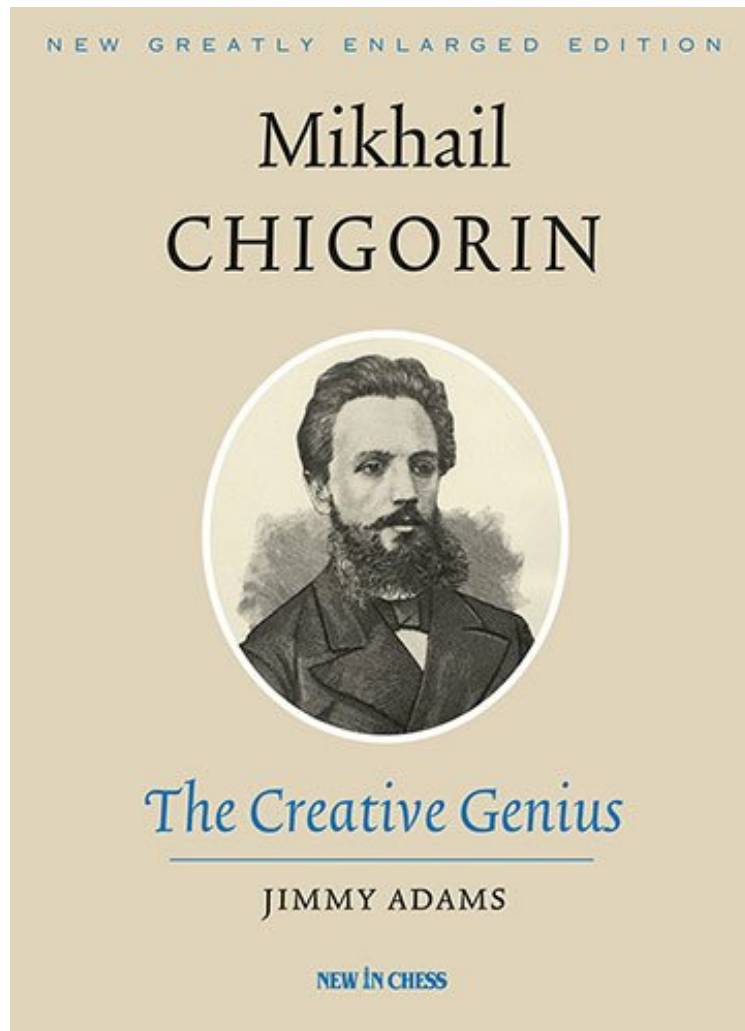


Mikhail Chigorin: The Creative Genius

Jimmy Adams

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Jimmy Adams : Mikhail Chigorin: The Creative Genius before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Mikhail Chigorin: The Creative Genius:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Excellent By B. W. Thew A wonderful book, lots of games with excellent notes. Also quite a good read with a very interesting biography of one of the all time greats. 17 of 17 people found the following review helpful. An outstanding portrait of a 19th century chess artist and his era! By Skinnyhorse This is a preliminary review as I have only gone through the first 220 pages. So far it has been an elegant journey through the later half of 19th century chess history. This is a wonderful book about one of best chessplayers of the 19th century - Mikhail Chigorin twice played for the world championship, losing to Wilhelm Steinitz 10-6 and the second time by 10-8. Chigorin had one terrible weakness as a practical player at the World Championship level: he

