

Alexei Shirov - My best games in the Sicilian english DVD review

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FritzTrainer opening Alexei Shirov My best games in the Sicilian

System requirements: Pentium Processor at 300 Mhz or higher, 64 mb RAM, Windows 98SE, Windows 2000, Windows XP, Windows Media Player 9.0, DVD drive.

Remark: the DVD is not playable on a standalone DVD player.

DVD contents:

Chessbase 9 Reader with 7 page manuals in English and German language in PDF format.

A readme.txt file.

Chessbase Videos (in Chessbase WMV format):

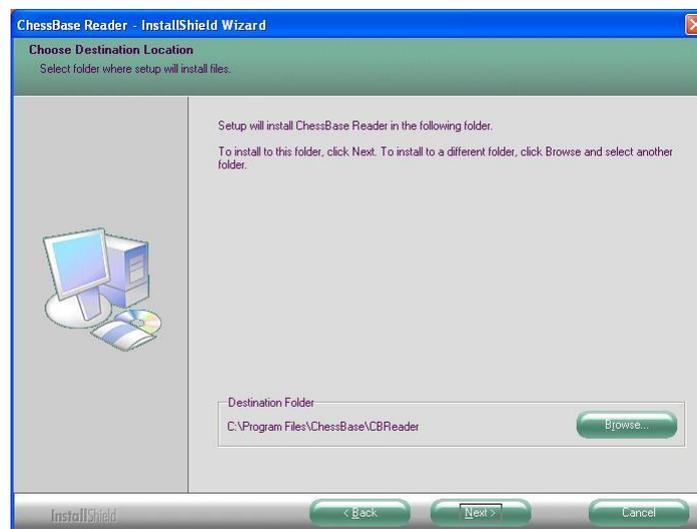
- Intro & Kan Variation (40:33)
- Taimanov Variation (34:51)
- Paulsen System (30:03)
- Sveshnikov Variation (23:10)
- Rossolimo Variation 1 (31:04)
- Rossolimo Variation 2 (30:48)
- Richter-Rauzer Attack 1 (16:38)
- Richter-Rauzer Attack 2 (23:19)

Total playing time: approximately 3h 50 min.

Total DVD size: approximately 897 megabytes.

Installation:

Installation of the Chessbase Reader starts automatically.



After the 1-minute installation is complete, you're prompted to restart your computer.

This DVD comes in a colorful, well designed DVD box. The system requirements for the DVD are pretty low, ensuring all users can benefit from installing and experiencing the videos.

Here is where you start. One click will open a video.

