

Gady Costeff Jubilee

I first met Gady when he was a teenager, at the local Tel Aviv chess club. I recall that around 1980 we found out that we had both, independently, composed a 100% identical scheme (!), and this without having a required set theme. I was several months ahead of him, so the piece (a small-scale idea) bears my name. It was an extraordinary occurrence which enables me to pride myself that I once had the same brainwave as Costeff.

Gady's most prominent characteristic is his unassuming character, always thinking less of himself and of his works than he should. One may recall, in this context, Gady's hilarious piece "How I became a Great Composer" (EG159-162, p. 379) in which he modestly suggested that, in several joint compositions in which he was involved, his main role was buying a round of beers. Yeah, sure.

I always knew that Gady was capable of great things but, it was not until I interviewed him for my book *The Grandmaster's Mind* (Gambit, 2004) that I had finally realized that he was not just another inventive chap, but one of the best contemporary study composers. While most studies present one or two brilliant moves or a clever manoeuvre, Gady's works tend to present grandiose operations, ultra-deep conceptions and full-scale symphonies that leave a lasting impression. He consistently and justly scores top prizes in major competitions.

In May 2011 Gady Costeff will celebrate his 50th birthday and I suggested arranging a jubilee tourney in his honour. Original as always, Gady preferred that some acquaintances should write an appreciation of him or his works. I willingly took on the task and invited several distinguished authors to contribute. You will find six mini-articles in the following pages. While the authors express themselves in different styles, they all share a great respect for Gady's work.

I thank HH for his consent to introduce this appreciation-piece in EG.

(Amatzia Avni)

The Early Days: A Star is Born

BY HILLEL ALONI

During the 1960s and the 1970s, our English friends more than once expressed their amazement at the Israeli study composers' youthfulness. They said that almost always people were attracted to the field of study composing when they were more mature. Our new composers proved to be not only young but also successful and within two generations they had produced 3 IM's and 2 FM's, quite a feat for a small nation in such a short time span.

We shall now concentrate on the story of the rise of Gady Costeff, a prominent representative of this group of composers who has recently crossed the IM barrier, heading to perhaps an even brighter future.

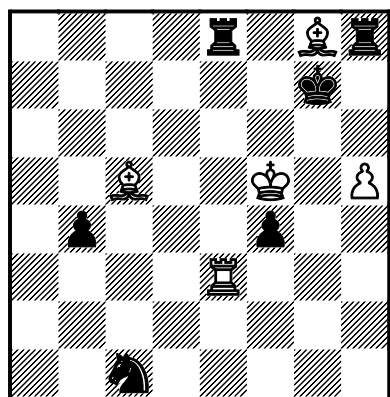


34 years ago, in the studies section of the Israeli chess federation's magazine, 16 year-old Gady Costeff published his first work, after making his initial attempts at composing just six months before. The present writer, who was then the studies column's editor, was impressed by the natural, economical and

challenging position with a feel of dramatic events already 'in the air' ...

G. Costeff

Schahmat 1977. First study



f5g7 0723.12 5/4 Win

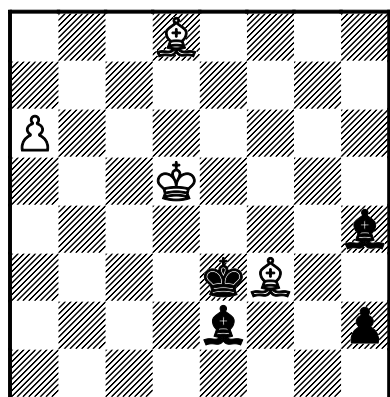
1.Bd4+ Re5+! 2.Rxe5! Rxh5+! (Rxcg8 3.Re8+ Kf7 4.Rxcg8 Kxcg8 5.Kg6 Se2 6.Be5 wins) **3.Kg4! Rxe5 4.Bc4! Kf6 5.Kxf4 b3 6.Bxe5+** with **7.Bb2** (These were the days before the Comay-Thompson computer discoveries that 2B always win vs. S).

It took another whole year before Gady published his second study, a pleasant miniature which was commended in the Israeli Ty. As in the previous year, this work too impressed both solvers and the judge.

Remarkably, Gady's third and fourth studies also appeared at annual intervals. It turned out that the bright young star was not in a hurry; it was more important for him that his pieces should contain wide and worthwhile content.

