



C O L U M N I S T S

Checkpoint

Carsten Hansen

**Reviewed this month:**

The Modern Benoni Revealed
by Richard Palliser

Starting Out: Modern Benoni
by Endre Vegh

The Dutch Defence Leningrad System A86-A89
(CD-ROM) by Boris Schipkov

Starting Out: The Dutch Defence
by Neil McDonald

Die Tschigorin-Verteidigung
by Valeri Bronznik

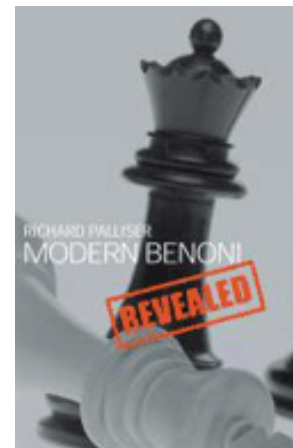
Ideas Behind Modern Chess Openings: Black
by Gary Lane

Daring Defenses

Opening books are being published at an ever increasing rate and there are more books than ever to review. So as not to fall too far behind, I have decided to review an extra title this month. I chose the name Daring Defenses, because all of the openings feature immediate Black counterattacks, albeit in three very different ways. Black doesn't just sit back and first hope to equalize in openings such as the Modern Benoni (two books), the Dutch Defense (two books), and the Chigorin Variation of the Queen's Gambit (two books), although the book by Lane also includes other defenses.

The Modern Benoni Revealed by Richard Palliser, 2005 B.T. Batsford, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Paperback, 208 pp., \$21.95

The Modern Benoni puzzled me more than any other opening during my formative years as a chessplayer. Black's possibilities of counterplay on the queenside, pawn breaks in the center, and feisty attacks on the kingside were an exciting prospect, but there was a part of me that hesitated. The many dynamic elements have to be fully understood, by both players, to not end up with a terrible position. My first stumbling block was the issue of developing the knight to a6. I could easily understand that it was traveling to c7 to support Black's queenside counterplay with ...b7-b5, but it has yet to be explained why White just doesn't exchange his light-squared bishop for the a6-knight and leave Black with isolated doubled a-pawns after ...bxa6. When I came across the third match game from the Spassky-Fischer match in 1972, where Fischer played ...Nf6-h5 and allowed White to double Black's h-pawns, I was thrown into complete disarray. This opening was making less and less sense to me as Black seemed ready to make all sorts of concessions to get his pieces in play. This was not the kind of chess that was advocated to young and highly impressionable minds and the books that were available didn't explain these things well enough for me. Fortunately for today's players there are books geared towards those who are new to the opening or who are somewhat familiar with it and want to know more.



Richard Palliser is a regular contributor to *Chess Monthly* and plays for one of the stronger teams in the British Team Tournament, Barbican 4NCL (Four Nations Chess League). His first book, *Play 1 d4!*, was well-received, but the premise of the present book is very different as he has to fit his coverage into the clearly defined theme of the ...*Revealed* concept.

Let's see how the material is divided:

- Preface (2 pages)
- 1 First Moves (11 pages)
- 2 Heroes and Zeros (28 pages)
- 3 Strategy (50 pages)
- 4 What's Hot? (64 pages)
- 5 Theoretical Overview (18 pages)
- 6 Tricks and Traps (18 pages)
- 7 Test Positions (4 pages)
- 8 Solutions (6 pages)
- 9 Before the Fight (2 pages)
- Index of Variations (1 page)

The distribution of the material makes good sense, with a strong emphasis on explanations of strategies for both sides, but the one-column format of the book leaves too much white space on the pages. The theory side of the opening has been toned down considerably, giving the target audience just the right amount of information. Too much theory, especially in an opening such as the Modern Benoni, is more likely to be confusing rather than revelatory. The chapter headings don't disclose much about their content, so let's take a brief look at each, along

with my impression of how Palliser has performed.

