



CCI-USA NEWS

Chess Collectors International

Volume 2016 Issue 1

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To The Editor:

I greatly appreciate the time and effort that Tom Gallegos has made to keep Chess Collectors International's members up-to-date with the latest developments in the rapidly evolving ivory situation, but I wish he had checked with me before asserting that I must have been fed some serious misinformation, and that my statements regarding the ivory ban are not true. Here is a brief recap of the statements with which he takes issue.

It's possible that Tom misheard my response to a question about the Federal ivory ban. I had said that the Federal Government is *in the process* of outlawing all interstate ivory commerce, not that they had already banned interstate ivory commerce. However, it is indeed the case that US Fish & Wildlife has already disallowed ivory imports. Before each of the recent Waddington's (Toronto) auctions, I had contacted US F&W directly, and they informed me that I would not be allowed to import any ivory. Whether this directive is overzealous or not is irrelevant, because the consequences of seizure (and possible prosecution) cannot be remedied by simply claiming that US F&W has overstepped their bounds. I'm sure that Tom is not advocating that I (or any other collector) should test the resolve of US F&W by ignoring its directive.

Another statement deemed "not true" is that a collector would not be able to donate ivory chess sets to a museum and take a tax deduction. I would be very pleased to hear that this statement is incorrect. But the fact is that my accountant, a former IRS agent, had diligently researched the issue earlier this year, and I was simply summarizing his findings. If anyone can provide research or evidence to the contrary, I would definitely appreciate it.

Regarding valuation of ivory items, the definition of monetary value is inextricably linked to a sale price (either real or theoretical). However, when an item cannot be bought or sold or donated, then there is no possible sale price, and therefore it has no monetary value. Of course, ivory items can still have significant value – historical value, artistic value, sentimental value – but not monetary value.

Public opinion runs strongly in favor of an ivory ban, without realizing that such a ban is simply an ineffective symbolic gesture. Meanwhile, politicians

are always happy to gain political capital, and to appear righteously indignant, at no political cost to themselves. I'm glad that Tom and others remain optimistic about the eventual outcome, but optimism does not always coincide with reality. Already I am unable to import antique ivory chess sets due to Federal restrictions, and I am unable to engage in "selling, offering for sale, purchasing, bartering, or possessing with intent to sell, any ivory [or] ivory product..." due to the New Jersey state laws. As is readily apparent, at this point I need to leave optimism to others, who perhaps have not been as affected by the ivory bans as I have been.

Jon Crumiller
Princeton, New Jersey, USA

A Brief Reply From Tom Gallegos:

I fully endorse everything Jon is saying here. His letter is a valuable clarification to a complex situation. My optimism is more for the long run. Someday, the courts will rule on all this. People will come to their senses. In the short run, and certainly for as long as the agency has its way, I absolutely agree the situation is dire.

As one of the world's elite collectors, no one has higher stakes in this "game," for lack of a better word, than Jon Crumiller. And he has considerable experience in these matters that I defer to, and did not intend to make light of. Collecting on a much more modest scale, I am certainly in no position to stand up to the Fish & Wildlife Service on my own, and Jon is quite right to point this out. I have not attempted to import ivory for several years now. Nor would I dream of doing so in the current political climate. Nor would I recommend anyone else try it, without a phalanx of lawyers at the ready.

But thanks for letting me provoke you a bit on this topic, Jon. Your letter has helped to more fully elucidate this critical issue for our readers. It serves to underscore the fear and uncertainty that has dogged law-abiding collectors ever since the President's original Executive Order – fear and uncertainty which will only wind up putting more elephants, not fewer, in the poachers' crosshairs. It is long past time to begin re-shaping public opinion on this fatally misunderstood topic.

Legislative forces in New Jersey recently attempted to ban even the mere ownership or possession of ivory, which would have officially turned NJ into America's first ivory police state. Were they thinking about conducting house-to-house raids? Who knows? Would this have saved any elephants from the poacher's bullets? No. If anything, this would have increased poaching, assuming African poachers even became aware of it. Luckily, this misguided effort was unsuccessful. The bill in question, a comprehensive wildlife trafficking measure, was massively watered down, the number of species covered being reduced from over 11,800 down to around 10. Ivory and rhino horn were both specifically exempted from the bill, so they are no longer subject to the bill's new possession prohibition and certificate requirements. The bill was watered down in other ways as well. This is just a quick summary. It just goes to show that sometimes, cooler heads do indeed prevail. But we are still no closer to improving the

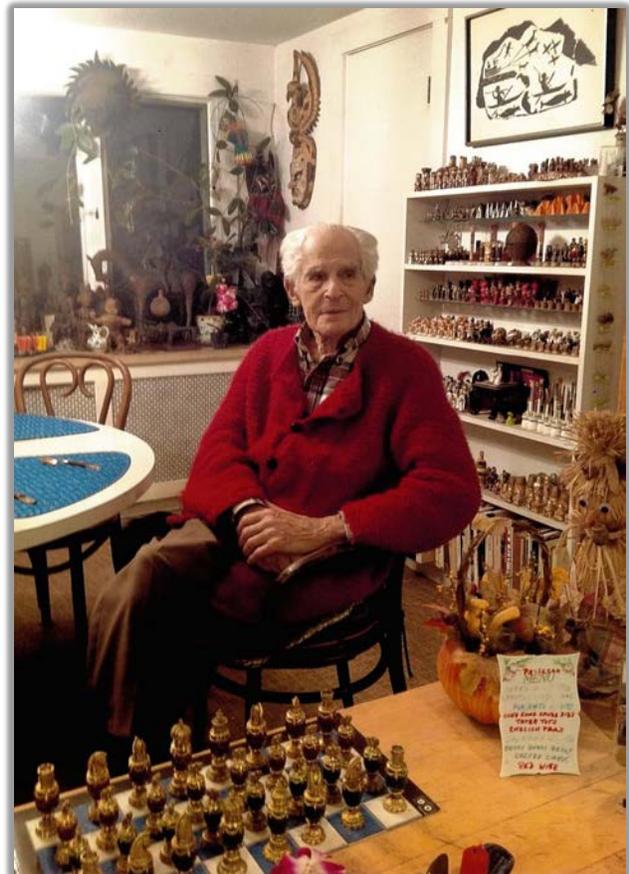
situation on the Federal level. The Fish & Wildlife Service's new Directors Order 210 is still being used as a sledgehammer to stop all import/export, even as their newly proposed regs are still in legal limbo, and will be for some time.

Again, I would appreciate feedback from anyone on the 23-page paper I submitted to Fish & Wildlife under their Public Comment procedure back in September. It is entitled, SAVE THE ELEPHANTS: LEGALIZE THE IVORY TRADE. Available upon request by e-mailing either Floyd at lichess@aol.com, or myself at livinginthepast@comcast.net. I should also clarify that my own views on this matter are exactly that, and should in no way be construed as representing the opinions of the editor, or the official position of Chess Collectors International.

Thank you.

BILLY LEVENE

We mourn the loss of Billy (Dr. Benjamin) Levene on November 4, 2015 at the age of 97. "Billy" and his wife Hope (married in 1942) were charter members of CCI when it started in Florida in 1984. He was known to all as the program coordinator as well as a speaker at every CCI USA meeting, and attended every CCI Convention until the August 2015 meeting in St. Louis. A Master rank chess player, world traveler (92 different countries) and chess teacher, Billy amassed a fantastic chess book collection. With Hope as his partner, they started collecting chess sets in the early 1950's, acquiring a greatly admired chess set collection, including many "put together sets" created by Hope (who has been our CCI USA Secretary for many years). Billy was a graduate of Columbia University and Dental School, with a Dental Practice in New York City. He leaves his wife, Hope, and his son, Kenneth, and his daughters, Hope and Faith, along with 5 grandchildren and one great grandchild. Condolences can be sent to his family at 71 Indian Hill Rd, Bedford NY 10506.