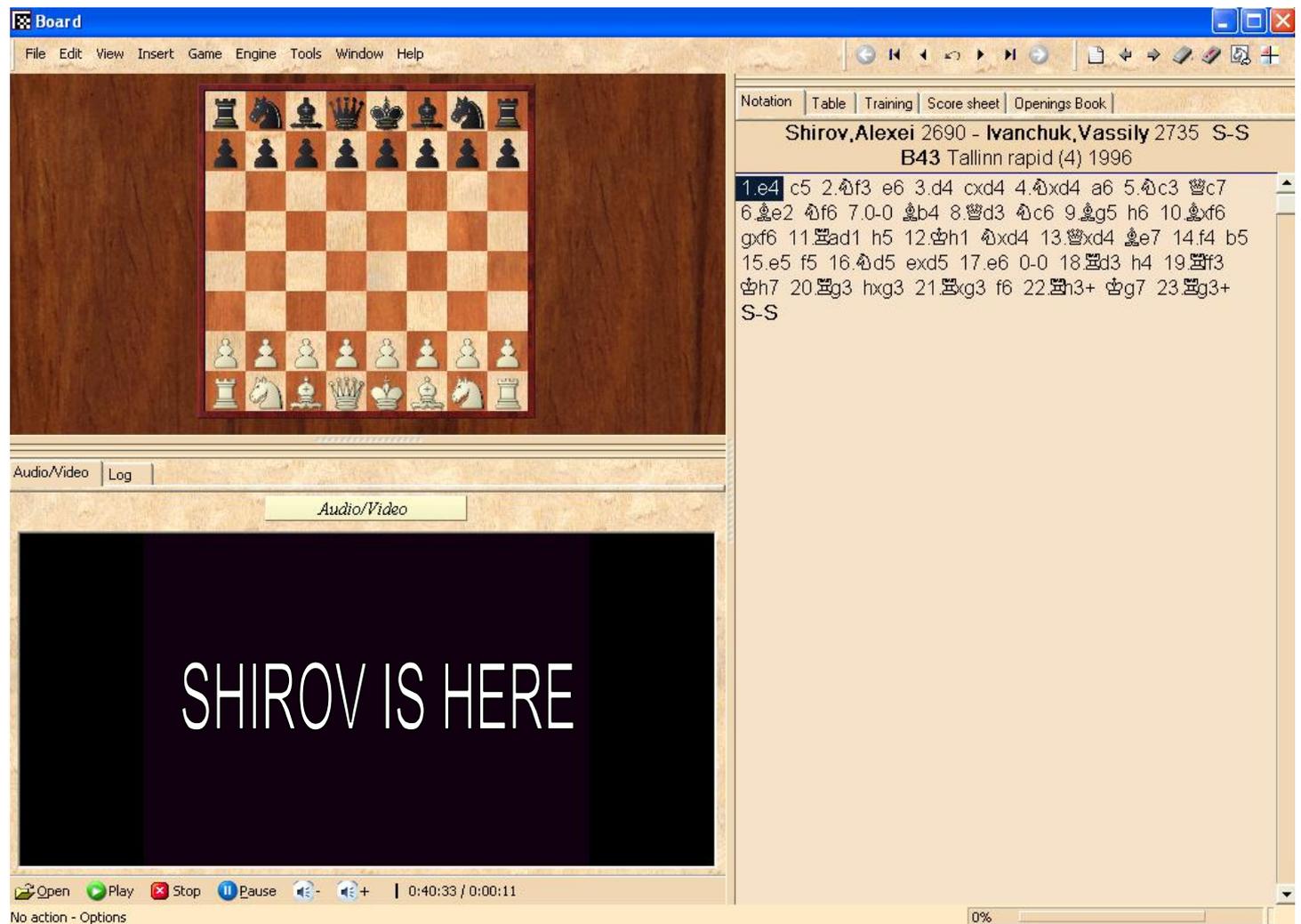


I recommend choosing the figurines notation and enabling "Material" in the Options area.

The DVD:

(Super) GM Shirov starts with a friendly “Hello”.

Chessbase’s new video recording technology is at it’s best, unlike my freeware screen capture utility, which failed to capture Shirov’s streaming image.



In the Reader, among many other, you have a useful option of pausing the video and continuing later, during the session. Hitting the “play” or even the “pause” again will get you back into the game. Rewinding is not precise, so listen carefully! As Shirov moves the pieces on his studio PC, the moves are magically being replayed on the board and in the notation window, analysis and other commentary included!

Shirov continues: “... *In the Sicilian defense, although I played it through all my chess career, I still feel that I cannot call myself an expert....*”

Wow, you may seem surprised, as I was, but only for a few seconds, as Shirov continues explaining his secrets on the Sicilian defense. It is unlikely that you can hear such honest explanations and super GM comments much elsewhere.

His experience in playing the Sicilian with Black pieces and challenging the same as White, makes ground for exceptional enjoyment waiting ahead.

Shirov comments that the best games he had played, the ones that gave him the most aesthetical pleasure, may just have happened in the Sicilian ones!

Middlegame ideas, sharp sacrifices and certain opening explanations are the basis of Shirov’s personal annotated game selections.

Below are some highly interesting topics, which may be interesting to a wide range of chess fans and professionals alike. Shirov briefly comments them, in his own unique way, while showing us his truly brilliant games. I have chosen to review his lectures/best game analysis, by suggesting what you will be able to learn, while carefully listening to one of the strongest chess players in modern history.

