

**BOOK
REVIEWS**

Sleeping Beauties

Eugene Manchester

Chess Brilliancy by Iakov Damsky, 2002 Everyman Chess, Softcover, Figurine Algebraic Notation, 224pp., \$21.95

There's no getting around it. Fish or master, player or spectator, we all love to see a spectacular game. Some players, such as Shirov and Tal, seem to thrive on fireworks and their games are immensely popular.

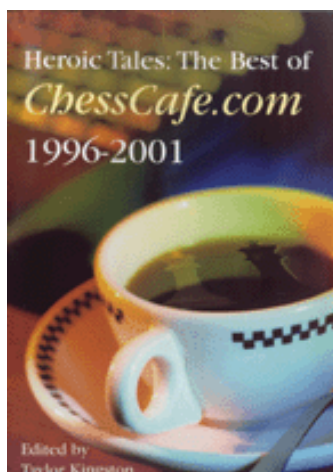
A few years ago a book by the experienced Russian writer Iakov Damsky was released by Everyman Chess. It received little notice or fanfare. It is possible you have never even heard of it. I can't explain this, for this is a superb, well-annotated collection of "crowd-pleasers."

The book is divided into four basic chapters. In Chapter 1, Brilliancy and its Myth, the author discusses the nature of brilliancy in chess, what formula should be applied to determine a brilliancy and how these kind of games are perceived by the public and the masters. Chapter 2, Yesterday's Classics, presents a well-organized historical overview. Among the dozen and a half games in this chapter, the reader will recognize such games as Anderssen-Kiesertizky 1851 (the "Immortal Game"), Réti-Alekhine 1925 (Alekhine's fantastic rook offering 26...Re3!!) and Averbakh-Kotov 1953 (Kotov's spectacular queen sacrifice, 30...Qxh3+).

The book moves into the modern era in Chapter 3, Rating by Aesthetics, with the help of the respected *Chess Informant*. It was in Chess Informant #5 that the Best Game from the previous volume was presented. These Best Games form the core of the third chapter, with most prize-winners and some close seconds, most deeply annotated. Finally, Chapter 4, From the Pages of History, considers over 80 games that have not been recognized as 'Brilliances' but perhaps should have been. There are some real diamonds-in-the-rough here, most with either light or moderate notes.

From Chapter 3, pages 71-73:

No. 52 Alekhine Defence B03



Bronstein-Ljubojevic
 Interzonal Tournament
 Petropolis 1973

1. e4 Nf6 2. e5 Nd5 3. d4 d6 4. c4 Nb6 5. f4 dxe5 6. fxe5 c5 7. d5 e6 8. Nc3 exd5 9. cxd5 c4 10. Nf3

With his last move Black expressed his readiness to prevent the white king from castling kingside, and a more timid soul would have eliminated this threat by 10 d6. But White demonstrates that he is aiming for a swift and open battle.

10...Bg4

If 10...Bc5, then 11 Bxc4 is possible, whereas now this would be answered by 11...Nxc4 12 Qa4+ Nd7 13 Qxc4 Bxf3 14 gxf3 Nxe5, when White is worse off than when he started.

11. Qd4 Bxf3 12. gxf3 Bb4 13. Bxc4 O-O 14. Rg1 g6

Slightly earlier, in a game with Honfi (Cacak 1971) Ljubojevic encountered 14...Qc7, and later after 15. e6 f6 16. Bh6 Qxc4 17. Rxc7+ Kh8 18. Rg8+ Kxg8 19. Qg1+ he announce mate. He himself improved the variation for Black, making his initial moves practically instantly. But, as an eye-witness at the tournament stated, “the following morning, Bronstein, after getting up early and with rapid steps setting off for a walk in the hills, left his hotel room holding a card with the text of the Ljubojevic-Honfi game, and showed it with his usual crafty smile. It thus remained unclear when Bronstein had extracted this card from his index – before or after his game with Ljubojevic.”

Here is further evidence in favor of the opinion of Mikhail Tal and Lev Polugaevsky, with which we are already familiar: what difference does it make, where and when the sense of brilliance visited the soul of a player?!

But if we return to the game, there is no course open to White other than the sacrificial one.

15. Bg5 Qc7

Creating two threats (to the c4 bishop and the g1 rook), but a slight inaccuracy: the queen would have done this better from c8, where later it would not have come under attack by the white d-pawn.

16. Bb3

The two threats could have been parried by the rather awkward

move 16. Rg4, 16...Nxc4 17. Qxc4 Qxe5+ would have transformed the position from double-edged into a sharp one with chances for both sides. Or more precisely, a position where both sides are attacking.