Chess Collectors International
17th BIENNIAL INTERNATIONAL MEETING
Paris France, May 2 – 6, 2016

The meeting will be held at the Novotel 'Les Halles', 8, Place Marguerite de Navarre, 78001, Paris.
Reservation Centrale (+33) 146-624-440. Tel. (+33) 1/42213131), Fax (+33) 1/40260579)
email: HO785@accor.com

Rooms can be reserved from today, by contacting the Hotel and specifying the code: CHESS COLLECTORS to obtain the preferred rate for CCI

Single room 2/breakfast – 200 euros
Exec room 2/breakfast – 279 euros

Double room w/breakfast – 210 euros
Suite room 2/breakfast – 375 euros

PROGRAM

MONDAY, May 2nd

5 – 7 PM: Registration Desk, Hotel Lobby
7 – 8 PM: Meet for Welcome Cocktail
8 PM: Dinner, Hotel Restaurant

TUESDAY, May 3rd

8 AM: Breakfast, Registration Continues
9 AM: Board Bus for 'Musee des arts Forians'
12 – 2 PM: Lunch at Restaurant
2 PM: Free Afternoon – Shopping or
Visit the Lourve Musuem
7 PM: Dinner at Hotel

WEDNESDAY, May 4th

8 AM: Breakfast
9 AM: Short Walk – Visit Modern Art Museum
12 – 2 PM: Lunch, Hotel Restaurant
2 PM: Lectures at Hotel
7 PM: Dinner at Procop Café

THURSDAY, May 5th

8 AM: Breakfast
9 AM: Board Bus, Visit Cluny Museum
12 – 2 PM: Lunch, Hotel Restaurant
4 PM: Simultaneous Chess Display
7 PM: Board Bus for Gala Dinner on Bateau Monche

FRIDAY, May 6th

8 AM: Breakfast
9 AM: Preparation for Chess Market
10 AM: Chess Market
12 – 2 PM: Lunch, Hotel Restaurant
2 PM: Possible Visit to Toy and Chess Collection of Jacques Lamy

Please confirm your participation to:
Patrice Plain

3 bis, rue Marceau, 10000 Troyes, France
Tel: 00 33 (0) 325 077; Mobile: 00 33 (0) 624 670 369

The fee for the meeting is 550 euros per person and includes welcome cocktails, lunches and dinners, gala dinner on Bateau Mouche with drinks, Museum entrance fees, transportation charges, program booklet and souvenirs.

Please pay the fee for the meeting by bank transfer to:
Chess Collectors International France BNP Paribas
53 rue de General De Gaulle, 10000 Troyes, France
N compte: 0 875 00010257006
RIB: 30004 00875 00010257006 25
IBAN: FR 76 3000 4008 7500 0102 5700 625
BIC: BNPAFRPPTRO

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION : Contact Patrice Plain by email or phone

CCI Germany Meets in Trier (November 6 - 8, 2015)

ROMANS VERSUS CELTS

**By Tom Gallegos
The Absentminded Antiquary**

Barreling through the European countryside, the sun shining, the engine racing, it's hard not to feel a little bit like James Bond. We are on our way toward unknown adventures in exotic locales, meeting glamorous people, connoisseurs and collectors. The fate of the world may not depend on our success, but much like Bond we are in search of intelligence and treasures known only to a few.

There are some slight differences between 007 and myself of course, most too trivial to mention. Instead of Bond's renowned Aston Martin, we are racing along in the cheapest possible rental car. The beautiful *femme fatale* at my side is not someone of dubious loyalties whom I just met in a gun battle, but my high school sweetheart of nearly 40 years.

Oh, and one other thing. Everyone we meet is not constantly trying to kill us. Instead, they welcome us, befriend us, open their homes and their collections for our perusal, freely share their knowledge and experience, inquire about our own buying, selling and trading, and generally make life interesting.

It's enough to leave one feeling both shaken *and* stirred.

The exotic locale this time was Trier, Germany. Most Americans will have heard of this place, but never been there. Right away, we've hit on one of the primary reasons why it's so worthwhile to make the effort to attend these overseas CCI meetings. In spite of language barriers and cultural differences, and being "out of our comfort zone" (which we usually are), the rewards are great.

Of course, there are many CCI members who simply cannot afford to travel overseas. (It usually strains our budget, that's for sure.) Others have busy work schedules or other conflicts. These things are certainly understandable. However, for those who can manage it, but choose to stay away due to an aversion to unfamiliar surroundings, strange food, or awkward conversations with non-English speakers, take it from me, you're making a big mistake.

Chess itself is not the easiest of games. We love it precisely because it is a challenge. It takes

backbone and character to excel. Similarly, if you take up the challenge of foreign travel, you will find yourself becoming a stronger collector and who knows, possibly even a stronger player. And you have no idea of the sheer hospitality, warm feelings and assistance that await you in Europe. It is true that most Europeans have much better language skills than most Americans. But they never make one feel ashamed or inferior for being monolingual. Instead, they usually just break into English without missing a beat when you show up. Not everyone speaks English of course, but hotel clerks and everyone else in the travel industry most certainly do, making travel a breeze. Sure, sometimes you find yourself sitting through a few lectures in a language you don't understand, but translations are often provided, and even when they're not, it can be fun to try and glean a few bits of the subject matter from the slides or other visual aids.

It's amazing how far you can get with just "Guten tag," "bitte" and "danke" (Good day, please and thanks). And don't forget, we all have a common language in chess, after all. Conversations can be a bit stilted at times, but still worth the effort, because everyone wants them to succeed.

Though collectors from many nations speaking many languages were present, Luann and I were unfortunately the only representatives from the USA at the Trier meeting, a situation we would like to see improved in the future. If there is one ground rule in CCI, it is this: Anyone and everyone who is interested is more than welcome at everyone else's meetings. The German meetings, for example, are not exclusive to the German members. We always say we would like to see more Europeans at our USA meetings. Similarly, we hope more Americans will travel to more of the European meetings in the future. Luann and I certainly can't afford to attend all of them, but we do the best we can.

The city of Trier itself turned out to be more than enough to prove my point. It is not just any ordinary medium-sized town. The oldest city in Germany, Trier was founded by the Romans in the first century BCE, although many people will whisper in your ear

that the Celts really founded it 13 centuries before that. The city was a key northern stronghold of the Western Roman Empire, a fact that lends the whole place an enduring "Romans versus Celts" sort of atmosphere, almost as if the entire town were a chess set with that theme. The modern inhabitants are, naturally enough, descendants of both Romans and Celts. Well, we are all familiar with the metaphor of a cozy chess game between a man and a woman in front of a crackling fire as a prelude to romance. Just so, in the history of warfare, protracted conflict between a local populace and an army of occupation quite often gives way eventually to intermarriage and reconciliation. The city of Trier is a perfect example of this.

There was a sightseeing trip on our meeting agenda, but these are usually by necessity too short, so Luann and I arrived a few days before the meeting to give the sights and museums more of the attention we felt they deserved. Although there isn't room in these pages to give you anything like a real tour of the city, one place in particular is too important not to mention.

