

# Karpov Fundraiser

A Tale of Three Legends: Karpov, Kasparov and Short campaign together at Simpsons



*Mirth at the Simpsons press conference: left to right, Nigel Short, Anatoly Karpov, CJ de Mooi and Garry Kasparov had important business to discuss but just can't take President Ilyumzhinov and his little yellow men seriously.*

**T**RULY, September 8 was a red-letter day for chess in London. It felt like a homecoming, with a number of former rivalries renewed under very different circumstances, but at a place which is almost a shrine to Caissa - where chess champions have congregated to worship the goddess of chess for more than 150 years.

There were two functions on the day's agenda. At 11am there was a press conference for Anatoly Karpov's FIDE presidential campaign. The great man was present in person, making his first appearance in London for more than a decade. And there seated, most unfamiliarly on the same side of a table, was his eternal-rival-turned-comrade-in-arms Garry Kasparov. It was as if Sherlock Holmes and Professor Moriarty had patched up their differences, joined forces and declared war on world crime (though, for sound legal reasons, we're not saying who compares to whom in that slightly risky analogy). If that wasn't quite wonderful enough, alongside them was their challenger of the 1990s, Nigel Short.

The conference was chaired by the English Chess Federation president CJ de Mooi. With his TV quiz show experience, CJ managed not to be overawed by the galaxy of chess talent around and summarised the situation succinctly: "All the six British federations have voted for Anatoly Karpov, and hopefully we can send him on his way to saving world chess. Over the past decade and a half the prestige and the reputation of FIDE

has taken a battering, and hopefully this whole campaign can go some way to regenerating that and returning the wonderful game of chess to the position it deserves in the world, in people's eyes and indeed people's hearts."

In the evening was the Darwin Strategic Staunton Memorial dinner and gala fundraising event, superlatively organised and stage-managed by CJ himself, with help from Ray Keene and the sponsors. The purpose of the event was to raise money for Karpov's FIDE presidential campaign and also the 2011 British Championship and children's charities. It was a huge success, with many famous faces, including Sir Tim Rice, Carol Vorderman, Richard Farleigh, CJ himself and his *Eggheads* TV show colleague Kevin Ashman, plus chess's own celebrities, the two Ks, Nigel Short, Michael Adams and a host of British GMs and former champions. It raised more than £4,000 for the Karpov campaign, around £7,000 for the British Championship and more than £1,000 for the charities.

Garry Kasparov and Nigel Short sportingly gave their time to play blitz mini-simuls, taking on two players at a time (who had bid for the honour in an auction), and then they took part in an intriguing four-hander game, with an hour on each clock, again alongside the successful winner of an auction for the seats beside the chess legends. Jon Crumiller, a keen chess set collector, accompanied Kasparov, while chess-boxing referee and 220+-rated Rajko Vujatovic sat beside Nigel Short.

Before looking at the game, it's fascinating to have **Jon Crumiller's** own account of his pre-game preparation, which is called...

## CRUMILLER'S DREAM

We've all awakened to a blaring alarm clock, with a strange chess dream still rattling around in our heads. Usually it goes something like this.

I'm supposed to meet with Garry Kasparov to talk about chess. So there I am, waiting for him in a hotel lobby somewhere. But while I'm waiting, who strolls up to say hello? Anatoly Karpov! He greets me by name, though we've never met, and we chat for a few minutes. Then Garry appears out of nowhere, and we sit down together - Kasparov, Karpov, and me. Just the three of us, discussing chess.

Eventually Anatoly wanders off. Garry starts quizzing me on my openings, and we rattle off the moves - in our heads, without a board.

"What do you play as White against double-KP?"

"The Scotch."

"OK, so e4 e5, ♠f3 ♘c6, d4 exd4, ♘xd4: what do you play after ...♗f6?"

"I play ♘xc6."

He continues to call out moves rapidly in response to my moves.

"So Black plays bxc6."

"I play e5."

"♗e7"

"♗e2" "♘d5" "c4" "♘a6"

I take a deep breath. "b3...then if he plays g6 I play ♗b2. But not f4 because



of g6-g5. If he plays g5 straight away after b3, I play h4."

Garry nods. "Fine. h4 is good. But what do you play after ♖b6 instead of ♗a6?"

Right about now is when the alarm clock usually goes off. But not this time. Because I was wide awake, and all of this really happened, just as I've described it here, on 7 September.