G. Costeff

Schahmat 1980



d5e3 0080.11 4/4 Draw

White's pieces are simultaneously threatened. His king's unfortunate position along the a8-h1 diagonal has put his chances of escape in doubt, but Gady prepares a devilish dance of four bishops, culminating in a surprising finish:

1.Bh1! Bf3+ 2.Kc5!! Bxh1 White intended 3.Bc7. 2...Bg3!? fails because of 3.Bc7! (not 3.Bxf3? Kxf3 4.a7 Bf2+) Bxc7 4.Bxf3! draws. **3.Bc7!** Now it transpires that had white chosen in his second move 2.Kc4 (Ke6)? he would have lost to 3...Bd5+!, while 2.Kd6 (Ke5) would have closed the b8-h2 diagonal for Bc7! **3...Be7+ 4.Kb6 Bd8! 5.Ka7!! Bxc7 stalemate!**

This piece took 4th prize in the Israeli Ring Ty 1980, and signalled a landmark in Costeff's meteoric rise towards the world's summit in subsequent years.

This, in a nutshell, is the story of the fresh appearance and a giant leap forward of a young, talented and imaginative lad, a self-made composer who always strives to perfection, to the front stage of the artistic art of chess studies.

Meeting Ambitious Challenges

BY YOCHANAN AFEK

I met Gady back in the late 1970 in the municipal youth chess centre of Tel-Aviv. He was a decent player from the small town of Ramat Hasharon, yet not exactly the competitive type one usually meets in tournaments. I suspect that the ordinary realm of over-the-board chess was not stimulating enough for his unique fantasies and pretty soon he was more and more attracted to the excitement of our own art.

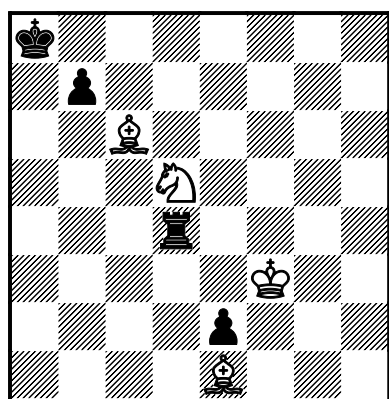
In those days the chess centre was directed by the Israeli legend IM Moshe Czerniak, who taught us all to seek chess beauty rather than Elo points and to adore endgame studies rather than opening books. No wonder it became a sort of a glasshouse for a generation of young composers of which the names of Ofer Comay, Amatzia Avni and yours truly made

later their way to the International scene. Gady ceased fighting flesh and blood opponents much earlier than the rest of us and almost from the very beginning preferred to use conventional chess materials for creating some of the most imaginative fairy tales ever seen, without any need for a single fairy rule or a fairy piece.

He scored some fine achievements even in his youth, winning among others the studies section of the 1983 WCCT; but I was especially impressed (a matter of personal taste), by the following classic:

Gady Costeff

1st hon. mention *The Problemist* 1980



f3a8 0321.02 4/4 Win

1.Sb6+! (1.Sc7+? Kb8 2.Sb5 Rd3+ 3.Kxe2 bxc6) **1...Ka7** **2.Sc8+** **Kb8** **3.Se7!** **Rd1** **4.Bg3+** (4.Kxe2? Rxe1+ 5.Kxe1 bxc6) **4...Ka8** (Ka7 5.Kxe2 Rg1 6.Bf2+) **5.Kxe2** **Rg1** **6.Bf2** (6.Bh2? Rg7 7.Sf5 Rh7) **6...Rg5** (Rg7 7.Sf5 Rg5 8.Be4) **7.Be4** (7.Be3? Re5) **7...Re5** **8.Sd5!!** **Rxe4+** **9.Kf3** (Domination!) **9...Re5** **10.Sb6+** **Kb8(Ka7)** **11.Sd7+** wins.

Classics, however, were hardly Gady's real artistic goal; he was after much more ambitious challenges in the minefields of minor-promotions. Over the years he created quite a few masterpieces showing the desired Alumwandlung theme in highly original settings. He is still the only person to demonstrate three quarters of the Babson-Task in a correct endgame study.

