



FORGOTTEN GENIUS
THE LIFE AND GAMES OF
GRANDMASTER
DRAGOLJUB VELIMIROVIC

VOL. 2





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Forgotten Genius

The Life and Games of
Grandmaster

Dragoljub Velimirovic

Vol. 2

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Key to symbols

!	a good move	±	White has a serious advantage
?	a weak move	∓	Black has a serious advantage
!!	an excellent move	+−	White has a decisive advantage
??	a blunder	−+	Black has a decisive advantage
!?	an interesting move	→	with an attack
?!	a dubious move	↑	with initiative
□	only move	↔	with counterplay
=	equality	Δ	with the idea of
∞	unclear position	⊃	better is
≡	with compensation for the sacrificed material	N	novelty
±	White stands slightly better	+	check
∓	Black stands slightly better	#	mate

Table of Contents

Intro	13
My father.....	17

1976 - 1977

A grandmaster's wandering	21
Velimirovic : Honfi	23
Ivanovic : Velimirovic.....	24
Farago : Velimirovic.....	29
Langeweg : Velimirovic.....	32
Velimirovic : Ree	34
Matulovic : Velimirovic	37
Velimirovic : Popovic.....	39
Velimirovic : Olafsson	42
Velimirovic : Suetin.....	46
Velimirovic : Ostojic	49
Tal : Velimirovic	52
Velimirovic : Nunn.....	54
Ghitescu : Velimirovic	56

1978 - 1979

First cycle, first attack	61
Velimirovic : Matanovic	62
Velimirovic : Ivanovic	68
Praia de Rocha.....	73
Toth : Velimirovic	74
Mariotti : Velimirovic.....	76
Velimirovic : Marjanovic.....	81
Velimirovic – Jovicic.....	85

Tal : Velimirovic	87
Velimirovic : Shamkovich.....	95
Velimirovic : Smejkal.....	99
Velimirovic : Hebert.....	102

1980 - 1982

Relaxing and the second attack.....	107
Velimirovic : Vukic	108
Velimirovic : Tringov.....	110
Velimirovic : Bukic.....	113
1981 – Attack No 2!.....	116
Vukic : Velimirovic	117
Martinovic : Velimirovic.....	120
Velimirovic : V. Kovacevic	123
Budva - second victory in a row at the Zonal tournament.....	126
Velimirovic : Ivanovic	127
1982 - Interzonal and ... Korchnoi	130
Velimirovic : Gufeld	133
Velimirovic : Bilek.....	134
Velimirovic : Popovic.....	136
Moscow 1982.....	139
Velimirovic : Andersson.....	140

1983

Charging batteries	147
Velimirovic : Dizdar.....	147
Vukic : Velimirovic	150
Velimirovic : Terzic	153

1984

Attack No. 4!.....	155
---------------------------	------------

Ivanovic : Velimirovic	156
Velimirovic : Timman	160
Velimirovic : Hulak.....	165
Velimirovic : Cebalo.....	168
Velimirovic : Marjanovic.....	170
Velimirovic : Thipsay	171
Velimirovic : Cebalo.....	174
Velimirovic : Zapata.....	175

1985

Disappointment and return 179

Velimirovic : Cebalo.....	180
Kotronias : Velimirovic.....	181
Soylu : Velimirovic	184

What comes next? 185

Kurajica : Velimirovic	185
Velimirovic : Sofrevski	187
M. Gurevich : Velimirovic	189
Velimirovic : Gavrikov	193
Velimirovic : Morovic.....	194
Velimirovic : Marjanovic.....	197

1986

A year to forget 201

Velimirovic : Cebalo.....	202
Velimirovic : Popovic.....	204
Haik : Velimirovic.....	209

1987

Attack, fall, ascent..... 211

Velimirovic : Suba	212
Passerotti : Velimirovic	215

Flear : Velimirovic	219
Velimirovic : Adorjan	222
K. Georgiev : Velimirovic	226
Velimirovic : EhIvest	228