Kasparov and I were meeting to prepare for the next day's Staunton Memorial partnership game – the two of us versus Nigel Short and his partner, Rajko Vujatovic. Of course Nigel is extremely strong, but Rajko is also a force to be reckoned with – a FIDE 2220-rated player who has knocked down some big names in his heyday.

The rules of the game were daunting. Players alternated moves, without any consultation or communication whatsoever. Colours were to be decided immediately before the game, hence Garry and I had to prepare for both White and Black. As it turns out, we played Black, and went into my favourite Kan Sicilian – because a guiding principle of ours was that he would need to adapt to my repertoire, rather than vice versa. Fortunately he "vetoed" only one major line I play, as White against the Scandinavian: 1 e4 d5 2 exd5 ♖xd5 3 ♜f3. (We needed to prep for the Scandinavian because Rajko plays it against e4.) So on Wednesday morning, while most people were having a jolly good time doing whatever Londoners do on Wednesday mornings, I was studying the intricacies of the more normal lines of



"I know him so well": lyricist of the hit musical 'Chess' Sir Tim Rice chats to CJ de Mooi at the Staunton dinner.

the Scandinavian. Just in case.

I will leave comments about the game itself to Rajko. Instead, I will continue to dream on about my amazing adventure in London with the two Ks. Or maybe next time my chess dream will be about another K, and another game, played in 1851 at precisely the same spot!

"I'm playing against Adolf Anderssen... but he's sacrificing all of his pieces!... he doesn't have anything left to beat me with... oh no, is that mate??"

That's Jon Crumiller's side of the story. Let's take it up with **Rajko Vujatovic**: When I was given the once-in-a-lifetime chance to play against Garry Kasparov in a consultation game at London's historic Simpsons-in-the-Strand, I grabbed it with both hands. I was to partner Nigel Short

against Garry and the affable American Jon Crumiller, who flew from Princeton, New Jersey, especially for the occasion.

I was optimistic having last year defeated Viktor Korchnoi in 15 moves with the black pieces in a simultaneous display. Now...if only Kasparov could be added to the list of scalps, wouldn't that be nice? The Simpsons atmosphere was extraordinary; you genuinely felt you had been transported back in time to the nineteenth century. More should be said of the chess set we used, the oldest known Staunton set in the world! Crumiller's friend Alan Fersht kindly provided the pieces from his own personal collection. This was a Jaques club-size boxwood and ebony set from 1849, which is the year Jaques first came out with the Staunton design. Fersht's set came in a box that was hand-signed by Howard Staunton and hand-numbered, "#8". Collectors do not believe that #1 through #7 exist anymore, but club secretaries are advised to check their storage cupboards! Like Fersht, Crumiller is also a renowned collector, of 500 sets.

Besides chess sets Jon Crumiller also loves his wine, and made a lovely gesture of bringing two bottles of 170 year old Madeira, from 1827 and 1834. This was in recognition that Simpsons began life in 1828, and was generously shared amongst the participants and grandmasters later that evening. I have to say, I have never tasted anything like it in my life!

It was incredible to spend almost two hours seated opposite Kasparov, the greatest chess player in history. I could experience at first hand his aura of invincibility – including his steely glares, facial expressions and legendary body language. I would savour the experience by looking up and around the crowd, then to Garry and Jon, and then back to the



When Garry met Carol: celebrity guest and TV star Carol Vorderman renewed her acquaintance with the chess world – and Garry Kasparov – at the fund-raising event on 8 September at Simpsons. Carol was the presenter of the 1993 Kasparov-Short match TV coverage on Channel 4



crowd. Sometimes Garry's eyes were closed and heaven-bound whilst meditating on the position; sometimes his hand was sprawled over his face.

My opposite number Jon Crumiller had no ELO and no games in Chessbase. But after a bit of googling, I realised he was no woodpusher; he is a master at both correspondence and over-the-board play, a memory champion, and has defeated Yuri Averbakh in a simul. The day before the match, Garry and Jon had an hour-long strategy session. Nigel, however, had just flown in from Angola as part of his pro-Karpov globe-trotting, so we had a two-minute chat to touch base just prior to the game. My repertoire was totally different from Nigel's, so I had spent the previous fortnight studying his games in order to adopt his repertoire.