First Moves explains the basic opening moves. Here Palliser examines the opening from Van Wely-Topalov, Wijk aan Zee 1998, which saw one of the more wild and complicated lines in the Modern Benoni: **1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 e6 4.Nc3 exd5 5.cxd5 d6 6.Nf3 g6 7.e4 Bg7 8.h3!? 0-0 9.Bd3 b5!? 10.Nxb5 Re8 11.Nd2!? Nxe4! 12.Bxe4 Ba6 13.a4 Qa5! 14.Nxd6 Nd7 15.Qc2! f5**



Although I like Palliser's supporting comments, I don't agree with his choice of variation as it doesn't really show typical Modern Benoni play. It is rarely as crazy as the above example indicates and it would be a shame to scare off potential readers with a poor example, since they don't know how much good stuff they are missing. I would have used a game like Van der Sterren-Psakhis, Tallinn 1987, which can be found in the following chapter and better illustrates typical Modern Benoni opening play.

Heros & Zeroes offers examples of the best and worst performances with the opening. Palliser focuses mostly on well-played games with relatively few errors from both sides, rather than wasting time on bad ones, which don't truly help you understand the opening. The annotations are not variation-laden, but there is a lot to be gleaned from Palliser's comments explanation-wise.

The *Strategy* chapter does a great job explaining what strategies can be employed by either side. Topics include: Black's Queenside Advance, The ...c4 Push, The Key e5-break, The Crafty b2-b4 advance, The Dark Squares and the Bg5 systems, The Modern Benoni Endgame and much more. I learned quite a bit about this opening from this chapter alone. The examples are well-chosen and the supporting prose is first-rate.

The 64 page *What's Hot* chapter is the longest in the book and showcases the ideas behind the opening, along with a good chunk of theory. This caters to my belief that it is far more important to understand an opening than it is to memorize its theory. Here you get just the right amount of theory to get by, with a particular emphasis on the sharpest lines. After reading this chapter you feel as if you can handle Black's position almost without breaking a sweat!

Theoretical Overview covers a few variations that weren't mentioned previously, but mainly focuses on move order alternatives, etc. Such material is included here because the format of the book doesn't allow Palliser to place it elsewhere.

The *Tricks & Traps* avoids showcasing silly opening traps and instead focuses on conceptual errors from both sides, such as playing on the wrong flank, the dangers of playing too ambitiously, understanding the importance of dark-square control and kingside safety, and other matters of that nature. You'll become a smarter and more knowledgeable player after reading this chapter.

Test Positions and *Solutions* is pretty straightforward. The test positions have supporting text to guide you in the proper direction as to what is important in each particular position.

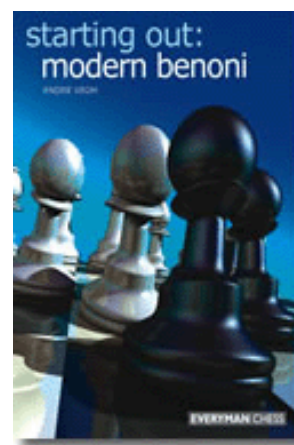
Before the Fight gives tips on some key points and suggests books for further study if you ready for some theory.

This is a great book. It imparts a whole new understanding of the opening and the possibilities it offers for both players. You can't ask for much more from an introductory guide to this opening. The only thing that seems to be missing is an index of complete games.

My assessment of this book:

Starting Out: Modern Benoni by Endre Vegh, 2004 Everyman Chess, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Paperback, 176 pp., \$18.95

This book is intended for the same audience as the previous title; however, they are very different and the question isn't which book you should buy, but rather if you should buy both!




Before continuing, let's look at the contents:

- Foreword (1 page)
- 1 Introduction to the Modern Benoni (59 pages)
- 2 Rare Variations (25 pages)
- 3 The Fianchetto Variation (14 pages)
- 4 Systems with f2-f3 (14 pages)
- 5 Systems with f2-f4 (19 pages)
- 6 The Modern Variation: e2-e4, Nf3 and h2-h3 (14 pages)
- 7 Classical Sidelines with Nf3 and e2-e4 (10 pages)
- 8 Classical Main Line: Nf3-d2 and e2-e4 (12 pages)
- Index of Variations (3 pages)
- Index of Complete Games (2 pages)

Compared to the previous book, there is a long introduction and then a focus on the different variations. The introduction actually uses several of the same games, yet it is somewhat more advanced than in Palliser's book. There's much more theoretical coverage and the prose is directed towards a higher level audience. So if Palliser's book targets players from 1200-1700 in rating, then Vegh's audience is more like 1500-2000. Therefore, look at your needs rather than your wants when deciding between the two. If you are in the upper echelon of the target group for Palliser's book you should seriously consider buying both because you will want the first for its thorough introduction to the opening, and then this book to build on the theoretical information.

