughts, but he felt the mentalist had underestimated the thinking processes of a top chess master. Korchnoi said, "I was analysing a position that might occur well in the future, when Kreskin suggested a move I was thinking of. But of course it was illegal in the present position! He could not distinguish between the move played on the board and our thoughts."

Afterwards an extremely haggard Kreskin exclaimed the exhibition was the hardest he had ever done, and he would "never do it again" (!). Perhaps this will explain why . . .

New York 1979 BYRNE DEFENCE GONE WRONG

KORCHNOI	KRESKIN
1. d4	Nf6
2. c4	b6

Byrne in fact played 2 . . . c6. Kreskin's slight miscalculation in thinking it was the next pawn threw both games off track. Although several times he suggested moves similar to ones Korchnoi had made, on his Byrne board they were frequently illegal.

3. f3	d5
4. cxd5	Qxd5

How did he even know Korchnoi had taken the pawn!

5. e4	Qd8
-------	-----

"I sense a great danger," the blindfolded mentalist joked to the crowd, and then he amazed them by withdrawing his queen.

6. Nc3	e5
7. dxex5	c5
8. exf6	Bd6
9. Bb5 ch	Nc6

Ugh, but at least he got out of check.

10. Bxc6 ch	Bd7
11. Qxd6	

It was here that perhaps the most impressive Kreskin exploit of the match occurred. Korchnoi wrote a note to the referee saying that if Kreskin castled illegally over an attacked square he would allow it, because Kreskin might not know the rules. Kreskin suddenly exclaimed that Korchnoi was writing and showing a note — and then castled!

11. . . .	O-O!!!?
12. Bxa8	Qxa8
13. Qg3	Qe8
14. Qxg7	checkmate.

MURRAY CHANDLER