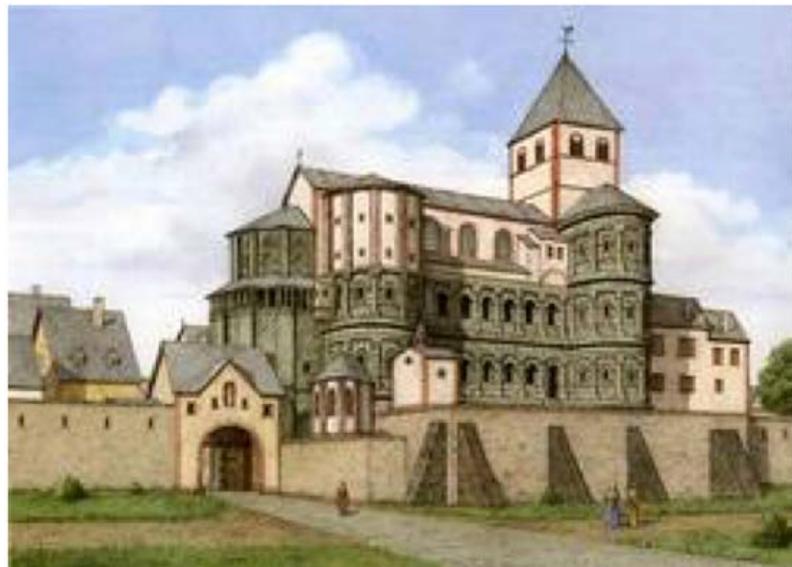
Porta Nigra (the "Black Gate") is the symbol of Trier, the only tower/gate surviving from the days when Trier was a fortified Roman settlement. Blackened by time and circumstance, scarred by calamity, neglect and scavenging, this is the northern gate of what was once a walled city with four such gates, one for each cardinal direction. Looking for all the world like a massive rook from some vast medieval chess set, Porta Nigra appears every bit as defensible today as it would have been in antiquity, if it weren't for the fact that almost none of the old city wall still exists, and you can now simply walk around the gate, as well as through it. But it is still a formidable structure. Looking up from its base, you can almost glimpse the ghosts of armed legionaries manning the gray sandstone parapets several stories above you.



For a time in the Middle Ages, they built a large Gothic church right on top of Porta Nigra, almost as if combining the powers of rook and bishop. Much later, Napoleon had the church torn down and stripped away, restoring the gate's imposing, rook-like appearance.

Rook (above): Porta Nigra, the "Black Gate" as it looks today, without a church on top. (Not black enough for you? It kind of depends on how the light is striking it.) It was more symmetrical in antiquity, with another story on the left side tower. The apse to the left of that is a medieval addition.

Rook plus Bishop (below): Porta Nigra, from roughly the same angle, as it looked in the Middle Ages, with a church on top (Artist's reconstruction.)



Rooks are everywhere in Trier, it turns out. Some of the earliest houses in the city were actually individual fortified stone towers, with the only entrance high in the air. A man's home was truly his castle in those days, even if you had to pull up a long ladder to get some peace and quiet in the evenings, effectively keeping out armed intruders, door-to-door salesmen, in-laws and other unwanted guests.

Indeed, the entire city once bore a distinct resemblance to a chessboard, the streets having been laid out by the Romans in a coldly rational, supremely efficient grid pattern. After the fall of the Western Empire, however, upkeep was difficult, the grid pattern literally wore away, and it is the more organic, random spaghetti pattern of the medieval street layout that survives today.

This was to be another short, weekend meeting of the German section of CCI, its value and interest to the members and guests exceeded only by its brevity.

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Just as the members were convening, we were saddened to hear news of the passing of long-time members Isaac Linder of Russia, and Billy Levene of the USA. This was exactly the sort of gathering both men would have relished.

No Longer President but Still Doing
Most of the Work, our good
friend, Dr. Thomas Thomsen.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 6TH:

The meeting opened this evening with the traditional cocktail reception in the lobby of the Park Plaza hotel, followed by dinner, also in the hotel. A few welcoming speeches were made; most notably Wolfgang Angerstein rose to give all credit for

organizing this meeting to (once again, to no great surprise) Dr. Thomas Thomsen. Wolfgang even went so far as to present a well-deserved award of appreciation to Dr. Thomsen, who accepted it with his usual good grace and humor.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 7TH:

A very busy day of talks and viewing began at 9 am sharp, as the organizers attempted to squeeze as much as they could into the only full day of the meeting. To be honest with you, I'm not going to be able to do much more than give you the titles of the talks, because most of them were in German. (For a different account of the Trier meeting, which gives a much better synopsis of the talks than I was able to do here, check out the report Nicholas Lanier posted on his most excellent website, www.chess-museum.com.)

After welcoming remarks by Wolfgang Angerstein and Thomas Thomsen, and a short report on CCI activities by Dr. Thomsen, there was a talk entitled, "Medieval Rock Crystal Chessmen - Current Research Status" (by Michael Pilz). "To Trier - Funnies with Marx" (by Michael Negele) was next. "Chess Collectors in Numbers" was a statistical presentation about the worldwide distribution of our members (by Harry Schaak). The current re-design of CCI's website was the next topic (by Jens-Frieder Mukke). Then after a coffee break featuring a lavish array of gourmet snacks, came one of the few English presentations by our President,



Michael Wiltshire, talking about a spectacular early travel set he was lucky enough to find, quite possibly made for the wedding of Emperor Ferdinand V in the early 19th century.

Michael Wiltshire's amazing find from a recent holiday in Vienna, a silver traveling set with its original leather pouch, possibly a royal wedding gift, circa 1831 (Board roughly 6.5 inches square.)



"Foursome Chess in Friedland" was the next talk (by Barbara Hollander, who graciously handed out an English translation of her text.) Finally, Franz Josef Lang led a short discussion on new member acquisition.

After a convivial luncheon in the hotel, we all boarded a bus, which took us across the nearby western border of Germany to Luxembourg (a tiny sovereign nation, just 51 miles from top to toe, and the world's only remaining Grand Duchy, no less) to view the exquisite chess collection of Reinhard Egert and Anita Burg. It's a very short drive from Trier to Luxembourg.

Dinner that night was in the restaurant *Zum Domstein* ("the Cathedral Stone" denoting its proximity to the oldest Roman Catholic cathedral in Germany), which serves local cuisine and even some dishes and libations based on ancient Roman recipes.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 8TH:

This morning was taken up with a walking tour of the city, which was very worthwhile, but which was, for Luann and me, more of a recap, since we had made a point of seeing as much as possible of Trier before the meeting began. I have already made a few observations about the city and its history, from the chess collector's perspective.

The last official function was a farewell luncheon in the hotel, which we missed.

Meetings like this may be short, but the friendships they generate are long. There is no rule that says you

must go home after the official programme has ended, which is why Luann and I typically try to tuck on a few vacation days before and/or after a meeting to sightsee and make short visits to friends, both new and old. Sure enough, as so often happens, by the time the meeting was over, we had more invitations than we could possibly handle. Luckily, since we had planned to spend a week in Luxembourg after the meeting, and we had rented a car, we were able to accept at least a few of them.

Therefore, as the farewell luncheon was just getting started, Luann and I said goodbye to friends as best we could, then were whisked away by Reinhard and Anita to an altogether different luncheon, at their favorite *Weinstube* (wine tavern) back in Luxembourg. We were joined by several other German CCI members and it was all *sehr gemütlich* (very cozy), or as we might say in English, the place had a warm and friendly ambiance.

Reinhard Egert's collection being politely drooled over by the membership



Luxembourg City,
a magical mystery tour

Later in the evening, Reinhard and Anita took us on a most magical twilight walking tour of Luxembourg City, pointing out nuances that might easily be missed on a more commercial tour. At this time of year, as the sun sets, the old city lights up like a Christmas Tree. It was breathtaking to witness.

In and around our other Luxembourg sightseeing and antique hunting, we also made time to visit our old friend Thomas Thomsen, who was fresh from another triumphant feat of organizing with the Trier meeting, and our new friends, Jean-Paul Goerens and his wife, Micheline Dohm of Luxembourg. (Yes, we found ourselves driving back and forth between Germany and Luxembourg quite a bit. Luckily, it's not far.)