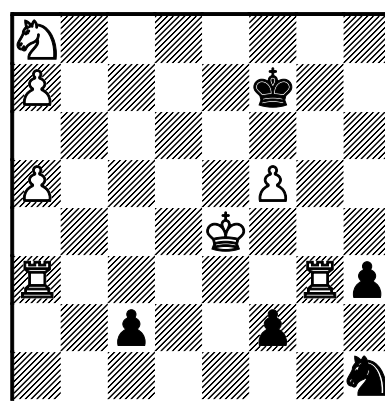
Around 2000, Gady's career seemed to take off to new heights. Exhausting more or less the mega-schemes of minorpromotions, he was now seeking even more ambitious goals,

transferring to our genre classical themes and tasks typical to mate problems. He has done wonders with Bristols, Staircases and Switchbacks and even has enriched us with the most beautiful realization of the difficult Valladão Task. Gady rarely bothers to spare material in his tireless efforts to make his most daring concepts come true. For him, the idea is what counts, whatever the cost.

If I have to pick up one of Gady's studies as my favourite, here it is, still a Meredith:

Gady Costeff

1st hon. mention Stoffelen 70 JT 2008



e4f7 0204.33 7/5 Win

1.Rg7+!! (Logical try: 1.Rgc3!? f1Q 2.Rxc2 Sf2+ 3.Rxf2 Qxf2. 1.Rgf3!? c1Q 2.Sb6 Sg3+ 3.Kd4 Se2+ 4.Ke4 Sg3+ draw) **1...Kxg7** **2.Ra1** **f1Q** **3.Rxf1** **Sg3+** **4.Kd3** **Sxf1** **5.Kxc2** **Se3+** (h2 6.Sb6 h1Q 7.a8Q Qh2+ 8.Kb3 Qg3+ 9.Ka4 Qf4+ 10.Kb5 Qxf5+ 11.Qd5 Qb1+ 12.Kc6 Qa1 13.Kb7 wins) **6.Kd3** **Sd5** **7.Sb6** **Sc7** **8.Sd5** **Sa8** **9.Sf4** **h2** **10.Sh5+!** The point of the key! **10... Kh6** **11.Sg3** **Kg5** **12.Ke4** **Kg4** **13.Sh1** wins.

The cornered Knights have exchanged places.

Despite a string of remarkable achievements, Gady retains his inborn modesty. Two years ago I organized a solving contest at the Corus festival and asked my colleagues and friends to spare an unpublished study for that purpose. Gady, who happened to have one, was sceptical whether it was good enough for such an event and it took some effort to persuade him. The solvers apparently thought otherwise and GM John Nunn even declared that Gady's entry was his favourite. Later on,

when this study was submitted to my column in *The Problemist* for publication, it was awarded a first prize in the biennial composing tourney, by ... Judge John Nunn.

What shall I wish Gady on the complete of his first 50 years? That the next one will be at least as creative and successful as this one. Please, dear Gady, don't ever cease to surprise us, time and again, with your freshness and originality.

An Artist's Distinctive Style

BY SERGIY DIDUKH

Fellow-composers participating in this original celebration of Gady Costeff's 50-year jubilee know him much better than I do. A rare exchange of letters outlines the scale of our communication. His words of support and valuable answers to my questioning helped me to take my first steps in chess composition. You should interpret this introductory anecdote as a demonstrative rolling-up of the sleeves: there are no hidden cards. The part of an honest magician surely suits me a lot in this situation and I'll gladly play it here to show how creative work truly reveals the man's nature.

Gady Costeff is not afraid of any illusions and difficulties. His distinctive style tends to heavyweight fights with spectacular punches and uppercuts. These shows with dislodged jaws and broken bones are called romantic in chess composition! Great historical feature films can convey the heroic romanticism of wars masking the atrocity of bloody battles. Gady can show it in studies. He craftily replaces furious combinations by peaceful scenes of elegant struggle for tiny advantages. Chess pieces don't lose their self-control in rumbling positions and often undertake subtle manoeuvres instead of imminent carnage; well-coordinated, they make their contribution to grandiose plots of the commander. If you panic at the sight of 'blood' and enjoy the masterful touch of the Israeli composer in his studies with economical settings, you should

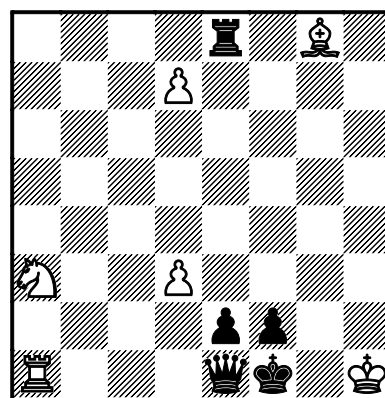
be aware that he uses just the minimum number of pieces necessary for every specific idea.