Vegh has done an outstanding job on both the introduction and the theoretical coverage, with a good balance between variations and prose as well as allocating the material between which lines are popular at the moment and which are not. The author has also added many original pieces of analysis, improvements and other suggestions that allow the book to be enjoyed by a wide spectrum of players.

However, the statistics that show how well a particular move scores aren't all that relevant for the readers of the *Starting Out* books and should be eliminated from future books in the series. Even the *New In Chess Yearbooks* have stopped providing statistics in their surveys.

My assessment of this book: 

Order *Starting Out: Modern Benoni*

by Endre Vegh

The Dutch Defence Leningrad System A86-A89 by Boris Schipkov, 2004
ChessBase GmbH, Figurine Algebraic Notation, CD-ROM, \$29.95

The material on the present CD is as up-to-date as can reasonably be expected; nonetheless, I still have some issues with it. The database texts are quite superficial in that they do little more than provide links to the games; some of which are annotated and some are not. The unannotated games are particularly bothersome, since the majority of the players who will consider buying this CD will not have the knowledge to accurately evaluate the positions that are being thrown at them. So linking-in games without annotations should be prohibited because it is indicative of laziness and disrespectful to the reader. A printed book that gave a lot games without assessments would be called database dump, and that is what it is, whatever the format.



Furthermore, many of the linked games date back a few years, so the opening annotations may have become outdated since they were originally written and apparently nothing has been done to rectify this problem.

Of course, it's not all bad, and the author has put some effort into his work. Let's look at the following nice game, accurately played by White, and featuring the author facing the Leningrad Dutch. The annotations are in English and German, just as on the CD-ROM.

Schipkov, Boris - Gerbakher

Yalta Open 1988[A88]

[Schipkov, B]

**1.d4 f5 2.g3 Nf6 3.Bg2 g6 4.Nf3 Bg7 5.0-0 0-0 6.c4 d6 7.b3 Qe8 8.Nc3 c6
9.Ba3!?**

[9.Bb2]

9...Na6

[9...h6; 9...a5]

10.Qc2

[10.Qd3]

10...Rb8 11.e4 fxe4

[11...b5 12.e5 b4 13.exf6 Bxf6 14.Bb2 bxc3 15.Bxc3 Qf7 16.Qd2+= Baburin-Grigorov, Starozagorski Bani 1989.]

12.Nxe4 Nxe4

[More precise is Genauer ist. 12...Bf5!?

13.Qxe4 Bf5 14.Qe3 Nc7?!

[14...Bf6!? is interesting ist interessant. 15.Rad1 Nc7 16.Rfe1 Qd7 17.Rd2 Rbe8 18.Bb2 a6 with counterplay Basin, L - Kramnik, V, Belgorod 1989; 14...Qd7!?

15.Rae1

[15.Rfe1]

15...Bf6 16.h3!+= h5

[Or Oder 16...Qd7 17.g4 Be6 18.Ng5 Bf7 19.f4 b5 20.Nxf7 Rxf7 with some edge to White. mit einigem Plus für Weiß.]

17.Kh2 Qf7

[After 17...Qd7 18.Nh4!? (18.Ng5 b5+=) 18...Bxh4 19.gxh4 Rbe8 20.d5 e5 21.dxe6 Rxe6 22.Qg3 Rfe8 23.Rxe6 Rxe6 24.Rd1 Ne8+= White has the advantage of the two bishops. Weiß hat den Vorteil des Läuferpaars.]