Dr. Thomsen's hospitality was as warm as ever, and his collection, while it has been through some changes since our last visit several years ago, has lost nothing in terms of sheer quality, easily remaining one of the world's elite collections of chess sets. It has been written about in these pages a few times, and is also familiar from the many specialized exhibitions he has put on at various museums, often in conjunction with a CCI event. We were able to dine together and even had the pleasure of meeting a few of his family members this time. However, Dr. Thomsen is already so well known to the readership, we will keep this part of the report brief.

Jean-Paul Goerens and his wife Micheline, on the other hand, happened to sit with us at the opening dinner in Trier. We learned they are very new members of CCI, though hardly new collectors. They hadn't bothered joining CCI up until now, they explained, because they assumed CCI was all about set collecting. They are much more involved in collecting chess stamps, postcards, books, ephemera, etc., and have been active in the Chess On Stamps Study Unit (COSSU) over the years. When we arrived at their flat in Differdange (which we assumed was a village, but turns out to be one of the larger towns in Luxembourg), we were in for a shock. The apartment was full to the brim of chess-themed - *literally everything* - including what must have



been thousands of books, artworks, posters, knick-knacks, LP's, CD's videos and other media... you name it, it was there. And it was all chess. We spent a very pleasant afternoon being educated about chess stamps and postcards, leafing through album after album after album, until we were finally convinced it would take a month or more to see their entire collection.

The shocks kept coming, however. Just when we thought we had sized things up, Jean-Paul casually inquired whether we would care to see "the other apartment." What? They took us down a short hallway and opened up a second flat, *equally as full as the first*. Yes, the collection was suddenly twice as big.

The explanation was simple once we understood that both husband and wife are avid chess collectors, and players. Micheline, although she does not speak much English, was proud to show off some of the chess stamp albums she has assembled and exhibited herself, and it turns out she is a strong player in her own right. She and Jean-Paul are a true "chess-match made in Heaven" if ever there was one.

Jean-Paul modestly protested he only had a few sets to show us, perhaps some 10 or 12, he said. This is why they hesitated to join CCI for so long. So, he shows us some. They are certainly nice enough, but then one of them turns out to be a complete set, board (table, that is), clock and even a pair of chairs *from the 1966 Olympiad in Havana, Cuba*, acquired through a friend who was a participant. A chess set (and furniture!) made officially for the Olympiad, and used for the actual games. Apparently one of these ensembles was sent home with each national team. When I could catch my breath again, I gently tried to explain to Jean-Paul

that this set alone would buy him instant credibility in any room full of chess set collectors.

Micheline and Jean-Paul prepare to do battle across the 1966 Olympiad table



A COMMUNITY OF COMMUNITIES

Jean-Paul and Micheline are vivid reminders of just how diverse the chess collecting world is. Since joining CCI, I have been amazed time and again to see that no two collectors or collections are alike, even in a field as narrow and specialized as one might think chess would be.

We in CCI tend to think mostly about collecting sets - and even there the rule applies, every collection is different - but there is all the other paraphernalia, books (the Ken Whyld Association obviously comes to mind), boards, timers, not to mention chess books, art, stamps, postcards, etc., etc. For the types of things they collect, Jean-Paul and Micheline recommend the following website as a portal: www.euwe.nl. There are even people on this portal collecting chess graves and tombstones! (Bagging photos of the resting places of famous players, etc.)

I hope this article might help make a few of the US members a little more aware of the sheer variety of interests and diverse subcategories our hobby encompasses. And that it is possible to make connections with like-minded people who will appreciate what you have done, or are planning to do, and are even willing to help you, if they can. If it exists, someone, somewhere will collect it. And, as CCI members prove again and again, someone else will eventually want to visit, to see and appreciate that collection.

As Timothy Leary once said, "Trust your instincts. Do the unexpected. Find the others."

PARIS IN THE SPRING, 2016

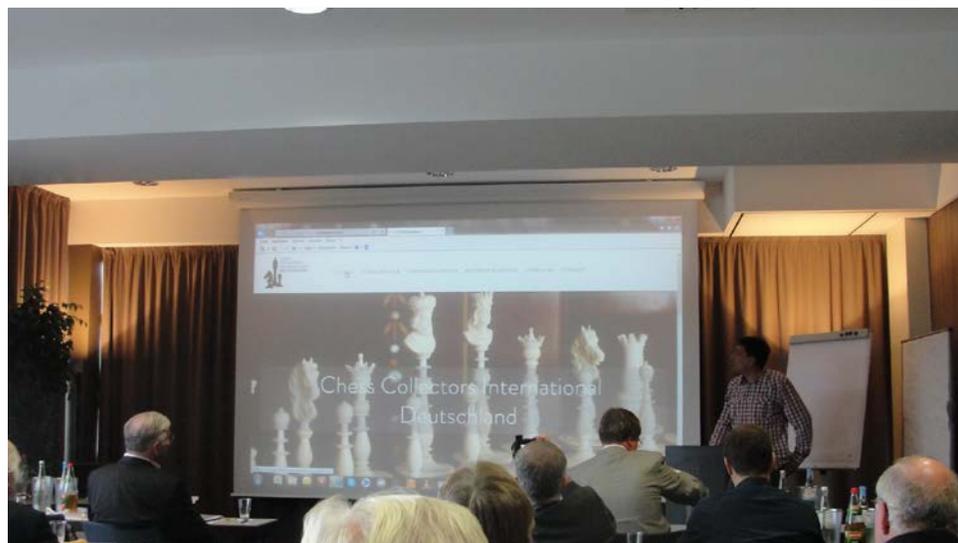
Now that I've made you all feel thoroughly rotten for missing the Trier meeting, let's try this again:

Come to Paris! The city of Philidor, of Saint-Amant, of the Café de la Régence, of Napoleon, of the Louvre, and of the Eiffel Tower, yes, none other than the City of Light will host CCI's 17th Biennial Congress, from May 2 - 6, 2016. Patrice Plain, the head of CCI France, has planned for us a full

schedule of museum and collection visits, a simul, chess market, gala dinner, and sightseeing.

Please see Patrice's invitation, hotel details and proposed programme of events elsewhere in this issue. And make your reservations early! Come on, people, it's Paris. This one at least, should be an easy sell to spouses and partners. See you there!

Jens-Frieder Mukke
on CCI Website



Marcus Pilz on Rock
Crystal Chessmen

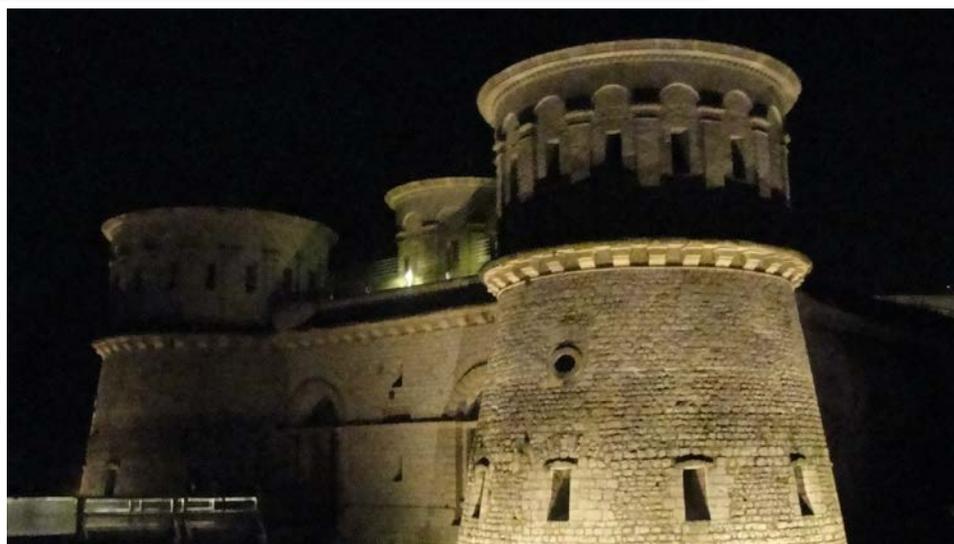
Michael Wiltshire's
Silver Traveling Set