I am sure that if you ask Gady whose studies and advices helped him to develop his combative style, he, will out of respect, enumerate a dozen names. I would delete from this list those who use a sledgehammer for nailing a clock on the wall, but an expert of composition workshop such as Jan Rusinek definitely deserves his place there. Record ideas trembled with fear when these two masters did their job. They are the only ones who defied the Babson task in the study and realised three pairs of mutual identical promotions. Many fans of the genre know the short but incomplete Babson-study story. J. Rusinek started the assault in 1980. His study was cooked, but one year later Gady corrected it. In 1997 he also composed another 75% Babson with rooks instead of bishops. That's all, but not quite. I assume with 75% certainty that the first correct task of 1981 gave birth to the silver prize-winner by J. Rusinek in the 3rd WCCT 1984-1988. The similar placing of pieces is undeniable even if the championship theme 'mate with pinned queen' has little in common with promotions. Perhaps Gady noticed it too and even admired the Polish composer's perspicacity but doubted that mates can be inserted in the task!

G. Costeff

2nd spec. hon. mention *Sakkélet* 1981

Original version S. Didukh



h1f1 3411.12 6/5 Win

1.Sb1! Unpinning the queen! 1...Rxb8
2.Sd2 mate, first mate with a pinned queen.

1...Qc1 2.Sd2+ Ke1 3.Sf3+ Kd1 4.Bb3 second correct mate. **1...Qxb1 2.Rxb1+**, with

– **e1Q 3.dxe8Q!** Not 3.dxe8R? Qxb1 4.Bd5 Qb7! (Qxd3? 5.Bg2 mate) 5.Bxb7 stalemate. **3...Qxb1 4.Bd5.** It's not easy at all to win after 4.Bc4!? Qb7+ 5.Qe4 Qc7 6.Qg6. **4...Qb7 5.Qh5 Ke1 6.Qe5+ Kf1 7.Qa1+** stalemate avoided.

– **e1B 3.dxe8B!** 3.dxe8S? Ke2 4.Rb2+ Bd2 5.Rb1 Be1 draw.

– **e1S 3.dxe8S!** 3.dxe8B? Ke2 4.Rb2+ Ke3 5.Rxf2 Kxf2 6.d4 Ke3 7.d5 Sd3, the knight captures the last pawn. **3...Ke2 4.Rb2+ Ke3 5.Rxf2 Kxf2 6.d4 Ke3 7.d5** wins.

Deep (Blue) Costeff

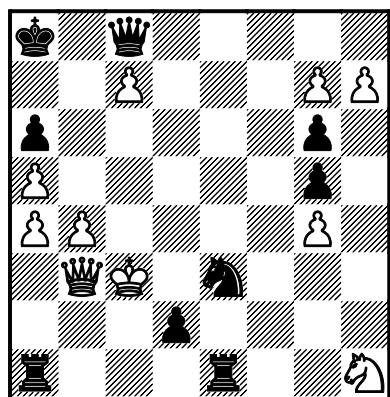
BY PAZ EINAT

Gady, I wish you many happy returns and continuous creativity. My wife Miri happily joins the greetings; she somehow happened to know you before I did, as they grew up in the same town. Miri highly recommended him (over 30 years ago) for one of his first jobs, replacing her in cleaning staircases in some apartment buildings! [Gady made some progress since then; he is currently CEO of an internet company – A.A.].

Choosing a study was rather easy as the one below is one of my all-time favourites.

Gady Costeff

6th Place 7th WCCT 2001-2004



c3a8 4604.73 10/8 Win

Usually, when I take a look at such a study I simply stare helplessly at the board without a clue of what to do. This is exactly the case

here. Fortunately, I have the solution in front of me, so now I can stare helplessly at the solution...