had no coherent system to deal with d-pawn openings; in the first match, Chigorin lost 7 of 8 games when Steinitz opened 1. Nf3 and 2. d4 (or 1. d4 and 2. Nf3) and in the second match he lost 0-3 when Steinitz played the queen pawn opening. Jimmy Adams states "In the match came to light the weak side of Chigorin - the sportsman. He ought to have set himself the task, long before, of finding a correct system of play as Black against 1. d4. In 1889, as indeed also later, he placed too many hopes on improvisation at the board." The next great Russian champion, Alekhine, with the benefit of almost 40 years of chess development, had a full understanding of how to defend against 1. d4. In 16 games, defending against Capablanca's Queen's Gambit Declined, Alekhine scored 2 wins, 3 losses and 11 draws, allowing himself to win the match when he had the White pieces. The layout, formatting and fonts used, make this book enjoyable to read and add greatly to the appreciation of Chigorin's biography. The layout of the games is especially comfortable, as the game moves are in bold font, columnar-fashion and the comments and variations are dropped down one line, separate from the game moves. This avoids the "crowding" that occurs in some chess books, where it is difficult to tell the difference between variations and the game move "tree trunk". Also discussed in interesting detail are other chessplayers of that era, such as Winawer, Schiffers, Alapin (who was a backstabbing enemy of Chigorin), Tarrasch, Lasker, Pillsbury, Charousek, Teichmann and others. Alapin supplied Steinitz with opening analysis prior to the match against Chigorin, which played a role in Chigorin's defeat. The author gives a good portrait of the oppressive Russian society of that era within which Chigorin strove to express his chess art. There are approximately 220 annotated chess games, with the right touch of variations and verbal explanations and many stories and biographical portraits. EXCELLENT! 6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. One of the greatest chess game collections EVER! By mojojojo50 This is an outstanding history and games collection. Besides 220 deeply annotated games with details how Chigorin developed as a player, he was also the primary promoter of chess in Russia for 30 years (founded magazines, wrote chess-columns, set-up chess clubs, gave exhibitions and lessons, coordinated tournaments, etc). From 1880 to 1900, he was a top five player in the world. In his second title match Chigorin came close to taking Steinitz world title until his collapse in a critical late game with a safe piece up in a winning position--this is again echoed in the next-to-last round at Hastings 1895 when he lost a game and his lead over Pillsbury, due to being seriously hungover (and probably drunk). At his peak he drew long matches with Tarrasch and Gunsberg, won (and organized) the first Russian championships and finished 1st or near first in several big tournaments. His style of play was aggressive and highly creative. Clearly Nimzovich and Alekhine learned much from his play, as did Rubinstein (Chigorin's rook endings were widely admired). His main openings are Two Knights, Evans, Kings Gambit and pioneering work in the Ruy, and much of his opening theory remains relevant. Included are tournament crosstables, excellent games index and an opening index (which is two-pages off, when you look for the reference). Nice touches include small snapshot photos of other players and Jimmy does the odd editor note to correct or elucidate small details. Adams has compiled, edited and joined together two Russian books from 1962 and 1970 with a lengthy tribute article by Romanovsky. The separate biographies actually complement each other nicely, as they have distinctly different tones and outlooks and are fascinating to read. The deep Games notes in the first half are by Nikitin (later Kasparov's teenage trainer) and the very strong GM Vasyukov; while Panov writes the second section in highly opinionated style full vitriol and "insider" type details on the man (eg on his deathbed Chigorin - who was clearly dying from alcohol related illnesses, insisted that his chessboard be burned as his dying wish). Adams has edited in additional notes throughout by other annotators (including Lasker, Chigorin, Bogolyubov, etc). This massive book is among the best game collections I have ever. I briefly knew Jimmy at the London CENTYMCA chess club in the early 1970. We (Jimmy, Ray, and me- Larry) were young chess addicts). Before the Fischer boom, everyone was amateur and chess book publishing does not really get going until the late 1970s (with Batsford). In the early 70s, Jimmy started assembling chess books from different sources. His first work was K Is For Karpov (a hand-typed, stapled, off-set printed booklet). Later, he resurrected several out-of-print Tournament books (eg Bled 1931, Paris 1900), translated some Russian game collections, (Flohr) into hand-typed, carefully edited, editions published by small printing-houses. From 1990 to 2010, he was editor for Chess magazine. It is great to see New in Chess has produced this great book (and luckily for me, occasionally drops its price to something I could afford). This book is clearly a masterpiece

Mikhail Chigorin (1850-1908), the first great Russian chess master, belongs to that select group of exceptionally strong players who did not quite succeed in winning the world championship. The defining moment for Chigorin came when he blundered away a completely winning position in the decisive final game of his second title match against Steinitz. Chigorin remains universally admired for his creative and courageous style of play. He was not guided by Dr. Tarrasch's general principles, prevalent at the time, but by the specific characteristics of each individual position. He would always play to win, not only by his famed dashing attacks but also by precise calculation of variations, purposeful manoeuvring and exploitation of positional weaknesses, artful defence and refined endgame play. Today Chigorin is best remembered for his contributions to opening theory. He was the finest gambit player of his generation, but it is his pioneering work in defences to the Spanish Game and Queen's Gambit as well as various King's Indian formations that has been the most enduring. The present book is a hugely expanded second edition of that published in

1987. Over two hundred extra games have been included, annotated by Chigorin and his contemporaries in addition to more modern grandmasters. The biographical part has been extended with hundreds of pages of material depicting Chigorin's turbulent life.

"A stupendous new book, one of those rare events that represent milestones in chess publishing history." (Raymond Keene, Grandmaster The Times)"The game annotations are a real treat, especially when a number of sources are quoted within a single game. One of the best parts of the book comes at the very end, in the form of 'Reminiscences of Chigorin's Daughter.' The document paints a vivid picture of her father and his eccentricities, and it is a chess gold dust (..) It is hard to see how this book could be improved. To call it a new edition of the earlier book on Chigorin doesn't begin to tell the story of just how much extra material has been included." (Sean Marsh CHESS Magazine (UK))"A superbly researched biography on Russia's greatest 19th century player." (Fred Wilson, author of '100 Questions on How to Play Chess')"A book that reads extremely well. A first-rate chess biography for which we must thank the publisher: finally a big book about Chigorin!" (Florian Jacobs Max Euwe Centre Amsterdam)"A compelling read because Chigorin's story is so amazing with links to poverty, glory and fame." (Gary Lane, International Master Chess Moves Magazine)About the AuthorFIDE Master Jimmy Adams is a prolific chess author, who has written, translated and compiled a wide range of books on openings, historical tournaments and legendary players. From 1991 to 2010 he was the editor of the English magazine Chess.