18.Rd1

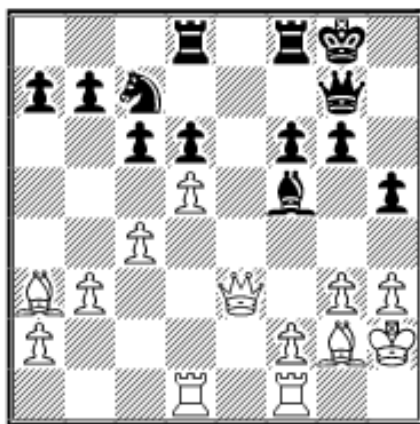
[More precise is Genauer ist 18.Ng5!± with a good game for White. mit gutem Spiel für Weiß.]

18...Rbe8?!

[18...b5!?, with counterplay.]

19.Ng5! Qg7 20.Ne4± Rd8

[20...Bxe4 21.Qxe4 d5 22.Qf4 Rc8 23.Rfe1 Qf7 24.Qd2 dxc4 25.bxc4 Qxc4 26.Bxe7 Bxe7 27.Rxe7± Since Black's kingside is weak White is better.]

21.Nxf6+ exf6 22.d5!

White has a clear advantage. The black knight is much worse than the white dark-squared bishop. Weiß hat klaren Vorteil. Der schwarze Springer ist deutlich schwächer als der schwarzfeldrige Läufer des Anziehenden.

**22...c5 23.Qc3 Rde8 24.Rfe1 b6
25.Bb2 a5 26.Rxe8 Rxe8 27.Bf3!**

A little finesse. Eine kleine Finesse.
[27.Qxf6 is weaker ist schwächer:
27...Qxf6 28.Bxf6 Re2 with

compensation for the pawn. mit Kompensation für den Bauern.]

**27...Kf7 28.Qd2 Be4 29.Qf4 Bxf3 30.Qxf3 Rf8 31.Qf4 Ke7 32.Rd3 Kd7
33.a3! Ne8 34.Rf3 Kc7 35.Re3 Qf7 36.b4!+-**

The decisive breakthrough. Der entscheidende Durchbruch.

**36...axb4 37.axb4 Ng7 38.Ra3 Qg8 39.bxc5 bxc5 40.Ra7+ Kb8 41.Rd7
Nf5 42.Rxd6!**

It was a nice tournament. I was sole winner with 8 points out of 9 and outstripped 80 players from Russia, Ukraine and other republics. Es war ein schönes Turnier. Ich wurde alleiniger Sieger mit 8 Punkten aus 9, wobei ich 80 Spieler aus Russland, der Ukraine und anderen Republiken hinter mir ließ.

42...Nxd6 43.Qxd6+ Kc8 44.Qxc5+ Kb8 45.Qb6+ Kc8 46.Ba3 1-0

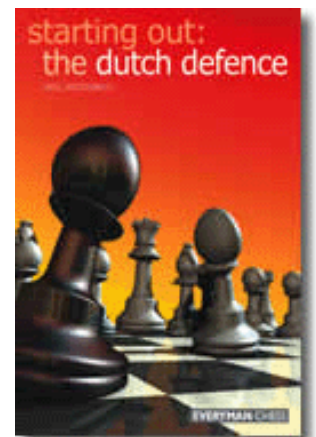
Schipkov has written 18 database texts, annotated 142 games to a varying degree, and added a training database to practice your skills. It is a reasonable piece of work, but it wouldn't have demanded too much effort from the author to improve the product even further.

My assessment of this CD: 

**Order *The Dutch Defence Leningrad System A86-A89*
(CD-ROM) by Boris Schipkov**

Starting Out: The Dutch Defence by Neil McDonald, 2004 Everyman Chess, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Paperback, 173 pp., \$18.95

This book has an entirely different approach compared to the others in the *Starting Out* series. It explains what you need to know with regards to understanding the opening, and then adds a touch theory as icing on the cake. The material is also divided differently than other books in the series:



- Bibliography (1 page)
- Introduction (6 pages)
- 1 Dutch Gambit Lines (12 pages)
- 2 White Plays 2 Bg5 (11 pages)
- 3 White Plays 2 Nc3 (9 pages)
- 4 Stonewall Dutch (28 pages)
- 5 Classical Dutch: Introduction and Main Line (28 pages)
- 6 Classical Dutch: Various Alternative Ideas (20 pages)
- 7 Leningrad Dutch: Introduction and Main Line (29 pages)
- 8 Leningrad Dutch: Other Ideas (26 pages)
- Index of Variations (3 pages)
- Index of Complete Games (2 pages)