1988

Colorful year 1988.....233

Velimirovic : V. Raicevic	234
Maksimovic : Velimirovic,	236
Rajkovic : Velimirovic.....	237
Matulovic : Velimirovic	239
Velimirovic : Bellon Lopez.....	242
Velimirovic : Gutman.....	244
Velimirovic : Maynard	253
Velimirovic : Z. Vukovic	255

1989 - 1990

Farewell from the national team257

Velimirovic : Damljanovic.....	258
Velimirovic : Dizdarevic.....	261
Velimirovic : Romanishin.....	265
Velimirovic : Züger.....	273
Polugaevsky : Velimirovic	275
Velimirovic : Wojtkiewicz.....	277
Kozul : Velimirovic	280

1991 - 1995

Disintegration of the country, war, crisis.....285

A prophecy.....	286
Velimirovic : Strikovic.....	288
Velimirovic : Davies.....	291
Velimirovic : Ilincic	294

Velimirovic : Simic	296
Velimirovic : Maksimenko	298
Velimirovic : Tseshkovsky,	300
Velimirovic : Ciric.....	302
Velimirovic : Cvetkovic	302
Velimirovic : Cosma.....	303
Damljanovic : Velimirovic.....	305

1996 - 1999

The fall, the final ascent and the NATO attack 307

Velimirovic : Beliavsky	307
Velimirovic : Maksimovic	310
Velimirovic : M. Stojanovic	312

The miraculous year 1997 314

The third title of National Champion..... 314

Damljanovic : Velimirovic.....	315
Velimirovic : Ivanisevic	317
Velimirovic : Zontakh.....	319

Last Zonal tournament..... 322

Velimirovic : Mozetic	322
Velimirovic : Damljanovic.....	323
Velimirovic : Pavlovic.....	326
Velimirovic : Minasian.....	328

1999 Bombs, Quits, Principles 330

2000 - 2011

Chess retirement..... 335

Antic : Velimirovic.....	336
G.M. Todorovic : Velimirovic.....	337
Velimirovic : Rublevsky	339
Velimirovic : Ilincic	346
Velimirovic : Vuckovic.....	347

Balashov : Velimirovic.....	351
Velimirovic : G.M. Todorovic.....	352
Velimirovic : Cmilyte.....	356

A man with too much chess talent.....	361
--	------------

Best Results 1976 – 2011	369
---------------------------------------	------------

About Georg.....	370
-------------------------	------------

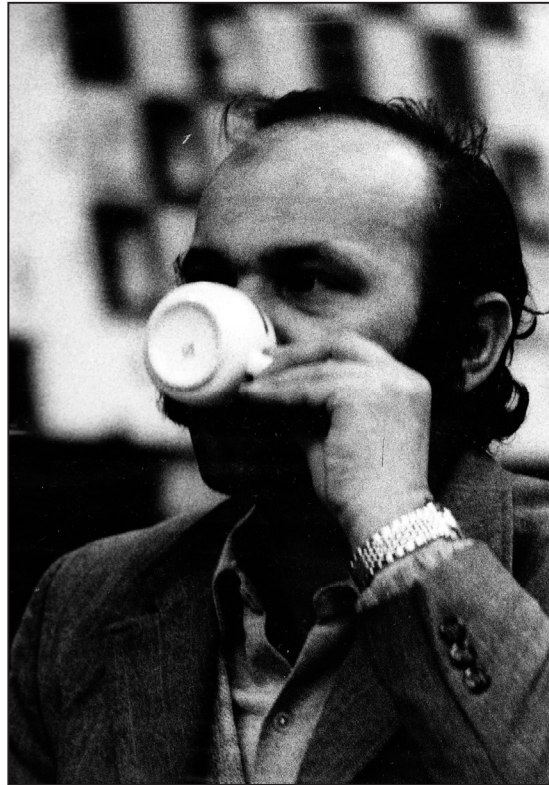
About Ana.....	372
-----------------------	------------

Index of OPENINGS	373
--------------------------------	------------

Index of PLAYERS.....	375
------------------------------	------------

Index of TYPICAL SACRIFICES	377
--	------------

Bibliography & Photographs.....	379
--	------------



His limit could only be the sky!