1966 Havana Olympiad Set

Luxembourg Has Rooks Too



Trier - Palace with Constantine's Basilica

From the
Reinhard Egert
Collection



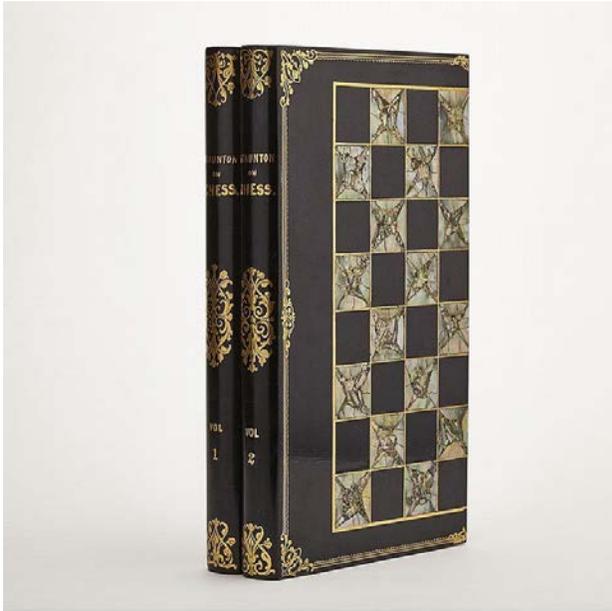
From the
Reinhard Egert
Collection

From the
Reinhard Egert
Collection



DECORATIVE ARTS and INTERNATIONAL ART AUCTION

Waddington's Canada Auction Results, December 7, 2015



Lot 101: Victorian Black Lacquered, Abalone Inlaid and Prcel Gilt Games Board Box, 19th Century, open 16.1" x 19.25 - 41 x 48.9 cm. Modelled as two books titled 'Staunton on Chess Vol. 1 & 2', opening to tooled leather backgammon board interior.

Estimate: 400 - 600 Canadian;
Realized: 360



Lot 102: Two Scandinavian or Syrian Islamic Turned Horn Chess Pieces, 9th Century, height 1.3" - 3.3 cm. Each a smooth cylinder with ring turned domed top and bone inclusions.

Estimate: 300 - 400 Canadian
Realized: 240



Lot 103: Group of Five Arab Islamic Ivory and Bone Chess Pieces, 18th Century and earlier, tallest height 1.8' - 4.5 cm. One with inset brass wire twist and traces of red wax filling, one with Imperial Seal of Mughal Empire on domed top, two ring turned, and one with shaped 'head'.

Estimate: 700- 900 Canadian
Realized: 360



Lot 104: Group of Six Arab Islamic Ivory and Bone Chess Pieces, 18th Century and earlier, tallest height 1.7" - 4.3 cm. One with Imperial Seal of Mugal Empire on domed top, a baluster with notched top, a ring turned baluster and three with 'burr grinder' heads.

Estimate: 700 - 900 Canadian
Realized: 432



Lot 105: Group of Six Arab Islamic Ivory and Bone Chess Pieces, 18th Century and earlier, tallest height 2" - 5.2 cm. One with Imperial Seal of Mughal Empire on domes top, a baluster with notched top, a ring turned baluster and three with 'burr grinder' heads.

Estimate: 700 - 900 Canadian
Realized: 432



Lot 106: Japanese Carved Ivory Nesuke Type Figural, signed Tomomitsu, 19th or early 20th Century, King height 3" - 7.6 cm. One side stained sepia, the other side left natural, with emperors as kings, queens holding fans, priests as bishops, Samurai warriors as knights, pagodas as rooks, and mythological figures as pawns, each piece with maker's signature.

Estimate: 5,000 - 7,000 Canadian
Realized: 5,040



Lot 107: German 18th Century Style Carved Ivory Figural, 1st half, 20th Century, height 4.1" - 10.5 cm. Three quarter length figures on beaded bases, with seahorses as knights and turrets as rooks.

Estimate: 800 - 1,200 Canadian
Realized: 1,440



Lot 108: Indian Carved Ivory Figural, Rajasthan, 19th Century, height 6" - 15.2 cm. One side with black lacquered bases, with monarchs on howdah mounted elephants, bishops on camel back, knights on horse back, rooks as caparisoned elephants and pawns as mounted soldiers.

Estimate: 1,000 - 1,500 Canadian
Realized: 2,280



Lot 109: Indonesian Carved Antler Figural 'Deity', early 20th Century, White King height 3.7" – 9.4 cm. One side left natural, the other stained brown, each figure modelled as a character from Balinese Hindu mythology.

Estimate: 1,000 – 1,500 Canadian
Realized: 1,920



Lot 110: Sino-Italian Carved Ivory Medieval Style, c1910, King height 5" – 12.7 cm. One side left natural, other stained red, with crowned monarchs, Moses as bishops, mounted soldiers as knights, turrets as rooks, and foot soldiers as pawns. Literature: Keats, 1985: 107, 156; Mackett-Beeson, 1973:35ff

Estimate: 2,000 – 3,000 Canadian
Realized: 0



Lot 111: South German Carved Limewood and Ivory 'Charlemagne' Figural Chess Set, early 20th Century, King height 5" – 12.7 cm. One side in a slightly darker-coloured, kings with swords, queens with scepters, bishops with spears, knights as rearing horses, rooks as turrets, individualized pawns with staffs

Estimate: 1,000 – 1,500 Canadian
Realized: 3,120



Lot 112: French Turned and Carved Ivory Assembled 'Europe vs. Africa' Chess Set, Dieppe, c.1790, white King height 4.1 – 10.3 cm. One side left natural, the other stained red.

Estimate: 2,000 – 3,000 Canadian
Realized: 4,080



Lot 113: South German Carved and Lacquered Wood 'Europe vs. Roman Empire' Figural, 19th Century, height 3.6" – 9.1 cm. European side painted faux lapis lazuli, uniformed king in bicorn hat, queen in plumed headdress, armed soldiers as pawns, Turkish side faux malachite, with king and queen in turbans, all bishops with scepters, horseheads as knights and turrets as rooks.

Estimate: 800 – 1,000 Canadian
Realized: 3,840



Lot 114: Signed John Calvert Turned and Carved Ivory, c.1850, King height 3.7" – 9.4 cm. The monarchs with pierce carved crowns, white king with master's mar: 'Calvert Makers', 189 Fleet Strt. London.

Estimate: 1,000 – 1,500 Canadian
Realized: 2,040



3.4" – 8.6 cm. One side on darker bases, most pieces modelled as standing bears, with crowned monarchs, queens with cubs, bishops with staffs, knights with horse heads, and bears in turrets as rooks.

Estimate: 800 – 1,200 Canadian
Realized: 5,520



Lot 116: Portuguese Vista Alegre Porcelain 'Christians vs. Moors' Bust, mid 20th Century, King height 4.5 – 11.5 cm. European monarchs in medieval dress, bishops as bishops, the Muslim side with Emir and Emira as king and queen, priestesses as bishops, and both sides with horse heads as knights, turrets as rooks and foot soldiers as pawns.

Estimate: 800 – 1,200 Canadian
Realized: 960



Lot 117: German Turned and Carved Ivory and Bone 'Selenus' Type, early 19th Century, King height 5.1" – 13 c. Monarchs with pierced galleries, bishops with plumed finials, knights with double horse heads, elaborate turrets surmounted by pagodas with spiral flags as rooks and pawns with gallery finial over pinwheel collars. Provenance: Sotheby Parke-Bernet sale No. 558, lot 30.