Even though the introduction is stunningly short, I can easily testify that this book is the best introductory guide to the Dutch I have ever read. The author is simultaneously witty, entertaining, and an excellent teacher. You will learn something about this opening on every page, whether you want to play the Dutch as Black, or learn how to face it as White. McDonald sticks to the facts, focuses on what's important, and doesn't waste time discussing statistics. Let's take a look at a sample game:

Wells - Summerscale

Edinburgh 2003

1.d4 e6 2.c4 f5 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Nf3 Be7 5.Bf4

White's thought processes behind this move can be summed up as follows: 'I want my bishop out of the pawn chain before playing e2-e3. I'll put it on f4 in order to deter a counterattack by Black with ...d7-d6 and ...e6-e5.

Then, having stabilised the position in the centre to my satisfaction, I intend to start a direct attack on the black king with h2-h3 and g2-g4. It is assumed, that Black will castle kingside.'

The drawback to this reasoning is, firstly, that White is as much provoking a counterattack with ...e6-e5 as deterring it, as it would come with gain of time by hitting the bishop on f4. And secondly, just exactly where is the white king going to liver while the attack with g2-g4 is taking place, as White is going to have a fractured pawn structure on both sides of the board?

5...0-0 6.h3 Ne4!

Here Black's beloved ...Ne4 move is the perfect answer to White's attempt to play on the wing.

7.e3

Less ambitious is 7 Qc2 so as to avoid the doubled pawns and keep the queenside as a secure habitation for the white king. The Black could set-up a Stonewall with 7...d5, as the attempt by White to snatch a pawn with 8 cxd5?! exd5 9 Nxe4 fxe4 10 Bxc7? Would be suicidal after 10...Bb4+, for example 11 Nd2 Qe7 12 e3 Bxd2+ 13 Kxd2 Rxf2+ 14 Be2 Nc6 15 Bg3 Nxd4 16 exd4 Qg5+ and 17...Qxg3 etc.

Another option for Black is 7...Nc6!? With counterplay after 8 d5 Nb4.

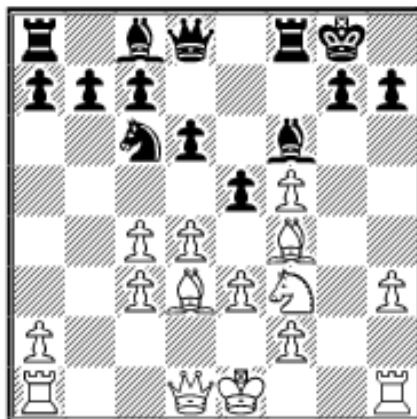
Again it would be foolhardy for White to snatch material because 8 Nxe4 fxe4 9 Qxe4 d5! 10 Qe3 Nb4 11 Rc1 Nxa2 etc. is tremendous for Black.

7...Nxc3 8.bxc3 d6 9.Bd3 Nc6 10.g4 Bf6 11.gxf5

Both sides have gone purposefully about their business: White has carried out his kingside advance, while Black has built up towards ...e6-e5. It appears that White has got in first and consequently defeated his opponent's plan, as after 11...exf5 all the tension in the centre vanishes. In that case, White could concentrate on his attack down the g-file with very little to disturb him. Any counterattack by Black on the queenside would be at an embryonic stage compared to White's onslaught, which means White could afford to castle queenside in order to get his queen's rook involved in the attack.

It is moments like these at the end of the opening phase that set the pattern for the middlegame. Will it be a question of dour defence by Black, or will he find a way to keep the dynamism in his set-up?

11...e5!!



Black rises to the challenge. The need to retain active chances is far more important than the immediate recapture of the pawn on f5.

12.Bg3 Qe8!

Now there is a double threat of 13...e4 and 13...exd4 14 cxd4 Nxd4, breaking up White's centre.

13.Bc2 exd4 14.cxd4 Ne7!

