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Berlin Wall

John Cox

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John Cox : Berlin Wall before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Berlin Wall:

28 of 28 people found the following review helpful. Superb opening instruction By Goosemeyer I am completely in awe of the author's accomplishment. How many times have you read about an opening book claiming to focus on ideas and been disappointed? Well, this time you won't be. Cox spends some 130 pages on deep deep explanatory material before he even starts talking theory. Now this isn't an easy opening and it's going to take a lot of work to absorb all the positional motifs and endgame subtleties and piece evaluations, but the material is there for you. The book has done its job to perfection - the rest is up to you. You learn which pieces are valuable and for what reason, which trades are advantageous, what plans White will likely adopt and how to counter them, which pawn moves are appropriate in

which cases, how to position your King, how to coordinate your pieces to blockade White's pawn majority, specific recurrent tactical motifs, and I could go on and on. Cox offers repertoire coverage of three systems of development after the initial position, Kramnik's ...Bd7 against Kasparov, Kaufman's ...Be7, and the contemporary ...Ne7, each of which has a different character. He does not offer coverage of divergences before 3...Nf6 but refers you to Mihail Marin's *Beating the Open Games* (outstanding itself, but in a different style). Now I mentioned that it is not easy material. Some of the endgame discussions, for example, assume you have a clue, which in my case was a bit optimistic, but even in those cases it offers great material for study and analysis so that you can come to understand his points as you improve. The third endgame study, to offer one example, passes over a long corresponding squares sequence (I think) without comment. There is still enough simple material though for modest players to get their money's worth many times over straight out of the gate. The Berlin is one Ruy that you might actually get to play, given that it has a short entry sequence. If you don't get that far then Mihail Marin's wonderful book has your back. The combination is a remarkable collection of material that will help any player learn and play the open games seriously and with growing confidence. You really couldn't ask for more. 10 of 11 people found the following review helpful. Thorough in opening theory as well as positional themes

By James Wagner
Cox explains in great detail the various plans white and black have in the Berlin Wall variation of the Spanish. In the first part of the book he examines the various endgames that may arise - the pawn ending, rook ending, double rook, knight vs bishop, bishop vs knight, other bishop vs knight, etc. However, the Berlin Wall doesn't directly lead to these endgames, but to a queenless middlegame. Thus the next part is devoted to showing numerous examples of typical positional themes and tactical blows. The final chapters deal with the opening theory - and Cox looks at a lot of lines and variations, practically all of black's (and white's) tries get a look. The only small problem I had was that often, in the notes to a game, punctuation would be forgotten, which sometimes makes it a bit hard to understand where Cox is coming from. But overall this book is an excellent resource for anyone interested in the Berlin Wall defense. 1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Masterpiece on the Berlin Wall

By Thijs
As I was looking for an opening to play with black, I came across this book, and after reading many positive reviews I decided to give it a shot. Reading the book I was very surprised how the Berlin Wall can actually be so entertaining (both to read about and to play as black!), given the bad reputation it has in the chess world as hoping for a draw with black. Against average opponents however the Berlin Wall is both a solid choice, as a rich choice with many options for white to go wrong and win the game as black.

Pros: + Very well-written, an absolute pleasure to read + Completely changed my mind about this opening, after reading this book + With Kramnik having beaten Kasparov with the Berlin, this is a durable choice as well, even if you get to the GM level
Cons: - There is an annoying "bug" in the book which causes many punctuation marks to be missing, which makes it a bit less of a pleasure to read - As for the opening, it is not the most convenient in the sense that there are many enormous sidelines: before you get to the Berlin on the 8th move, white could already have deviated in many ways, and black has to be prepared for those sidelines as well. (Many of these sidelines are covered in this book as well though, but e.g. you may also face the Scotch, the Italian game, the King's gambit etc.)

The Berlin variation of the Spanish is one of the most popular chess openings among world-class players. After 1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 Nf6 Black can play a completely sound opening based mainly on understanding rather than memorizing theory. Many opening books make this claim, but the scarcity of forcing lines in the Berlin mean that in this case it is true. The trick is to gain the requisite understanding, and this is where John Cox's eloquent prose comes into its own. After reading his explanations it will be clear why this robust opening has been nicknamed The Berlin Wall.

You learn so much about chess from reading this book it is amazing! It is incredibly well-written.
Carsten Hansen,
ChessCafe