Intro

Drasko!

Two years ago, when we agreed with Thinkers Publishing House on a series of books under the title "Forgotten Genius", my first two book heroes were immediately decided. The book about Albin Planinc, my Slovenian compatriot, opened the series, which we are now continuing with this book about the Serbian Grandmaster, Drasko Velimirovic, the famous "Gazda (Boss)", a hero who in one way or another shaped the chess career and destiny of all chess players who grew up in the spaces of the former Yugoslavia.

Of course, there is much more to tell about Velimirovic and his career. The "Boss" was respected in the wider world, as you will see in the book, in many places and at many times much more than at home, where beams were thrown under his feet and many obstacles were placed on his way to the top. Serious, principled, honest to the extreme with himself and with others, he endured all this, got angry, jumped, leaped, swallowed the injustices that often left him far behind, returned, rose like a phoenix and climbed again and again to the top, upsetting to the extreme those responsible, especially those who did not like him.

But no one could take away Drasko's career. His games, his tournament victories, his theoretical innovations. His coaching work, and quite some Grandmasters claiming to be his direct successors. They are, or rather, they wish they were. And his stories, anecdotes, another part of Drasko's chess history that should not be ignored under any circumstances.

Drasko also had a certain influence on me, at that time a young promising master from the chess province of Slovenia. How I devoured the variants of his attack, how I delighted in the glorious victories and sacrifices on the white squares in the center! I called him "Mr. f5", and that's what we called him in my chess club, ZSK Maribor. The reason is not hard to guess: Drasko's knight sacrifices on the f5-square were legendary and remain so to this day. Growing up playing chess, I quickly realized that Drasko was much more than just "Velimirovic's attack".

His contribution to the King's Indian, Benoni, Dragon Sicilian and many other openings is immeasurable. In many openings he rewrote the theory – often he even started writing it.

When I got to know Drasko personally over the years, there was a gap between us. In terms of generation - Drasko belonged to at least two generations of older chess players; in terms of quality - I would never have dared to think that I could be his equal, even though we both held the same Grandmaster title. But you know, dear readers, how it is. There are grandmasters and Grandmasters, and Drasko undoubtedly belonged to the group of those who are written large, with a capital initial.



Georg Mohr

But enough of that. Years have passed, almost a decade since Drasko's death. I have been wondering why no one has written a book about such a giant. I guess we will not just forget him? Deep inside I had long had the desire to write such a book, and when we came to an agreement with Thinkers Publishing House, I was very, very happy and even more grateful for the opportunity that presented itself.

I did not know my co-author – Drasko's daughter, Ana - at that time. When I somehow found her and asked her if she had anything in Drasko's estate that I could use in the book, I was shocked and stood there with my mouth open. Ana not only had a wonderful collection of photos, cartoons, and other wonderful materials, but also kept a collection of Drasko's games in the drawer. The "Boss" commented on most of them himself, explained this and that in many places, showed us how his attack was born, how the ideas developed in many variations. He described to us many adventures and events as if in passing, but some of them he explained with hindsight, as they show the cruel history in their own light, and through the eyes of those who write them.

The decision was simple: I asked Ana if she wanted to write the book with me. She gladly agreed and told me that the book about her father is also her

long-cherished wish, a kind of debt to Drasko, who left her such beautiful memories. Our wonderful journey together began, with the final result that you are reading now. Today, I know that without Ana's help this book would not have existed. Or rather, if I had decided to write it, it would have been only a pale imitation of it. So once again, thank you, dear Ana!