Estimate: 1,000 – 1,500 Canadian
Realized: 5,520



Lot 118: English Turned and Carved Bone Chess Set, 19th Century, King height 3.2" – 8.1 cm. One side left natural, the other stained red, with conventionalized pieces, the kings surmounted by Maltese Cross, queens by Prince of Wales plumes, all pieces with elaborate 'barleycorn' type carving.

Estimate: 200 - 300 Canadian
Realized: 384



Lot 119: German Ivory Mounted Ebony and Walnut, mid 20th Century, King height 4.1" – 10.4 cm. Each conventionalized piece of inverted horn shape, the monarchs with studded necks, the knights with horse heads on urn form bases.

Estimate: 700 - 900 Canadian
Realized: 0



Lot 120: Portuguese Turned and Carved Ivory 'Marine Life', early-mid 20th Century, King height 5.5" – 14 cm. One side left natural, the other stained dark green, with crowned monarchs and all pieces as fish, except knights and rooks which are sea horses and snails, respectively.

Estimate: 2,000 – 3,000 Canada
Realized: 9,600



Lot 121: French Carved and Polychromed Bone Figural, Dieppe, c.1770, King height 3" – 7.6 cm. European monarchs as kings as queens, admirals with leather tricorn hats as bishops, sea horses as knights, and turrets as rooks and baluster pawns with petal collars.

Estimate: 4,000 – 6,000 Canadian
Realized: 7,800



King height 5.4" – 13.8 cm. King and queen seated in meditation as monarchs, seated elephants as bishops, crowned seated horses as knights, pagoda temples as rooks, all on lotus blossom bases, with lotus blossom form pawns.

Estimate: 5,000 – 7,000 Canadian
Realized: 4,800



Lot 123: French Carved Ivory Renaissance Style Figural, early 20th Century, King height 4.4" – 11.2 cm. Both sides stained sepia and distinguished by costume, with European monarchs as kings and queens, noblemen as bishops, mounted knights as knights and foot soldiers as pawns.

Estimate: 2,000 – 3,000 Canadian
Realized: 10,200



Lot 124: French Carved Ivory 'Battle Crécy' Figural, early 20th Century, King height 5.4" – 13.7 cm. French side left natural with Philip VI as king, Joan of Burgundy as queen, foot soldiers with halberds as pawns. English side stained green with Edward III as king, Philippa of Hainault as queen, kneeling archers as pawns, all hunchbacks as bishops, horsemen as knights, and fortresses as rooks.

Estimate: 3,000 – 5,000 Canadian
Realized: 25,200



Lot 125: Set of Traditional Chinese Ivory Xiangqi Chess Counters, early 20th Century, height .7" – 1.8 cm., diameter 1.3" – 3.3 cm. Each squat barrel disc with incised character, one side stained black, the opposing side brown.

Estimate: 200 – 300 Canadian
Realized: 1,440



Lot 126: Collection of 45 French Carved Bone Spillikin Chess Pieces, Dieppe, 19th Century, length 5.5" – 14 cm. Includes bust forms, full length figures, flags, knights, pawns, and seven with painted highlights.

Estimate: 500 – 700 Canadian
Realized: 840



Lot 127: Turned and Carved 'Spanish Pulpit', c.1800, King height 4.5" – 11.4 cm. One side natural, the other stained brown, most pieces with stiff leaf decoration, monarchs with crown finials, bishops with mitres, horse heads as knights, turrets as rooks.

Estimate: 2,000 – 3,000 Canadian
Realized: 6,000



Lot 128: Thai Carved Bone and Ivory Figural, 19th Century, King height 3.1" – 8 cm. One side stained red, the other left natural, with seated kings and queens, mounted elephants and horses as bishops and knights respectively, pagodas as rooks and foot soldiers as pawns, all figures with horn inset eyes.

Estimate: 300 – 500 Canadian
Realized: 6,000



Lot 129: Mughal Carved and Polychromed Figura, Rajasthan, early 19th Century, King height 3" – 7.6 cm. One side with red accents, the other with green, with emperors and attendants as king and queen, camel heads as bishops, horse heads as knights, elephant heads as rooks and foot soldiers as pawns.

Estimate: 8,000 – 12,000 Canadian
Realized: 25,200



Lot 129A: Anglo-Indian Miniature Ivory and Horn Game Table and Chess Set, Vizagapatam, c.1840, height 9.25" – 23.5 cm. With white and red pieces on an octagonal veneered sandalwood top board on turned support on quadripartite base raised on paw feet.

Estimate: 800 – 1,200 Canadian
Realized: 4,320

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The future and quality of this publication depends on your contributions. Please send comments, notes, reports, articles, photos, stories, etc., to any of the people listed above. Electronic form would be best. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all who contributed to this issue.

A 'Class A' Act: Louis Persinger

THE MAN, TEACHER, MUSICIAN, COLLECTOR, PLAYER, WRITER, HUSBAND & FATHER

Chess and Music Further Explored

By John A. Mazzucco, Vermont

PREFACE

This article is somewhat a continuation in our exploration of the connection between chess and music, as detailed in the earlier article within the CCI-USA issue (Volume 2015 Issue 1). The title of that article (by the same author) was “Sound Moves on a Musical Chessboard”. That previous article initially investigated (at least in a superficial way) the apparent connection. Its eventual focus was on chess sets that had a musical theme. One such chess set adorned the front cover of the issue. However, the article went on to picture and discuss three other chess sets either within the author’s (that’s me!) own collection, or about to become part of his overall chess collection.

However, *this* article – in front of you – will focus on a special musician and his life, as well as focusing in on one of his many chess sets. So, how about we begin this article with riddle-like imagery?

QUESTION

Both tend to be seductively curved. Both arouse inner desires that need quenching. Both were owned and promoted (in a manner of speaking) by a genus of sorts. What are they?

In the picture to the right, we see a suggestion for the answer: MUSIC (in the familiar appealing female form of a shapely chess piece – a violin) can help elicit fantasies of the mind, spirit, and body. The chess piece is also representative of a potentially seductively luring and addictive activity – namely, the game of CHESS itself. Some of you have seen that particular chess piece “B-4” – in an earlier article from a chess set that I recently acquired from Floyd and

Bernice Sarisohn, curators of the Long Island Chess Museum and CCI founding members. It could also be said that the set was acquitted under the legal guidance of Attorney Floyd Sarisohn. However, I have promised to lessen my tongue-in-cheek punning and I am thusly substituting some serious talk. Therefore, I will duly abide by my promise – even though this article will be more laborious than usual for me to write.

I am of the strong opinion that Mr. Louis Persinger may well have found this particular “violin chess piece” (and its accompanying Stringed Instrument Chess Set) interesting. However, I doubt that he would have ever played a game of chess with that musical related chess set. The place where he made beautiful music and impressive feats was not on the chess board – though some may argue with that opinionated position. His piece de resistance was, rather, on the stage as well as the teacher’s studio and classroom.

Perhaps the more important question to be answered is “Who is (was) Louis Persinger?”

LOUIS PERSINGER

Louis Persinger was born in the USA on February 11, 1887, and died on December 31, 1966 at the age of 79. In his early learning years, he was seen as quite an accomplished and talented violinist. Among his places of residence were California, Illinois, and New York. As a gifted child he received lessons and training in various locations including Colorado. He also lived, taught, worked, and/or learned in some European countries such as France, Belgium and Germany.



Although he was an excellent violinist of meteoric rise, it was his gift as a violin teacher that brought him into worldview and exceptionally high appreciation. It also provided him with opportunities to play chess with other musicians as well as with international chess players. It was said by his wife (with whom the writer of this article met twice and corresponded frequently during the last few months of her life) that his international students would often bring him a chess set (from another country) as a gift. It was, in part, in this manner in which Mr. Persinger accumulated his many chess sets. How many? That information is, apparently, no longer readily available to me.