Well, after much work I get to understand some of it. The key is suppose to be **1.g8Q** but why not 1.h8Q? Apparently, we get into an important variation that will come up along the solution. 1...Rac1+ Kxd2 (White needs to make sure this pawn will go away before it will emerge as a queen) Sc4+ 3.Qxc4 Rcd1+ 4.Kc3 Rc1+ 5.Kb3 (5.Kd4 Rxc4+ 6.Kxc4 Re8) Rb1+ 6.Ka3 Ra1+ 7.Qa2 Rxa2+ 8.Kxa2 Re8 9.g8Q Rxg8 and Black gets the upper hand. The difference is that with a queen on g8 White can reply: Rac1+ 2.Kxd2 Sc4+ 3.Qgxc4 and wins. The same is true for 1.g8R?, a relevant attempt to overcome future stalemate, as again Rac1+ 2.Kxd2 Sc4+ leads to the same continuation. If I would be playing Black now I would happily send my king packing, but while White makes rather straightforward moves (queen promotions, although carefully selected) Black's response is very subtle: **1...Ka7!** The idea is that after **2.Qxc8** Black can play Sc4+ again, but why not 2.h8Q? The reason is d1Q+ 3.Qd4+ (White's best as he must check) Qxd4+ 4.Kxd4 Qxg4+ and Black can draw.

So we continue **2...Rac1+** (no time for d1Q now) **3.Kxd2** (3.Kd4? d1Q+ and following the exchange on d1 the rooks can keep on checking for a draw). **3...Sc4+ 4.Kd3!** now comes a more difficult question; why not 4.Qxc4? and again Black must play really well: Rcd1+ 5.Kc3 Re3+ 6.Kc2 Re2+ 7.Qxe2 Rd2+ (White must avoid the captures that result in stalemate) 8.Kc3 Rd3+ 9.Kc4 Rd4+ 10.Kc5 Rd5+ 11.Kc6 Rd6+ and Black draws! So play continues "naturally" **4...Se5+** (no time for Re3+ 5.Kd4 Rxb3 6.Qb8+) **5.Kd4** the white king is "locked" between the two rooks and can move only along the d file **5...Sc6+ 6.Kd5 Se7+** and what now? Can White give away the promoted queen? **7.Kd6 Sxc8+** yes! **8.Kd5** (8.Kd7 Re7+ 9.Kxc8 Rxc7) **8...Se7+ 9.Kd4 Sc6+** (Rxb1? loses quickly to 10.b5 Rxb7 11.Qe3 Rxc7 12.b6+) **10.Kd3 Se5+ 11.Kd2 Sc4+** We get the same position as af-

ter Black's 3rd move, but without the white queen! This meets the theme of the WCCT studies section. How does this difference allow White to win? Well, without wQc8 Black cannot use the stalemate strategy. **12.Qxc4 Rcd1+ 13.Kc3 Rc1+ 14.Kb3** (14.Kd4? Rxc4+ 15.Kxc4 Rxh1! and Black can play Rc1+ and thus a draw) **14...Rb1+ 15.Ka3 Ra1+ 16.Qa2 Rxa2+ 17.Kxa2 Rxh1** (Re8 18.b5 Kb7 19.b6 Rh8 20.Sg3 Rxh7 21.Se4 wins) **18.c8R!** a beautiful finish, promoting a rook where the white queen was thematically sacrificed. Obviously, 18.c8Q leads to stalemate after 18...Ra1+.

Now we can look back at what has been achieved in this study. First, choosing the queen as the piece to be thematically removed is a brave undertaking. The reasoning behind this, namely prevention of the black stalemate manoeuvre, is sharp and easy to understand but very difficult to realize. The removal of the white queen using the black knight/white king journey along the d-file, going up and down like two persons in deep thought, is highly artistic and, for me, is the heart of the study. The final touch, the rook promotion (instead of a queen) contrasts with White's first move, in which a queen promotion is preferred over rook, actually leading to the entire stalemate issue.

Fantastic!!!

Miniatures: A Unique Interpretation

BY EMIL VLASÁK

Happy birthday from the Czech Republic, a country with an old endgame study tradition! Our study grandfathers lived under the influence of the well-known Bohemian problem school and so they accepted the idea of strict economy in studies, even for both fighting sides. This approach has been revered here up to this day, for example by Jaroslav Pospíšil, IM Jaroslav Polášek or the present leader, Mario Matouš.