Black intends to recapture on f5 with his knight: a livelier scenario than the stale, prospectless 11...exf5.

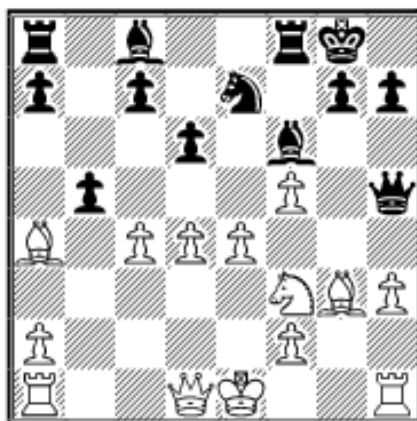
15.Ba4!?

An ingenious attempt to hold together the centre.

15...Qh5 16.e4

Visually at least, White's pawn centre is marvellous. However, such a chain of pawns requires the close support of its pieces, and here the white army is scattered or inert. Furthermore, the white king is sitting uncomfortably on e1. It won't take much of a nudge for the white centre to come tumbling down...

16...b5!!



17.Bc2


The knight on f3 is indefensible after 17 Bxb5 Nxf5! 18 exf5? Bb7 etc.

17...Nxf5! 18.exf5 Bb7 19.d5 Bxa1

White has avoided disaster on f3 only for it to strike on a1. Now White will remain the exchange down with a ruined centre, as if 20 Qxa1 Qxf3 etc.

20.0-0 bxc4 21.Nd4 Qxd1 22.Rxd1 Bxd4 23.Rxd4 Rae8 0-1

This is just one of the many splendid games featuring excellent supporting annotations by McDonald. Anybody who wants to learn about the Dutch should unhesitatingly buy this book. However, stronger players looking for deeper theoretical coverage may want to consider a more specialized treatise. McDonald gives just enough theory to begin playing the opening, especially in the lesser and more trick-oriented variations.

My assessment of this book: 

[Order](#) *Starting Out: The Dutch Defence*

by Neil McDonald

Die Tschigorin-Verteidigung by Valeri Bronznik, 2001 Schachverlag Kania, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Hardback, 303 pp., \$29.95

I will briefly discuss this book to bring it to the attention of readers outside of Europe, as it may have escaped their attention, and it covers one of the openings suggested by Lane in his repertoire for Black.

The book is now almost four years old, but it would be a serious mistake to dismiss it just because of its age. The theory of the Chigorin Variation of the Queen's Gambit doesn't develop at the same breakneck speed as other popular lines, such as the English Attack against the Najdorf.



The material is divided into sixteen chapters:

- 1 1 d4 d5 2 c4 Nc6 3 Nc3 dxc4 4 e3 (9 pages)
- 2 1 d4 d5 2 c4 Nc6 3 Nc3 dxc4 4 d5 (31 pages)
- 3 1 d4 d5 2 c4 Nc6 3 Nc3 dxc4 4 Nf3 (52 pages)
- 4 1 d4 d5 2 c4 Nc6 3 Nc3 Nf6 (15 pages)
- 5 1 d4 d5 2 c4 Nc6 3 Nf3 Bg4 4 cxd5 Bxf3 5 gxf3 (22 pages)
- 6 1 d4 d5 2 c4 Nc6 3 Nf3 Bg4 4 cxd5 Bxf3 5 dxc6 Bxc6 6 Nc3 (14 pages)
- 7 1 d4 d5 2 c4 Nc6 3 Nf3 Bg4 4 Nc3 (8 pages)
- 8 1 d4 d5 2 c4 Nc6 3 Nf3 Bg4 4 e3 (5 pages)
- 9 1 d4 d5 2 c4 Nc6 3 Nf3 Bg4 4 Qa4 (7 pages)
- 10 1 d4 d5 2 c4 Nc6 3 Nf3 e5 (13 pages)
- 11 1 d4 d5 2 c4 Nc6 3 cxd5 Qxd5 4 Nf3 e5 (10 pages)
- 12 1 d4 d5 2 c4 Nc6 3 cxd5 Qxd5 4 e3 e5 5 Nc3 Bb4 6 Bd2 Bxc3 7 bxc3 (48 pages)
- 13 1 d4 d5 2 c4 Nc6 3 cxd5 Qxd5 4 e3 e5 5 Nc3 Bb4 6 Bd2 Bxc3 7 Bxc3 (27 pages)
- 14 1 d4 d5 2 c4 Nc6 3 e3 e5 4 dxe5 (5 pages)
- 15 1 d4 d5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bf4 Bg4 (11 pages)
- 16 1 d4 d5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 g3 (13 pages)

