

Romantic warrior

AMONG the greatest players never to hold the world championship, three Soviet Grandmasters in particular stand out. One, of course, is the celebrated defector Viktor Korchnoi whose fierce style of play still gives him chances, even at 48, in another attempt on the title later this year. Another is the all-rounder Paul Keres, considered at one stage before his death of a heart attack in 1975, to have been clearly stronger than his contemporaries. The third Grandmaster, although maintaining a lower profile in the history books, actually came closer to the title than either of the others.

The adjectives traditionally associated with David Bronshtein are words like "creative" and "artistic". For this gregarious and vibrant man has injected a spirit of romance into his games that few others have equalled.

Bronshtein's specialty is in "esoteric" opening ideas and new concepts in the middlegame. Other masters may have similar wishes for their games, but Bronshtein is unique in making it work at the highest possible levels. In the early days he, along with Boleslavsky, was one of the finest pioneers to recognise the dynamic counter-attacking potential of the King's Indian defence, and won many outstanding games with it.

Bronshtein, now 52, won the 1948 Interzonal (undefeated) and the 1950 Candidates tournaments to win the right to challenge world champion Mikhail Botvinnik. Bronshtein took the lead in the 24-game championship match, but right at the end Botvinnik managed to equalise the scores, tie the match and thus keep Bronshtein from the title.

It was an unlucky miss, though as Bronshtein himself confessed after a creative bottle of wine, there may have been a little too much romance off the chessboard at the time! Whatever the reasons, he never came so close again, although he continued to strive for beauty above all else in his games.

Sadly Bronshtein's appearances in the West have been inexplicably curtailed by the Soviet Federation over the past few years, and the only games we now see come from Soviet events, as in the game following. It was played, fittingly, in the Paul Keres Memorial tournament in Tallin, where Bronshtein finished second equal behind ex-world champion Mikhail Tal.

PIRC/MODERN DEFENCE

D. BRONSHTEIN	E. GUFELD
1. Nf3	g6
2. d4	Nf6
3. Bg5	Bg7
4. Nbd2	d6
5. e4	h6
6. Bh4	g5
7. Bg3	Nh5

Although the opening has transposed to a Pirc/Modern defence, the chasing of White's king's bishop is also reminiscent of the King's Indian. Bronshtein's next move bolsters the d-pawn,

which Gufeld threatens to win with 8...g4 9.Nh4 Bxd4.

8. c3	e6
9. Nb3	Nd7
10. Nfd2	Nxg3
11. hxg3	a5!

A useful move to induce a queenside weakness and discourage White from castling that side.

12. a4	0-0
13. Bd3	f5
14. Qe2	Nf6
15. f4	gxf4
16. gx4	Bd7
17. e5	Nd5
18. g3	Qe8

Clearly it was risky for Black to castle kingside after his weakening pawn advances earlier on, but it is not easy to exploit this. White cannot very well castle queenside, castling kingside takes a rook away from the attack, and meanwhile a4 is under attack.

The Bronshtein solution involves advancing the king in the centre, and sacrificing an exchange as well as the a-pawn!

19. Kf2!	dxe5
20. dxe5	Bxa4
21. Rxa4!	Qxa4
22. Bb5	Qa2
23. Bd7	Ra6
24. Rb1	Ne7?

White threatened 25.Nc1! trapping the Black queen, but better was 24...Rd8! when 25.Nc1 fails to 25...Nx4! 26.gxf4 Qd5. Possibly Gufeld did not reckon on the tremendous activity White's minor pieces gain after the queen exchange Bronshtein now invites.

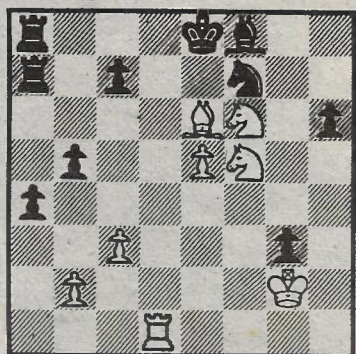
25. Qc4!	a4
26. Nc5	Qxc4
27. Nxc4	Ra7
28. Rd1	Rfa8
29. Bxe6 ch	Kf8
30. g4	b5
31. Ne3	fxf4
32. f5	g3 ch
33. Kg2!	Nc6

On the previous move 32...Bxe5 was met by 33.Nd7 ch, and now Black still cannot capture the pawn. With both players under some time pressure, Bronshtein nudges the Black king further towards the centre.

34. Nd7 ch	Ke8
35. f6	Bf8
36. Nf5	Nd8
37. f7 chl	...

Suddenly a delightful mating net materialises from the cluster of minor pieces.

37. ...	Nxf7
38. Nf6 checkmate!	



This remarkable finish will surely rank as one of the most prettiest end positions of 1981.

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