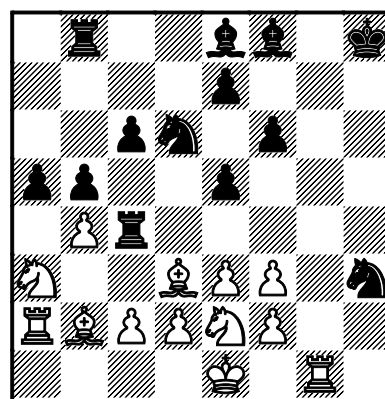
Our endgame study circle in Prague was visited in the past by Jan van Reek, John Roycroft and John Beasley; in June 2002 Gady Costeff suddenly appeared. A quick search into HH's collection led us to expect that it would be very interesting. Gady is a romantic composer, often using a big "canvas". Although the meeting took only two hours, Gady left an excellent impression. I will never forget his introductory wisecrack, softening creative differences. He said to Matouš: "*A miniature for you means you have 7 pieces on the board; and a miniature for me means that 7 pieces are missing.*" Great!

Unfortunately this has, so far, been my only meeting with Gady; therefore my contribution cannot include a broader personal dimension. I would like to comment on a Costeff study and add several words about Gady's Chess Query Language, known as CQL.

I am not a typical "Bohemian" composer: almost all effects in the study composition have already been invented and finding some original idea is, for me, more valuable than producing technically perfect constructions. That is why I have chosen the following study which is objectively not a technical masterpiece, but its high originality appeals to me.

Gady Costeff

special prize Humour Tourney *EBUR* 2004



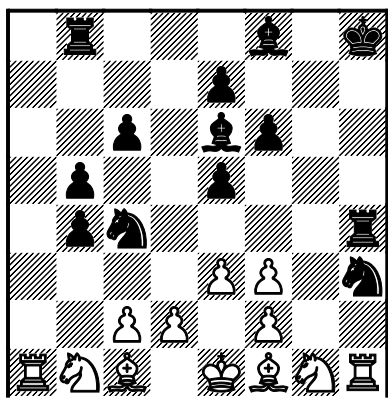
e1h8 0888.66 13/13 Win

My famous countryman, Richard Réti, has defined a study as an endgame with 'extraordinary' content. He was not fully correct because a lot of modern studies are typical middle games. Here, in the initial position only queens and two pairs of pawns have been

traded. It looks like it is taken from a game rather than being an artificial construction; a valuable feature, not often seen in modern composition.

1.*Bxc4?* Sxg1 2.Sxg1 axb4 gives nothing. 1.*Sxc4?!* Sxg1 2.Sxd6 Sxf3+ 3.Kd1 exd6 4.bxa5 Ra8 5.Sg3 gives White a small edge, but it is insufficient to win. White can also win a pawn playing 1.*Rg3?!* Rh4 2.bxa5. But the extra pawn a5 is noticeably weak and it gives Black a good counter-play.

The blitz-game move **1.Rh1!** – pinning a knight – is correct here. All next moves dangle around this pin and thus it is not difficult to find the whole solution. **1...Rh4 2.Sg1!** Bad is 2.*bxa5?* Bh5! with the point 3.*Sg1?* Sxg1! 4.Rxh4 Sxf3+. Similar fork-tricks to unpin work in lines 3.*Sg3* Bxf3 4.Rh2 Ra8 5.Sb1 Kg7 6.Sf5+ Sxf5 7.Bxf5 Bd5 8.Ra1 Sg5! or 2.*Sb1?* Bh5 3.bxa5 Bxf3 4.Rh2 Kg7 5.Sec3 Sf4! **2...Bf7 3.Ra1! axb4 4.Sb1! Be6** (Sc4 5.Bc1 Be6 6.Bf1 transposes to the main line) **5.Bf1!** After 5.f4? Sc4! 6.Bc1 Rh6! Black finally unpins. **5...Sc4 6.Bc1!**



The main rule for chess openings is somersaulted in this study! Finishing his *anti-development* (1.Rh1, 2.Sg1, 3.Ra1, 4.Sb1, 5.Bf1, 6.Bc1), White finally wins a minor piece with a technical win.

Do you need proof that this idea is really original? Since 1992 we have had at our disposal the HH database, covering almost all relevant published studies. But nevertheless it is not easy to test for more complex themes here. A chess player doesn't need to examine echoes and hence the searching features of

players' software like Fritz, ChessBase, ChessAssistant or Arena are very limited.