16...Bc5 17. Qf4



17...Bxg1

“An extra rook is, of course, a serious acquisition, but possibly Black should have preferred 17...N8d7 18. d6 Qc6 19. O-O-O Bxg1 20. Rxc1 Qc5 21. Re1 Rae8.” (Vasyukov)

18. d6 Qc8

“If 18...Qc5 I was planning 19. Ne4!, and after 19...Qb4+ 20. Kf1 Black loses, while if he gives back a piece by 19...Qe3+ 20. Qxe3 Bxe3 21. Bxe3 Nc6 22. f4, then he remains material ahead but with a rather difficult position.” (Bronstein)

And if 18...Qc6 there can follow 19. e6 fxe6 20. Bxe6+ and 21. Bh6+

19. Ke2?

“I wanted to retain the c1 square for my rook and freedom for my knight, but even so 19 O-O-O! should have been played, and if 19...Bc5 20. e6 fxe6 21. Qe5 Re8 22. d7! And wins.” (Bronstein)

But after 22...N8xd7 23. Bxe6+ Rxe6 24. Qxe6+ Kg7 Black appears to defend successfully, remaining a piece up. 22. Be7 (instead of 22. d7) looks a better try.

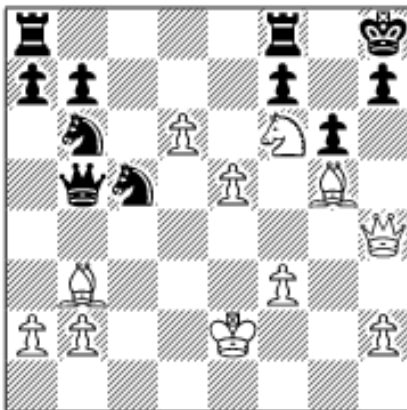
19...Bc5

“An inaccuracy in reply. 19...Qc5! was correct, and here if 20. Ne4 Black has 20...Qb5+, after which the white king has no good square. If instead 20. e6, then 20...Qf2+ 21. Kd3/d1 N8d7! And there is no way of strengthening the attack. But now it develops by force.” (Vasyukov)

20. Ne4 N8d7 21. Rc1 Qc6 22. Rxc5!

White no longer has any rooks, but the black king is diverted from the defence of the king.

22...Nxc5 23. Nf6+ Kh8 24. Qh4 Qb5+



“A desperate sortie by the main forces, timed to coincide with White's time trouble: Bronstein had less than one minute per move left on his clock...

There follows a final spurt by the white king, which, like Napoleon at the battle of Arcola, with a banner in his hands went personally into the attack.”

This was the picturesque description given in a book about Bronstein by his old friend and second, Boris Vainstein.

25. Ke3!! h5 26. Nxb5 Qxb3+

“Black is forced to return all his gains, as the pursuit of the white king by 26...Qd3+

27. Kf2 Ne4+ 28. fxe4 Qd4+ 29. Kg2 Qxb2+ 30. Kh3 Qc3+ 31. Ng3+ ends in mate to the black king.” (Bronstein)

27. axb3 Nd5+ 28. Kd4 Ne6+ 29. Kxd5 Nxb5 30. Nf6+ Kg7 31. Qxg5 Rfd8 32. e6 fxe6+ 33. Kxe6

The fantastic attack on the king was completed, and it was time to stop the clocks, but White had literally only seconds remaining...

33...Rf8 34. d7 a5 35. Ng4 Ra6+ 36. Ke5 Rf5+ 37. Qxf5 gxf5 38. d8=Q fxf4 39. Qd7+ Kh6 40. Qxb7 Rg6 41. f4 Black resigns

“The entire 11th round was eclipsed by the quite fantastic game Bronstein-Ljubojevic, in which the veteran played with veritably youthful energy. In our time few are capable of playing such a game. There can be no doubt that it will be awarded the brilliancy prize.” (Gufeld)

This is a typical example of the fireworks you will find in this book. The great majority of games are introduced to give the reader some perspective on the game's importance and presented with the complete game score, but there are also game fragments. One puzzler is the subtitle of the book: “250 Historic Games from the Masters.” Each game or fragment is numbered, but try as I might, I could only count 219 games. Where are the other 31 games?!

Be that as it may, overall *Chess Brilliancy* is a worthwhile addition to any library.

Great games, beautiful combinations and concepts, annotated by some of the world's greatest players. Sit back and enjoy...

[Order](#) *Chess Brilliancy*
by Iakov Damsky

Chess Brilliancy by Iakov Damsky is also available at considerable savings in the [Damaged & Shopworn](#) section of the online catalog.



[\[ChessCafe Home Page\]](#) [\[Book Review\]](#) [\[Columnists\]](#)
[\[Endgame Study\]](#) [\[Skittles Room\]](#) [\[Archives\]](#)
[\[Links\]](#) [\[Online Bookstore\]](#) [\[About ChessCafe.com\]](#) [\[Contact Us\]](#)

Copyright 2005 CyberCafes, LLC. All Rights Reserved.

"**The Chess Cafe**®" is a registered trademark of Russell Enterprises, Inc.