The coverage is based on stem games with the theoretical material included in the game annotations. The contents are first-class and the author has put a tremendous amount of work into the book. Material is drawn from nearly all possible sources and the author has added an abundance of original analysis, improvements, and suggestions of his own. The variations appear to be covered thoroughly and with as much detail as one could want.

Of course, the text is in German, but compared to other foreign language books that I have reviewed recently, this one has relatively little prose and so can be handled efficiently with the help of a dictionary.

My assessment of this book: 

Ideas Behind Modern Chess Openings: Black by Gary Lane, 2005 B.T. Batsford, Figurine Algebraic Notation, paperback, 192 pp., \$21.95

The title of this book, as with its predecessor *Ideas Behind Modern Chess Openings*, gives the impression that the author is going to explain the ideas behind popular openings for Black, but that is not the case. In fact, it is a repertoire book for Black, with some slightly obscure variations as the main choices. Both the Chigorin Queen's Gambit (1 d4 d5 2 c4 Nc6) and the Scandinavian Defense with 3...Qd6 (1 e4 d5 2 exd5 Qxd5 3 Nc3 Qd6) have plenty to offer for those who are not afraid to venture off the theoretical mainland, but neither are regular guests in grandmaster tournaments.



Gary Lane is a popular author whose books are easy to read and he doesn't talk down to his readers. He knows his audience and knows that they like just enough theory to brutally club down an opponent, using a slightly unusual line that contains just the right mix of soundness and danger.

Let's see how the material is divided:

- Introduction (3 pages)
- The Chigorin 3 Nf3 Bg4 4 Nc3 and 4 Qa4 (14 pages)
- The Chigorin 3 Nf3 Bg4 4 cxd4 Bxf3 (13 pages)
- The Chigorin 3 Nc3 dxc4 4 Nf3 Nf6 (17 pages)
- The Chigorin 3 Nc3 dxc4 4 d5 and 4 e3 (8 pages)
- The Chigorin 3 cxd5 (18 pages)
- The Chigorin 1 d4 d5 2 Nf3 Nc6 (13 pages)
- The Chigorin 3 e3 and 3 e4 (6 pages)
- The English (12 pages)
- Flank Openings (16 pages)
- Unorthodox Openings (21 pages)
- The Scandinavian - Main Line (23 pages)
- The Scandinavian - Various (10 pages)
- The Scandinavian - The Kurajica Variation 4...g6 (9 pages)
- Index of Main Lines (4 pages)
- Index of Games (1 page)

Lane has picked some interesting and somewhat unusual lines, but I'm not entirely happy with his coverage. The variations are given through a selection of main games, which are usually the short and hard-hitting type that are Lane's *modus operandi*, and this is fine as long as the theory is covered in detail in the notes. However, he occasionally omits lines and fails to indicate White's best options.

For instance, after the moves 1 d4 d5 2 c4 Nc6 3 Nf3 Bg4 4 Qa4 Bxf3 5 exf3 e6, Lane only gives 6 cxd5 for White. This move is so rare that it isn't even mentioned in Bronznik's book and the game Lane offers shows why: Black doesn't have any problems at all. The more popular 6 Nc3! should, of course, have been mentioned.

Also, after the fifth move alternative 5 gxf3, Lane presents a nice victory for Black in 27 moves, without indicating where White went wrong, not a single move is awarded a “?” or “?!”.