In 2004 Gady Costeff and Lewis Stiller wrote special software, CQL, for this purpose. The name is a small joke for experts, paraphrasing the SQL widely used in commercial computing. CQL is very powerful. It represents a great contribution to the art of chess study, comparable with Gady's best compositions.

CQL is not easy to use. Very detailed guidelines were published in EG176 and EG178. I give here only the requested proof. You have to write and run a query something like this.

```
(match
:pgn heijden.pgn
:output result.pgn
(position :movefrom R?? :moveto .a1)
(position :movefrom R?? :moveto .h1)
(position :movefrom B?? :moveto .c1)
(position :movefrom B?? :moveto .f1)
(position :movefrom N?? :moveto .b1)
(position :movefrom N?? :moveto .g1))
```

As a result you get truly the only study – the Costeff one.

Once again, good luck for the second half, Gady!

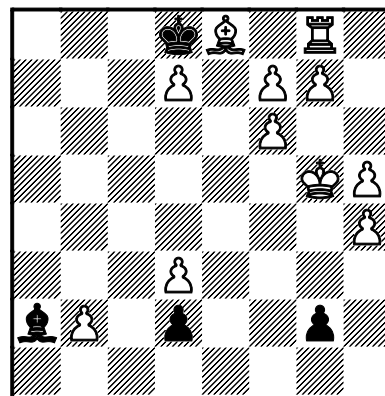
No Big Deal: The Maestro's Secrets Exposed

BY OFER COMAY

Have a look at the following study:

Gady Costeff

1st prize *Israel Ring Tourney* 2001



g5d8 0140.82 11/4 BTM, win

The solution is: **1...g1Q+! 2.Kh6 Qe3+ 3.Kh7 Qxd3+ 4.Kh8 Qe3 5.f8S! Qh6+ 6.Sh7 Bxg8 7.Kxg8 d1Q! 8.Kh8 Qd6 9.g8S! Qdf8**



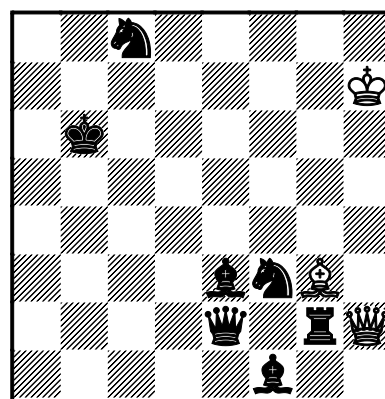
Gady Costeff

After long introductory play: **1.Rac8+ Kb7 2.Rb8+ Kc6 3.b5+ Kc5 4.Rbc8+ Sc7 5.Rxc7+ Kd5 6.Bf7+ e6 7.Bxg8 Bxg8 8.Rec8!** it's no good to win material with 8.Rcc8? because after Ba1 9.Rxg8 Qb2 Black has a winning attack. Now, Black is caught in an embarrassing situation. Those who have "Fritz" software can verify easily that 8...Qh7

doesn't help, because of 9.Rxd7, and the only way to release the black pieces is to make a Bristol: **8...Ba1!** Now 9.Rc2? (against Qb2) fails to 9...Qh7!; therefore White must create a Bristol of his own: **9.Rc1! Qb2 10.R8c2!** And again, Black's pieces reach annoying positions. It's no good to play Qe5 11.d4 Bxd4 12.Rd2, therefore blacks tries another Bristol: **10...Qh8 11.Rc8! Bg7 12.R1c7! draw.**

What's going on here? Why are we so impressed by these studies? A little research reveals one of Gady's basic tools: take a complex theme (Bristol or promotion), realize it in Black and White, and then – duplicate everything!

It seems that after understanding that simple approach, every composer can obtain similar achievements and become a Costeff (or, in a verb form – to Costeff)! I tried it myself and started with the scheme below that realizes two Bristols by each side:



H2# a) diagram

b) in the mating position of a),
move Kb6 to f2

[a) 1. Qa6 Bb8 2.Bb5 Qc7 mate; b) 1. Bf1 Qh2 2. Qe2 Bg3 mate].

Now – the only thing that remains – is to put everything in one variation and make it a study. This looks rather easy: in studies there are no stupid constraints such as limited number of moves, as we have in helpmates.

I am still working on it.