

A Peek Inside Private Archive

SILMAN'S HIDDEN GEMS

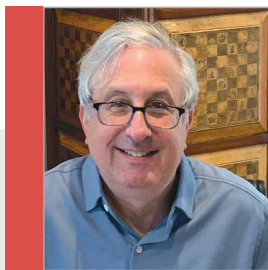
The West Coast has given us Jeremy Silman: a best-selling author and formidable IM. Now, we're venturing into uncharted waters, presenting games from Silman's private collection, showcasing his thorough opening groundwork and individualistic approach to the game.

By Andy Ansel

Jeremy Silman is best known for his writing and his books include *Pal Benko's Life and Games*, *How to Reassess Your Chess* (his all-time classic with four completely different editions) and *Silman's Complete Endgame Course*. He also authored many openings monographs including pioneering works on the Accelerated Dragon of the Sicilian and Caro Kann.

A terrific commentator, Silman lectured at several US Championships and was a mainstay at the American Open where he served as the chief lecturer for close to two decades. His work for The Great Chess Courses series, *How to Play Chess: Lessons from an International Master*, has sold over 100,000 copies.

I have known Jeremy since the mid-1970's from the Berkeley chess scene. A struggling chess professional in his twenties, he would sometimes make the rent by hawking foreign language chess books, some of which I still have in my library. Jeremy would often go over my games and give me free advice. It was very kind for such a strong player to pay attention to a lowly class B player.



Andy Ansel can be considered a product of the Fischer boom, having learned to play chess in 1972. He was active in the Bay Area chess scene while in High School, after which he moved to New York, where he achieved a peak rating of around 2100. He has now retired from active chess play but spends his time collecting books and maintaining a database based on games drawn from his library. He currently resides in North Fork, Long Island, with his wife and two dogs. His grown-up daughters live in NYC and London.

Jeremy grew up in San Diego and started playing in the late 1960s. A late bloomer, it was only when he moved to San Francisco in 1974 that his chess career took off, earning the USCF master title that year at the late age of 20 and crossing the 2400 and 2500 barriers a few years later. He later settled in Los Angeles where he achieved his peak rating of 2593 on the May 1990 USCF rating list.

While pretty much a life-long Californian, Jeremy did spend the first half of 1978 playing non-stop in England where he successfully butted heads with future Grandmasters Jonathan Speelman, John Nunn and Danny King. He also lived for short stints in Chicago and Seattle, winning the Washington state championship in the latter.

FROM A RATHER UNIQUE GAMES DATABASE, *AMERICAN CHESS MAGAZINE* REVEALS EXCLUSIVELY SOME HIDDEN GEMS GATHERED TOGETHER OVER DECADES BY RENOWNED BIBLIOPHILE ANDY ANSEL.

The three games selected for this column highlight Silman's deep opening preparation (obviously well before the computer era) and his acute understanding of a position's strength or weakness such as valuing pieces and pawn structure. Also different in this column is that Pete is only annotating one game. The other two come directly from Jeremy's file and show what he was thinking during the game.

Jeremy's opponent in the first game is the late Maryland master Denis Strenzwilk. Denis was a 2300-rated player who once drew with Yakov Estrin, World Correspondence Champion, in a local event and beat many top local Washington DC area players. He was known for strong endgame play as well as detailed opening preparation. The following game shows Silman's novel approach to handling the Accelerated Dragon.

B70

Denis Strenzwilk

Jeremy Silman

National Open 1990
Notes by Pete Tamburro

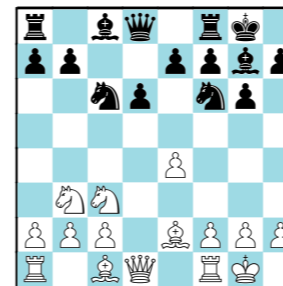
A wonderful lesson game! The Accelerated Dragon is a great thematic defense for both young people making their way up the ranks and older people who don't want to have to remember umpteen different lines in the Najdorf.

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♗xd4 g6 5.♘c3 ♗g7 6.♗b3 Old School! The ♗c4 paired with ♗e3 approach and the Maroczy Bind are both covered in my book *Openings for Amateurs - Next Steps*.

6...♗f6 If you're into damaging pawn structures right away you could play 6...♗xc3+ 7.bxc3 ♗f6 8.♗d3 d5 9.exd5 ♗xd5 10.0-0 0-0 11.c4 ♗d6 12.h3 ♗f5, but it's not as convincing as Silman's approach which uses a more traditional Dragon setup.