However, many years after Persinger's death, and well before her own demise, Ms. Joan Graul (Persinger's wife), still had well over 30 chess sets (and other chess related paraphernalia) in her possession. While at least some of those sets were sold or given away in the ensuing decades immediately after Persinger's death, approximately 20 or so sets were sold to two CCI members, of which I am one. Call me lucky. Call me opportunistic. Call me well connected with another (well known) chess collector. Just do not call me late to a game of chess (as it is never too late for a game of chess. Ask Tom Gallegos about that! But never, never.... punch the clock before I arrive at the other side of the chessboard!)

MUSIC? VIOLINS? SORRY, BUT THERE IS A GAME OF CHESS GOING ON HERE!

The December 29, 1957 issue of the Sunday New York Times contained an article written by Edward Downes. The last line of the article states, "...Mr. Oistrakh is sending his American friend... (Persinger)... a Russian chess set, a valuable set he will not entrust to the mails, but will send with another Soviet violinist, Leonard Kogan this winter."

So, here we see, dear reader, another familiar manner in which we chess collectors (including Persinger) have collected chess sets over time.

Among the world-famous violinists he taught (who also played chess) was Yehudi Menuhin [see picture to the right], with Persinger instructing Menuhin as a child in the art of the violin. However, there are numerous other musicians – including violinists, conductors, and pianist - who also played and play chess. In his 1961 article, as well as my

original article in hand by Persinger, this world-renowned Violinist Teacher lists dozens of chess playing musicians.

The Internet website at Chesshistory.com indicates that there was an article entitled "Chess and Music" by Louis Persinger on pages 209-210 of Chess Life, July 1961. The website mentions a discussion about of the affinity between the two arts (I do believe that musicians have had a very special hypnotic fascination for the 32 little figures and have always been very willing slaves to those little characters' inexhaustible intrigues and pranks.').

As just indicated, I have, in my possession, the original typed manuscript for that article, with handwritten corrections made by Mr. Persinger himself. He initially entitled the article "Chess, Music, Etc." Persinger speculated, in apparent awe, at the connection between chess and music. Allow me to quote some statements he made in that original document:

"It is perfectly correct to declare that chess and music can boast of certain basic similarities, that the one even complements the other, or that the simple explanation is that chess is exactly the opposite of music! (And as we know, of course, that opposites are liable to prove most attractive to each other). But nothing quite makes it clear why so many (many)



musicians of the most varied types have been addicted to chess. Of course, men and women of many other professions have been unable to withstand the temptations of the game, or have at least toyed with it or courted it for a time.”

Further on (in my original document entitled by Persinger, ‘Music, Chess, Etc.’), Persinger claims to have played against world-renowned and/or USA players such as Capablanca, Fischer, Reshevsky, Fine, the Byrne brothers, Marshall, Duchamp, M. Bronstein, Lasker, Euwe, Koltanowsky, and Jacqueline Piatigorsky. These games were most often, it seems, “...across the board, in off-hand games, or in simultaneous exhibitions, rapid transit tourneys, club matches, etc...”

Persinger adds, “Our symphony and theatre orchestras and chamber music groups number many chess enthusiasts, of course, and when they’re ‘on the road’, the ‘boys’ kill many an otherwise boring hour with exploits over the board. Some of the major orchestras... (in the USA)... have a board permanently set up, backstage, and when intermission times come around chess thoughts and chess pieces fly! And it’s the same with many European orchestras...”

Years later, a favorite author of mine, Katherine Neville, also made that connection (and furthered the mystical-appearing relationship between chess and music, as well as other art forms and methods of creativity, communication, and enjoyment. (That is, perhaps, the topic for another future article for CCI). In that novel, she also essentially investigated, in her own artistic novel way, relationships between time, space, energy, and historical human events. It was in that Mystery Thriller 550 page book, “The Eight”, that Neville shined in writing, as well as the intricacies involving human life and behavior – on the many levels that chess can bring. Her plot included the collection of chess pieces of a particular chess set, and the enigmatic aspects of that special chess set. Persinger showed his own brilliance in his world renowned musical teaching – and comparatively speaking, to a lesser degree, his chess prowess. What I would not give to have an ounce of Persinger’s chess talent, not to mention his outstanding musical genius. Furthermore, I might just trade in my paltry attempt at writing for Neville’s superlative ability to write a mystery. (However, some folks see my writing as a mystery. I don’t blame them for doing so).

It would seem to me that we (I) have talked enough about The Man Persinger (and The Lesser Man, Mazzucco), and not enough about chess sets – including the many he owned. The focus of this CCI article will be on only one, particularly interesting chess set, with which Persinger undoubtedly played games of chess at his home and perhaps elsewhere.

THE CHESS PIECES AND BOX

One of many chess sets, which Persinger had in his chess collection, is now in my own chess collection. In fact, I have several of his chess sets, thanks to Joan Gaul, Lestra Seguin, and Floyd Sarisohn. (Floyd, by the way, was also able to come into ownership of several of Persinger’s chess sets).

I would like to focus upon one relatively unique (in my opinion) chess set in that once, old, Persinger chess collection.

“The Chunky Monkey”

These carved and turned wood chess pieces appear “Stauntonish” in design. Although in my own 22½ (don’t forget the ½) years of chess collecting, I have not seen another of its specific style and mass, I would be surprised if its sister or brother is not lying around in someone’s basement or attic. A one-of-a-kind Stauntonish chess set is, by definition, certainly not the norm. I suspect that it was made after 1850, but more likely in the first part of the 1900’s. Upon arrival at my doorstep (along with several other chess sets), this particular chess set shouted out to me (and only me, as silence fell upon the ears of its accompanying visitors) and immediately introduced itself as “Chunky Monkey”. I believe that its self-adorned name is well suited and obvious when one sees the accompanying pictures on the following page. It arrived in the box seen in the picture on the bottom right of the next page. The pieces fit very well within the box. Not too big; not too small; just right! The corners of the hinged, well-worn box with a front clasp, are dovetailed. Box external dimensions are 8¼” x 8¼” x 5¾”.

As far as I can discern, there are three slightly – but noticeably - damaged chess pieces: a white and black bishop – each with a missing ball atop its deeply slotted top, and a damaged (missing) top “collar” (on opposite sides of the piece) of the white King. There is a slight but noticeable discoloration (actually a slightly darker reddish tone) to the white

king and - to a lesser degree - the white queen. It is possible that those two chess pieces are replacements. However if they are replacements, they are nearly exact duplicates for the originals (in form), in my opinion.

The general stems of the main chess pieces - but especially their respective bases - are massive. This appears to be especially evident in the knight and bishop. However, it also can be seen with respect to the rooks. Patina is generally excellent. Wear and dirt is noticeable, especially with respect to the knights. The chess pieces are not weighted. However, the chess pieces feel heavy, as if they were weighted. Perhaps it is due to their mass as well as the type of wood used. The dark pieces do not seem to have been stained or "ebonized" with a dark brownish stain. Their color seems to be "through and through". The dark chess pieces seem to have a somewhat visible "grain" or lines - similar to what can be seen on a cleanly sawed/cut tree stump - or the elongated lines on an ivory piano key. I suspect that, while possibly not immature ebony, the dark chess pieces may well be another dark hardwood such as walnut, etc. Perhaps some of you can take a close look?

King height (with padded felt below) is $3 \frac{7}{8}$ inches. The base diameter width is 2 inches.

The dimensions of the rest of the chess pieces are as follows:

- Queens: $3 \frac{3}{8}$ " tall and 2" wide
- Rooks: $2 \frac{3}{4}$ " tall and $1 \frac{7}{8}$ " wide
- Bishops (complete with small ball atop): $3 \frac{1}{8}$ " tall and $1 \frac{7}{8}$ " wide
- Knights: 3" tall and 2" wide
- Pawns: $2 \frac{1}{8}$ " tall and $1 \frac{5}{8}$ " wide

No chessboard accompanied the set. However, a suitable chessboard (23" x 23") with $2 \frac{1}{4}$ inch squares can suffice. A better-sized board for this set would have been one with $2 \frac{1}{2}$ inch squares.