Three days before the event, I learnt that this was a 'no-consultation' consultation game! Players would make alternate moves but could not talk to each other. Kasparov showed his genius during the game itself. His turn was after Short's but before mine. He played moves which had an unnerving quality about them, which gave me difficult choices, but would also give easier choices when it was Crumiller's turn after mine. Short and myself stunned Kasparov with a pawn sacrifice and we even obtained a clear advantage. But a couple of inaccuracies on my part conceded much of the ground we had gained. After that, Kasparov's pressure eventually turned my brain to jelly and led to a complete collapse. After a long think, Kasparov's quiet 28...♖h8!! was the move of the game. This immediately followed his disorientating 26...♗xd4! Short afterwards said, "That's typical Garry, throwing moves like that at you. He messes with your mind". Kasparov is like The Terminator. As soon as you think you've killed him off, he suddenly springs back to life!

*Darwin Strategic Staunton Dinner 2010*  
**Short & Vujatovic - Kasparov & Crumiller**  
*Sicilian Defence*

Moves 1, 3, 5, etc were made by Vujatovic & Crumiller. For the GMs, it was about making life as easy/hard as possible for the weaker partners. 1 e4 c5 2 ♟f3 e6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♟xd4 a6 5 ♟d3 ♟c5 6 ♟b3 ♟e7 7 ♗g4 g6 8 ♗e2 d6 9 0-0 ♟d7 10 a4 b6 11 ♟a3 Kasparov gave his first facial expression of the game – one of contempt. 11...♟b7 12 ♟c4 ♗c7 13 a5! True to the spirit of the occasion, Vujatovic decides to throw caution to the wind and commit White to a pawn sacrifice. Kasparov was rattled, making all manner of facial contortions and not at all happy with his position. 13...b5 14 ♟b6! After the game, Short



Photo: John Saunders

The main chess feature of the evening was an exciting four-hander between Garry Kasparov and Jon Crumiller (left) and Nigel Short and Rajko Vujatovic (right). We have the game with the amateur players' thoughts on playing alongside legends.

said Kasparov hated this sort of position, when he's a pawn up but needing to defend. 16...♟c8 17 ♟e3 ♗c7 18 c4! b4 19 e5! This advance has to be played at some point to open up lines

♟c4!! After the game, both Kasparov and Short generously praised this rook retreat, which was difficult to see amongst the raft of continuations. 27...♗d6 28 ♟d1!



The White team soon received confirmation that 19 e5 was a strong move – Garry was vigorously shaking his head! 19...♟b8! Amidst the chaos, Crumiller kept his cool and played this quite quickly. His rationale was instructive – he simply didn't like any of the alternatives. 20 ♟d4 It was Short's move and 20 ♟f4! was best for the alternating-move format of the game, since it gives fewer options. 20...f6 21 exf6?! Kasparov and Short preferred 21 exd6! 21...♟xf6?! 21...♟xf6 22 ♟b3 leaves White with only a small advantage. 22 c5 0-0 23 cxd6 Kasparov was fearful of 23 ♟c4! when he admitted that he wouldn't know how to respond. Probably he would give up the exchange for two pawns. After 23...dxc5 24 ♟e5 ♗a7 25 ♟xb8 ♗xb8, White stands better due to Black's ragged pawn structure. 23...♟xd6 24 ♟fc1 ♟xh2+ 25 ♟h1 ♗f4 26 ♟xc8!! A bolt from the blue which Short must have seen two moves ago. This came as a complete shock to everyone, including Garry who was visibly flustered. Nigel was looking very pleased with himself. 26...♗xd4! Garry responds with an equally brilliant and unexpected move! Rajko, who was geared up to play an easy ♗xe6, had to mentally readjust. Suddenly, the dark squares look ropey. 27

28...♟h8!! The move of the game!! "Messing with their minds". Kasparov plays a quiet move to avoid checks in a wild position, but allowing a discovered attack on the queen. 29 g3?? Unnerved by Kasparov's last turn. White should have played 29 ♟c6 simply because it looked quite active and would make Crumiller think the next move, after which it would be Short's turn. 29...♗d5+?! 29...♟xg3! would have fully exploited the lapse with a winning position. Crumiller later said that he had seen this was stronger, but deliberately played the game continuation because of the partnership aspect. Nevertheless, it was a pleasure to see the look of utter horror on Kasparov's face! 30 ♟xh2 ♗xa5 31 ♗xe6?? Buoyed that he had been let off the hook two moves earlier, Vujatovic played this quickly and confidently. So Crumiller's poker strategy is justified, and he does not let this final error go unpunished. 31 ♟g1 would have given reasonable practical chances to make a draw, according to Short. 31...♗h5+ 32 ♟h4 ♗xd1 33 ♟xg6 ♟g4+! 0-1 The White team resigns. A fantastic game! Each team had six minutes remaining from the original hour.