7.♗e2 d6 8.0-0 0-0



9.♗h1 Also possible is 9.♗e3 ♗e6 10.f4 ♗c8!! 11.h3 ♗d8 (Skold - Lundin, Stockholm vs. Budapest Match, 1947) where Black has no fear of 12.g4 because of 12...d5, the thematic Dragon move which discourages White's f4-f5. Now 13.f5 is met by 13...dxe4 14.♗e1 gxf5 and Black is winning. Note the importance of 10...♗c8. It allowed the rook to get to d8 to aim at the white queen and it supported the defense to f4-f5.

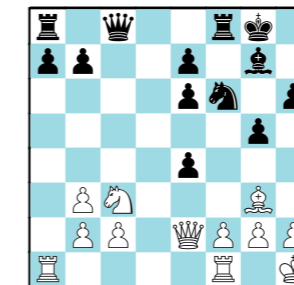
9...♗e6 10.♗g5 h6 Silman could have preceded the ...d5 thrust with 10...a5 11.a4 h6 12.♗e3 d5.

11.♗h4 g5! Eliminating threats to the knight that supports the ...d5 break. It's aggressive and safe since White is castled kingside.

12.♗g3 d5! And there we are! Black has equalized.

13.♗c5 If 13.exd5 ♗xd5 14.♗xd5 ♗xd5 15.♗xd5 ♗xd5 16.♗ad1 ♗fd8! 17.c3 ♗e5 18.f4 gxf4 19.♗xf4 ♗g6 and Black's a little better due to a nicely directed bishop pair – and the e7 pawn is passed! **13...dxe4** A somewhat unorthodox move

for modern tastes, but Silman has a plan for his tripled pawns!
14.♗xe6 fxe6 15.♗c4 ♗c8 16.♗b3 ♗a5 17.♗e2 ♗xb3 18.axb3



All the "vectors" in the Dragon are coming into play: action along the long diagonal, the c-file and the coming ...d5 – all later supported by the rooks – are enormous headaches for White.

18...♗c6 19.♗a4 ♗fc8? The engine likes two other moves better: 19...e3 20.♗xe3 b5 21.♗a5 a6=.

Or 19...♗ac8 20.♗xa7 ♗d5 21.♗xe4 ♗xc3 22.♗xc6 ♗xc6 23.bxc3 ♗xc3 24.♗xb7 ♗f7 25.♗c7 ♗xc7 26.♗xc7 ♗c8 27.♗b6 ♗xc2 28.♗b1 ♗c3 29.h4 gxh4 30.b4 ♗e8=.

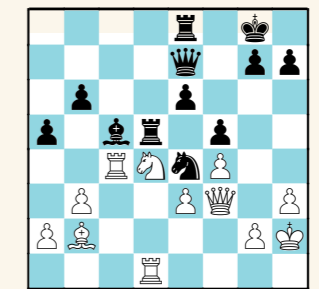
20.♗c4 ♗a6?! Black has sufficient counterplay after 20...♗b6 21.♗xe4 ♗xc4 22.bxc4 a5 23.c3 a4 24.h3 ♗c6 25.♗d2 a3.

21.♗xc8+ ♗xc8 22.♗xa6? A better chance at keeping the balance was 22.♗b5 ♗b6 23.♗a3 ♗c5+, but Black is still better placed. The white knight is offside and defensive. White's bishop attacks air and Black's major pieces are on better squares.

D37Miguel Najdorf
Jeremy Silman

Lone Pine 1976

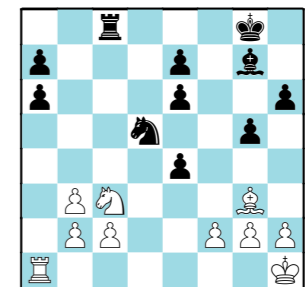
1.d4 ♗f6 2.c4 e6 3.♗f3 d5 4.♗c3 ♗e7 5.e3 0-0 6.♗d3 b6 7.b3 ♗b7 8.0-0 ♗bd7 9.♗b2 ♗e4 10.♗e2 a6 11.♗ad1 ♗b4 12.♗b1 ♗d6 13.♗e5 f5 14.f3 ♗g5 15.♗d2 c5 16.♗xd7 ♗xd7 17.dxc5 ♗xc5 18.f4 ♗f7 19.♗f3 ♗e7 20.♗d4 ♗d6 21.cxd5 ♗xd5 22.♗c1 a5 23.♗c2 ♗e4 24.♗fd1 ♗fd8 25.♗c4 ♗f6 26.♗d4 ♗ac8 27.h3 ♗xc4 28.♗xc4 ♗d5 29.♗h2 ♗e8 30.♗f3 ♗e4