I sincerely hope that you, dear readers, will enjoy the wonderful masterpieces you will find in this book. In addition to the authors, some of Drasko's contemporaries were also involved in its writing, and they immediately responded with pride and love to the request to keep the memory of the Serbian genius alive. I would like to thank all those who participated in this project. To the Grandmasters who wrote down their own memories of Drasko, which you will find in this book in special "boxes". To the contemporaries, friends, and comrades-in-arms of "Boss" who remember this or that anecdote, this or that event, this or that memory. I sincerely hope that this book will ensure that we do not forget the Serbian chess autodidact, one of the greatest chess players, theoreticians and coaches the world has ever known.

Almost last, but not least, I would like to thank the contributors (you will find their names in the colophon) who have invested too many hours of their free time in this project. And finally, although perhaps they should be at the top, the members of my family who have so patiently endured my escapes to the great chess masters of the world.

Georg Mohr, Maribor, July 2023



My father

For years Drasko selected the games with which he wanted to show his development as a chess player in a career that lasted more than sixty years. He collected 316 games, the first one from the Youth Championship of Yugoslavia in Radovljica in 1958 and the last one from 2010. In his material, besides chess comments, he went into the reasons and history of some moves, but also explained various circumstances and obstacles he encountered on his way. Unfortunately, he never got around to publishing this material.



Ana Velimirovic - Zorica

In March 2021, Grandmaster Mohr contacted me because he wanted to write a book about Drasko. I liked this idea very much, and since I myself had written the above-mentioned material of Drasko, we came up with the idea of writing a book together, which will be a mixture of the way Mr. Mohr saw Drasko as a chess player and as a human being, my memories of Drasko, and parts from Drasko's unpublished material. Mr. Mohr is responsible for the selection of games and the chess part, and some of the selected games come from my father's archives, where his comments were published in whole or in part. In the texts of the book we have combined my memories of my father's stories, old newspaper archives with his interviews, my mother's story, stories of colleagues and friends of Drasko, radio and TV programmes where he was a guest, statements of chess players about him and data from the material for his book, which was never published.

Drasko lived from chess, but also for chess. I remember that it happened that he woke up in the middle of the night and got up to write down an idea, then went back to sleep, and later analyzed this idea for days afterwards. He was very fond

of chess, but he was equally fond of me and my mother. He was always gentle and full of love for us, and he only showed aggression when he was sitting in front of the chessboard, never outside of it. He was honest, principled, and courageous; he didn't fit the mold, and therefore he wasn't always understood. He left a strong impression in everything he did, and we miss him greatly. This book is my way of thanking him for his years of love and support. He was a great support for me.

Drasko not only made a great contribution to Yugoslav and world chess, but he was also a very witty man who liked to make jokes, both at his own expense and at the expense of others, and he was also widely known for his humorous stories and pranks. All who knew Drasko agreed that the book about him would be very incomplete if at least some of his anecdotes and funny stories weren't published in it. He was known for entertaining the players (and other guests) at various tournaments with stories, in the evenings, when the day's games were over and the tension had died down a bit. It was funniest at the team competitions, where a large number of players, and therefore listeners, would gather in the evening. People were laughing, Drasko was talking, jumping, gesticulating, imitating the heroes of this and that story. Even foreigners listened to him, even if they didn't understand the Serbian language!

But beware, Drasko never told any of his stories twice in the same way, each new version was slightly different. The real goal was always the same: to entertain the listeners. In the end, only those who were directly involved in the story knew what really happened in those stories and which version was complete or the most accurate.

In time, Drasko became famous for his stories. When he was invited for interviews in his old age, especially on radio or television, he was always asked to tell an anecdote. He gladly accepted, and so his stories travelled all over the country.

Drasko usually told stories, but listened less. The reason for this is probably obvious: he had problems with his hearing, which made it difficult for him to participate in dialogues. Thus, storytelling remained his way of not remaining isolated in society.

These stories remained in the memory of his colleagues and friends, and Grandmasters Slavisa Brenjo and Aleksandar Kovacevic helped us remember some of them. In addition to anecdotes, they also shared other memories of Drasko with me, for which I am especially grateful.