- Where does Shirov get his inspiration, home preparation or over the board? Which of these two does he prefer?
- Will Shirov's opponents like these games as well?
- When in lack of time, how does Alexei choose his opening moves?
- What is the difference between the "Paulsen" and the "Taimanov" system?
- As White, does Alexei use the same systems today, as he did 10 years ago?
- Does he defend a pawn his opponent attacks?
- Is Shirov proud of his over-the-board ideas?
- Does he pay attention to details, while annotating his games in Chessbase?
- When without a clear plan how to continue the game, what does he do?
- Are Shirov's opponents surprised when Alexei launches a piece sacrifice?
- Can Alexei's opponent's surprise him, too?
- How much does intuition play a part of Shirov's games?
- Can rapid games be one's best games?
- How does Shirov cope with "tempting moves"?
- What is his opinion, will you like his games?
- Do one's best games have to have theoretical importance as well?
- Is Chessbase's main database "perfect"?
- How do electronic DGT boards handle games played very quickly?
- Does Shirov spend time on "special studies", regarding opening theory?
- Interesting moves that do not bring "real advantages", does Shirov employ them?
- Does Shirov always follow the main lines, or adapts other ones which may lead to sacrifices?
- When faced with losing an exchange, how does he react?
- Sacrificing "out of the sudden", is this an option for Shirov?
- Are "normal moves" a part of his game?
- Should one look at "joking moves" during the game?
- Is Shirov always sure how to react to his opponents moves?
- Are three connected pawns always a convincing equivalent for a piece?
- Are several pages of analysis with analysis engines sometimes necessary to reach the correct position assessment?
- If you ask Shirov after you've lost the game to him, "was this preparation?", will he answer, or avoid?
- Do rapid games, which go into endgames, have very often bad mistakes?
- Did former World Champion Kasimjanov refute one of Shirov's opening lines as White?
- Does Shirov remember all his opening theory?
- Are some moves in chess difficult to explain?
- How fast does opening theory develop?
- When commenting games, will Shirov sometimes hide his opening preparation from the public eye? How do other players do it?
- What was the famous story on the Korchnoi-Planinc game about?
- Does a winning position still require comments until the game ends?
- Can rapid games change opening theory evaluations?
- When Shirov wins brilliantly, is his play flawless?
- What do Shirov's masterpieces have in common?
- What feelings does he experience after winning his best games in the Sicilian?
- Is Shirov always prepared well and ready for all important Sicilian systems?
- How can you avoid the Sveshnikov system with White?
- Do all Sicilian systems have opening names?
- What is his opinion on losing a tempo in various situations?
- What does he think about "logical moves"?
- Do Shirov's eyes follow the opponent's King?
- "Best", "natural" or the most "joyful" move, which one might Shirov prefer?
- Does Shirov check calculations he makes during his previously made moves?
- Does Shirov use Chessbase's Fritz for post-game analysis?
- Can Shirov calculate more than 10 moves ahead in the middlegame? And if yes, can he do it all the time?
- Fascination vs. calculation?
- What is the highest numerical advantage Shirov ever had, according to Fritz?
- Do Shirov's opponents always resign when in a losing position?
- Are the moves you see in a database always the moves that have actually been played?
- What impact did GM Sergey Rublevsky have on Shirov's opening moves choices in the Sicilian?
- Can you always play the ideas you find during preparation?
- What is Shirov's opinion on "game line popularity"?
- "Primitive moves". Does Shirov play them?
- Should you sometimes think about the position of your pieces, and not only about the pieces of your opponent?
- What is the standard setup for White in Paulsen positions?
- When the clock is ticking, are players able to get out of their thinking pattern framework?
- Is a chess player almost always stressed during the game?

These are only a few of the hundreds of questions and topics discussed, to which the answers await you on this exceptional DVD.

Conclusion:

After a while, I have been confronted with a chess resource that requires not only the full attention of my eyes, but my ears, too.

"... *To be completely honest...*" is the trademark of this DVD, which makes it so special.

Shirov is honest and unique on his DVD, that will bring all many hours of entertainment and grandmaster chess training.

High concentration is necessary for optimal viewing.

While commenting his games, one cannot help but notice how Shirov is experiencing once again the feelings he had.

I can recommend this DVD to all chess fans and professionals. I also recommend watching all the videos more than once, as their value will remain very high even in the years to come.