31.♗xf5 ♗d7 32.♗xg7 ♗xd1 33.♗xe8 ♗xe8 34.♗xd1 ♗g6 35.♗f3 ♗d2 36.♗a8+ ♗f8 37.♗c8 ♗f1+ 38.♗g1
Black resigned

22...bxa6 Black has tripled pawns and doubled isolated rook-pawns, yet he has the advantage.

23.♗a1 ♗d5



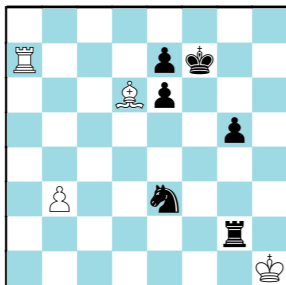
The vectors come to fruition – without the queens and one less rook. This is real Dragon play. White does get to gobble some pawns, but Black does, too, and the game is equal, but there are some things that can go wrong...

24.♗xa6 ♗f7 25.♗xa7 ♗xc3! The great endgame author is not wedded to saving his bishop over his knight if giving up the bishop is better. Objectivity!

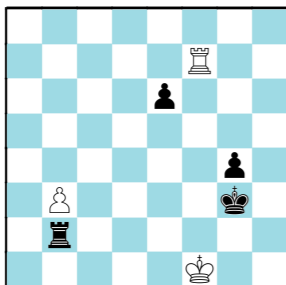
26.bxc3 ♗xc3 27.h4 ♗xc2 28.hxg5 hxg5 29.♗g1 e3 The engine likes these



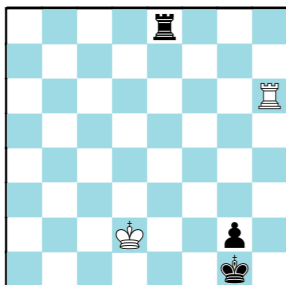
two moves a little better – both 29...♔f6 and 29...♙c1+, but the game move is much more artistic and just as effective. 30.fxe3 ♖xe3 31.♗d6 ♜xg2+ This whole planned out concept is terrific! Silman has set up an endgame win. 32.♔h1



32...♞e2 33.♗xe7 ♔g6 34.♗c5 g4 White is in a world of hurt. His passed b-pawn is not a threat as Black can get behind it with his rook. The black king will not only become more powerful as it advances, but it will be shielded from check from the black pawns. If the rook, knight, g-pawn and king all are allowed to descend on the trapped white king, it will be over quickly, so... 35.♗xe3 ♜xe3 36.♞b7 ♞e2! 37.♔g1 ♔f5 38.♞f7+ ♔e4 39.♞g7 ♔f3 40.♞f7+ ♔g3 41.♔f1 ♞b2



42.♞e7 ♞xb3 43.♞xe6 ♞b1+ 44.♔e2 ♔g2 Black controls the queening square with his king. It's over. Can you say, "Lucena?" 45.♔d2 g3 46.♞g6 ♞b8 47.♔e3 ♞f8 48.♞g7 ♔h2 49.♔e2 g2 50.♞h7+ ♔g1 51.♞h6 ♞e8+ 52.♔d2



52...♞e5 Any aspiring player should know this introduction to building a bridge.



SILMAN'S NEIGHBORHOOD

THE SANTA MONICA PIER, LOCATED IN LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA, IS AN ICONIC LANDMARK THAT HAS BEEN DRAWING VISITORS SINCE 1909. THE PIER IS ALSO HOME TO THE PACIFIC PARK AMUSEMENT PARK, BOASTING A SOLAR-POWERED FERRIS WHEEL THAT OFFERS PANORAMIC VIEWS OF THE PACIFIC OCEAN AND THE CITY. SANTA MONICA PIER IS A MUST-VISIT DESTINATION FOR BOTH LOCALS AND TOURISTS ALIKE.