THE PERSONAL CHESS ACHIEVEMENTS OF LOUIS PERSINGER

In 1943, the “U.S. Open” (a traditional yearly competitive tournament held in the USA) was held in Syracuse, New York. It was held in combination with the yearly NYSCA (New York State Chess Association) championships. Although Persinger did, at times, visit other countries overseas with respect to his musical endeavors, he did base his home in New York State. The location, therefore, was relatively convenient for Persinger to participate in the Class A Section of the tournament. In that Class ‘A’ Section, Persinger achieved an impressive First Place position against 12 other competitors [see picture, right]. He won 13 and drew 2 of the 15 games played.

In 1941, Louis Persinger participated in the first USCF open correspondence chess tournament and won! However, 3 years later (and one year after his 1st place showing in 1944, as mentioned in the preceding paragraph), he came in last place in the US Chess Championships. Of the 17 games played, he lost nearly all. However, the category, in which he played, carried many more exceptionally high-end chess players. In addition, in other games played against grandmasters and world-class chess players (and masters), he often lost. Among his various documented competitors were (psychologist) Rubin Fine, and (violinist) Oistrakh, who will be mentioned later in this article.

PERSINGER AND FAMILY

My personal (person to person) discussions in late 2013 with Persinger’s wife Joan Graul (who outlived him for 47 years) substantiates Persinger’s claim to have played several times with Bobby Fischer in the Persinger household. By the way, Mr. Louis Persinger was relatively “on in age” when he married his violin student, Joan, while she was at

Julliard School of Music in NYC. She was 18 and he was 68! (I guess Mr. Louis Persinger was a man of fine taste and impeccable ability to assess quality. In addition, he apparently had endurance in a number of life’s spheres, not the least of which was the seduction of music, chess, and the thought of fatherhood! Joan Howard (maiden name) apparently saw and knew a fine teacher and good provider (remember that the year was 1956) when she saw one. She was, needless to say, an accomplished musician herself. She was a violinist and pianist, who also eventually became part of the Vermont Symphony Orchestra upon her move to Vermont with husband # 2. Joan was indeed a woman of strength, endurance, and tolerance – as she outlived all three of her husbands! She was also a wonderful mother and provider herself.

Last but not least, Joan quickly became a good friend of mine. She had a devious sense of humor and her timing was superb. One day, while showing her one of my chess sets within a display cabinet, I mentioned that the set had one damaged rook (which I had not noticed when I first purchased the set). Her immediate response, made within a nanosecond, was, “You got rooked!”

On a further side note, Joan and Louis Persinger together had 4 children – 3 of whom have survived to this very day. Two of those adult children live here in New England, and one lives in

Arizona. I have met all three of them, and they are interesting, fine people. If it were not primarily due to Joan – but even more so one of Joan and Louis’s adult daughters, Lestra Seguin, this article would not likely be possible at all. Therefore, I would like to take this early opportunity to give special thanks and appreciation to Joan (now deceased) and especially to that wonderful professional nurse and friend, Lestra!



FURTHER DISCUSSION OF A PERSINGER NATURE

Aside from playing the violin and chess, Mr. Persinger also played something close to my heart: the piano. I can only dream of another lifetime (and perhaps an afterlife) when and where I could ever accomplish what he accomplished. (As a recently retired individual, my plan is to take piano lessons again. Early in my childhood, I had taken a mere 5 years of piano lessons. While I have played every now and then over the subsequent years, I have found that my own Steinway Model M piano – as beautiful as it potentially sounds – seems to be resisting the rusty efforts of my 8 fingers and 3 thumbs!

I have, in my possession, numerous score sheets of tournament games in which Persinger played with many other chess players. The documents I hold also include a certificate announcing that on August 29th, 1949, (and signed by Samuel Reshevsky) Persinger drew a game against Reshevsky in a simultaneous Exhibition given by Reshevsky and sponsored by the New York State Chess Association.

On the lower right corner of the March 1967 issue of USCF's *Chess Life*, shows a picture of a chess game between Persinger (who has white) and Oistrakh (world renowned violinist at that time). Both men were attending – as part of the jury/judging panel – for the “Queen Elizabeth Violin Competition” which took place in Brussels a few years earlier. Meanwhile, in that same picture, Yehudi Menuhin, another chess player, (and by then, superbly achieved and an adult) violin student of Persinger looks on and “kibitzes”.

Such impromptu games seemed to be a fairly frequent occurrence in Persinger's life, including musical and violin related events. Of interest is that such games often took place with simple wood or plastic Staunton chess pieces on a simple board (often made of a “pressboard”). This is often the case with many chess aficionados/players throughout the world – and even among “serious” chess players! This was indeed the case in that Brussels location. By the way, no chess clock is seen in the picture.

That associated article within that *Chess Life* issue was, entitled “Fiddling Around”.

The article consumes about 5 long paragraphs detailing aspect of the impromptu game as well as some aspects of the musical competition. Of further interest is that – according to the article – the Persinger/Oistrakh chess game was not recorded during the game. However, reportedly, a couple of days later, Oistrakh wrote down the chess score by memory. By the way, Persinger lost that game. Such is life – and more specifically, *Chess Life!* To have Oistrakh write down the respective 40 moves by memory – and many hours later – may not be too surprising. As with many other world-class musicians, who usually have a high degree of intelligence (at least in the musical realm), a good memory seems to be not all that unusual.

Needless to say, Persinger was an accomplished and driven aficionado of the game of chess. Evidence indicates that he rubbed shoulders with the elite of chess (as well as children, just learning to play chess – as shown in the picture below).

In a letter to its members, dated February 1, 1967, President Alfredo Cavalieri of the “Violoncello Teachers Guild, Inc.,” said the following of the then-deceased Louis Persinger:

“...His own life, too, was blessed by the friendship and guidance of the great artists and teachers of his younger days; the fruits of this flower into soloist, conductor and artist-teacher of international renown... Louis Persinger will be missed by his host of friends throughout the world. The spirit of his friendship and great personality remains a constant inspiration for us all...”



The following was taken from the Internet website, Chesshistory.com

‘From The Road to Music by Nicolas Slonimsky (Dodd, Mead and Company) we find a curious bit of chessmiana.

“Also in a humorous vein are such musical pieces as A Chess Game [see ‘score’ below], in which chess moves are imitated by melodic intervals. The pawn moves two spaces, and the melody moves two degrees of the scale. The knight jumps obliquely, as knights do in chess, and the melody moves an augmented fourth up. When the bishop dashes off on a diagonal, the music imitates the move by a rapid scale passage. Play this piece for a chess expert, and the chances are he will name the moves without a slip.”

NOT THE “INITIAL” – BUT RATHER, THE FINAL ENIGMATIC QUESTION (JUST OUT OF CURIOSITY):

It has been said (and most longtime chess players have heard) that there are 169,518,829,100,544,000,000,000,000 ways to play the first 10 moves in a game of chess.

If that is so, and if there is indeed an underlying connection/root/commonality (seen and unseen) between music and chess, then how many songs/tunes/melodies can be derived from just one octave of notes (13 notes including sharps and flats, as well as middle and upper C? It boggles the mind and could such an astronomical number exist? (Boggles, however, is another game introduced by the American Games Company in 1972 – and could, in fact, be quite the topic for another time by an imaginary and alternative sister organization to CCI. Another international group: “BCI”?... one stepping letter ahead of CCI?... (Mission)... IMPOSSIBLE!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS & REFERENCES

Wife of Louis Persinger, Joan Graul (03/02/37 - 12/21/13). Last residence: Vermont.

Lestra Seguin, (daughter of Louis Persinger and Joan Graul); Vermont.

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