In the very next chapter, danger is already looming for Black because Lane hasn't given any good alternative to the following game:

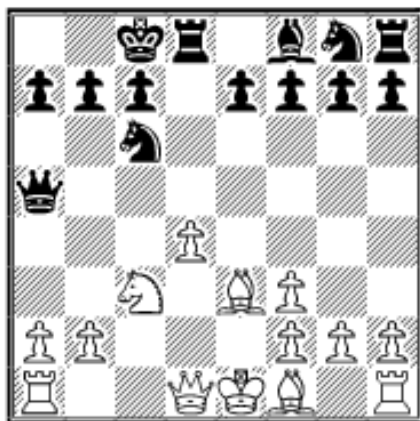
Svendsen-Reefschlaeger

Gausdal 1995

1 d4 d5 2 c4 Nc6 3 Nf3 Bg4 4 cxd5 Bxf3 5 exf3?! Qxd5 6 Be3 0-0-0

Here Lane comments: “A logical choice by Reefschlaeger to attack the d4-pawn. The standard move in the old reference books used to be 6...e5.” Then he offers two examples, both of which lead to an advantage for White. However, Bronznik's book warns readers not to get too excited about our main game and instead offers 6...e6 7 Nc3 Bb4 and now 8 Qa4 Qa5 9 Qxa5 Bxa5 10 Bb5 Nge7, when Black's advantage compensates for White's pair of bishops.

7 Nc3 Qa5



8 Bb5?!

Lane: “Though it seems natural to threaten to double the c-pawns by exchanging pieces, the idea is flawed. 8 Qb3 e6 9 0-0-0 Nf6 10 Bc4 Ne7, intending ...Ned5 would leave equal chances.” Bronznik instead offers 8 a3!, and now both 8...e6 and 8...Nf6 are met with 9 Bb5 as Black no longer has the same kind of tricks as in the game continuation. Also 8...Nxd4, as played in the game, is refuted by 9 Bxd4 e5 10 b4!, e.g. 10...Bxb4 11 axb4 Qxb4 12 Ra4! Qb2

13 Nd5 exd4 14 Bc4 and Black's initiative is rapidly running out of fuel. Here's the rest of the main game...


8...Nxd4 9 Bxd4 e5 10 Qc2 exd4 11 Qf5+ Kb8 12 0-0-0 Nh6 13 Qf4 Ba3 14 bxa3 Qxa3+ 15 Kb1 dxc3 0-1

Nor am I impressed by the repertoire against the English opening, which only seems to cater to the fact that White will play 1 c4 Nc6 2 Nc3 or 2 g3. Nothing is mentioned against 2 Nf3, so what should Black do? If he opts for 2...e5, then White may try something like 3 d4!?, where 3...d5 leads to a line not covered in the book and 3...e4 4 Ng5 f5 5 Nc3 is a line that has absolutely nothing to do with the repertoire suggested by Lane.

If Black has his way with 2 g3 e5 3 Nc3 g6 4 Bg2 Bg7 5 e4 d6 6 Nge2 Nge7 then Lane's main move is 7 0-0, and upon 7 d3 Lane quotes the game Taylor-Gallagher, British Team Championship (4NCL) 2003, and claims equal chances after 7...0-0 8

0-0 Be6 9 Nd5 Qd7 10 Be3 f5 11 Qd2 Rf7 12 f3 Raf8 13 Rae1 Kh8 14 b3 Ng8. Yet this line is endorsed by Kosten in *The Dynamic English* and he writes: "Black has run out of useful moves and must now find a better square than e7 for his knight" and follows it up with 15 exf5! Bxf5 16 d4 Bh3 17 Ndc3 Bxg2 18 Kxg2 exd4 19 Nxd4 Nge7 "White has a small but enduring advantage, Smejkal-Yusupov, Bundesliga 1991/2." Hmmm!

There are also a couple of hiccups in the section on the Scandinavian. And in the section on flank openings, a little inventiveness on White's part can create trouble for Black if he wants to stay within the repertoire that Lane proposes. For example, it is not even considered that after 1 Nf3 d5 2 g3 c5 White may play 3 c4 (or even 2 c4), both are curveballs to throw at Black, who may likely strikeout without having a chance. Yet, Lane deserves some credit regarding the choice of variations and his original input in some lines is considerable. Of course, there are limitations to what can be included in a book and a repertoire for Black is always more difficult to present than one for White; however, there are too many loose ends.

My assessment of this book: 

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