53.♞h8 ♔f2 54.♞f8+ ♔g3 55.♞g8+ ♔f3 **White resigned**

It's surprising Strenzwilk made Silman play this out. Didn't he read Silman's 1988 book, *Essential Chess Endings* (Chess Digest)? For those readers not familiar with the Lucena Position, here's how you build what is known as a bridge: 56.♞f8+ ♔g4 57.♞g8+ ♞g5.

Anyhow, the game was chock full of excellent concepts for those playing the Dragon and for those who wish to see a master of endgames at work.

The brevity against Sanchez shows the power of Silman's opening knowledge and preparation. Gabriel was a strong 2300+ player from the Bay Area who played in many local events as well as major National tournaments. This game is not representative of his true strength but also shows the power of Silman's novelty.

A70

Jeremy Silman
Gabriel Sanchez

San Jose 1981
Notes by Jeremy Silman

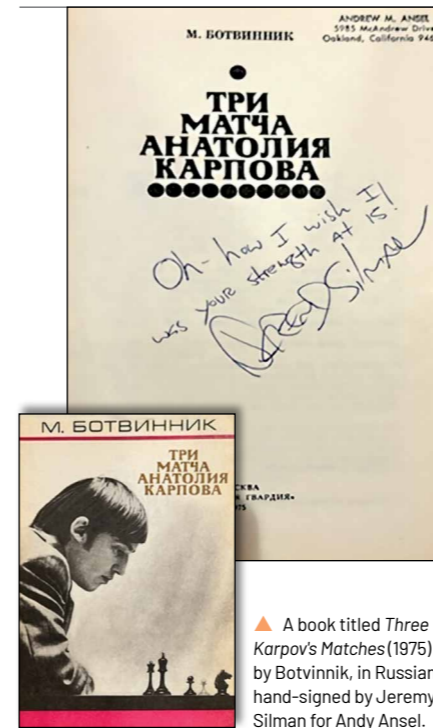
1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 e6 3.♖f3 c5 4.d5 exd5 5.cxd5 d6 6.♗c3 g6 7.♗f4 a6 8.e4 b5 9.♞e2 My opponent, a strong master, had never seen this before. [Considering the year when this

Deadly against the Benoni

In his prime Silman was a formidable tournament player, winning or tying for first in the US Open, National Open, American Open and the Northern and Southern California Championships. He was also quite a theoretician. One of his key ideas was accepting doubled a-pawns in a number of variations in the Accelerated Dragon and he also discovered 9. ♞e2 in the Modern Benoni, as shown in the Sanchez game below. In fact, he was deadly against the Benoni, scoring 90% against it with strong wins over many titled players.

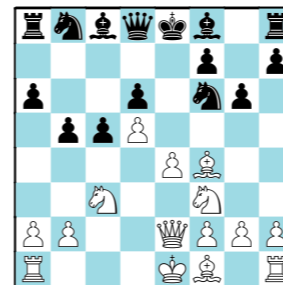
game was played, Silman's comment is absolutely understandable. At first glance, this queen move looks out of the ordinary as it deprives White's light-squared bishop from its "usual" development on e2 or d3. Then again, the direct threat of e4-e5 is just scary for Black, to say the least.

And, with contemporary "tools" in hand, it gets even more understandable that unconventional ideas invite extraordinary answers! Engines suggest that Black should opt either for 9...♗e7, when White can castle long (!), or for the similarly extraordinary 9...♞a7!?

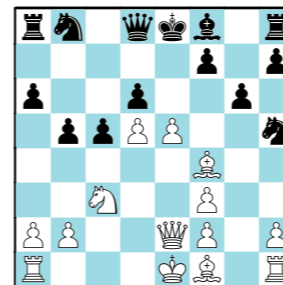


A book titled *Three Karpov's Matches* (1975) by Botvinnik, in Russian, hand-signed by Jeremy Silman for Andy Ansel.

that leads to very sharp play after 10.e5 ♞e7 11.♗e3. Well, one thing is for sure – Silman did his homework long before coming to this game, and it was a huge advantage particularly in a pre-computer era! –Dusan Krunich]



After a long think, he reacts with an immediate mistake. 9...♗g4?? Believe it or not, the game is now over! 10.e5! Winning on the spot. 10...♗xf3 Or 10...♗h5 11.exd6+ ♔d7 12.♗e5+ ♔c8 13.♞xg4+. 11.gxf3 ♗h5



12.exd6+ ♔d7 13.♗h3+ f5 14.♞e6 **Mate.**



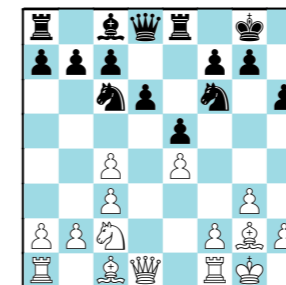
The last game is against U.S./Canadian GM Peter Biyiasas, who was also a mainstay in the Bay Area chess scene – besides being known for having Fischer stay with him. This game shows Jeremy going toe to toe in a tough fight with a GM and coming out on top.

A29

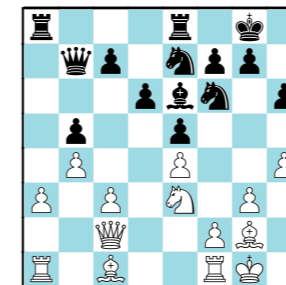
Peter Biyiasas
Jeremy Silman

Berkeley 1983
Notes by Jeremy Silman

1.c4 e5 2.♗c3 ♗f6 3.g3 ♗b4 4.♗g2 0-0 5.♗f3 ♗c6 6.0-0 ♞e8 7.♗e1 ♗xc3 8.dxc3 d6 9.♗c2 h6 10.e4



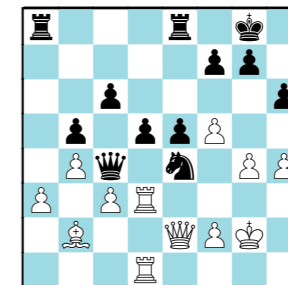
10...a6! An excellent move. Some might ask why Black intends to rid White of his doubled pawns. The answer lies in the quest for an active plan. Since White's doubled pawns gain space and are not weak, Black has no qualm about trading them off. The point of ...a7-a6 is clear: Black has no chances on the kingside and White holds more space in the center. This leaves the queenside as the one area of contention, so Black rushes to open lines there to enable his rooks to take part in the coming battle. 11.♗e3 b5 12.cxb5 axb5 13.b4 ♗e6 14.♞e2 ♞b8 Black already has the preferable position since White's two bishops are inactive and his a-pawn is a target. 15.h4 ♞b7! 16.a3 ♗e7 17.♞c2



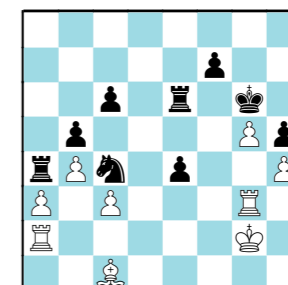
17...♗g4! White's best piece is his e3 knight, so Black goes out of his way to

exchange it. 18.♗f5? Strategically losing. Now Black creates a crushing knight versus a poor bishop scenario.

18...♗xf5 19.exf5 ♗d5 20.♗xd5 ♞xd5 21.♞e2 ♗f6 22.♗b2 ♗e4 23.♞f1 Better was 23.♞f1 ♗d2 24.♞ad1, though Black retains a marked advantage after 24...♗f3+ 25.♔h1 ♞b3 26.♞xf3 ♞xb2 27.f6 ♞xa3. 23...♞c6 24.♞d3 d5 25.♞ad1 ♞c4 26.♔g2 c6 Finding himself in a nightmarish situation with a bad bishop and weak pawns on a3 and c3, White decides to try for some desperately needed kingside play. 27.g4



27...♗f6! Forcing the exchange of queens and ending White's attack before it even begins! 28.g5 ♞e4+ 29.♞xe4 ♗xe4 30.♗c1 h5 31.♞e1 ♗d6 Heading for c4 where it will target the a3 pawn for destruction. 32.f6 ♗c4 33.fxg7 ♔xg7 34.♞f3 ♞e6 35.♞e2 e4 36.♞g3 ♞a4 37.f3 ♔g6 38.fxe4 dxe4 39.♞a2



39...♞d6 40.♞e2 ♞d1 41.♗e3 ♞xa3 42.♗d4 ♞d2 43.♞xd2 ♗xd2 44.♔f2 ♗f3 45.♔e3 ♔f5 46.♞g2 ♞a1 47.♗f6 ♞e1+ 48.♔f2 ♔f4 Threatening 49...e3 mate. 49.♗d4 e3+ 50.♗xe3+ ♞xe3 51.g6 fxg6 52.♞xg6 ♞xc3 53.♞h6 ♞c2+ 54.♔f1 ♗h4 55.♞xh5 ♗f5

White resigned