The Burning Boards

Glenn Kaino

September 1, 2014 / 6:30 p.m. / World Chess Hall of Fame
PROGRAM
6:00 p.m. Cocktails and hors d’oeuvres
6:25 p.m. Opening Remarks
6:30 p.m. Games Begin

THE BURNING BOARDS

Developed for the Whitney Museum of American Art in 2007, Glenn Kaino’s The Burning Boards explores concepts of winning through the medium of chess. Kaino uses the format of a unique competition to draw together friends from the worlds of art, chess, technology, and music. In the piece, thirty-two chess players, both expert and novice, compete in a dark room at sixteen closely-arranged tables. They use burning candles as chess pieces, imbuing the performance with a sense of danger and urgency.

Kaino has used indeterminacy to structure the performance, meaning that each participant becomes a co-creator of the larger spectacle, choosing his or her moves, but unable to control the outcome of their game or the performance as a whole. The lighting in the playing hall builds and diminishes over the course of the performance. “Burning boards” is sometimes defined as the act of using fire to level a playing field. Here, the advantages of experts over novices are leveled, and the value of skill diminishes as the element of chance increases. Unidentifiable pieces cannot be played, nor can those burned out or stuck to the board. Soon players realize that they are battling their shared situation—the board and pieces, not each other. They can better survive through mutual accommodation than through zero-sum aggression. Competition gives way to comity and onerous constraints lead to comical, collegial outcomes. The World Chess Hall of Fame’s presentation of The Burning Boards is the third staging of the piece, which is intended to be performed anew rather than to be a static historical event.

WORLD CHESS HALL OF FAME

The World Chess Hall of Fame (WCHOF) is a nonprofit, collecting institution dedicated to enhancing public understanding and appreciation of art, history, and chess. The WCHOF is the only institution of its kind and offers a variety of programming to explore the dynamic relationship between the arts and chess, including educational outreach initiatives that provide context and meaning to the game and its continued cultural impact.

CURRENTLY ON VIEW:
Cage & Kaino: Pieces and Performances
May 8–September 21, 2014
Strategy by Design: Games by Michael Graves
May 8–September 28, 2014
A Memorable Life: A Glimpse into the Complex Mind of Bobby Fischer
July 24, 2014–June 7, 2015

COMING SOON:
Living Like Kings
October 9, 2014–April 26, 2015

CHESS CLUB AND SCHOLASTIC CENTER OF SAINT LOUIS

The CCSCSL, located directly across the street from the WCHOF, focuses on teaching and promoting the game of chess. To learn more, visit saintlouischessclub.org.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The World Chess Hall of Fame acknowledges Jeanne and Rex Sinquefield, whose generous support has made this event possible. Special thanks to Glenn Kaino, Luke Lizalde, Larry List, Honor Fraser Gallery, Kavi Gupta Gallery, and the participants in The Burning Boards.
PARTICIPANT PAIRINGS

Maxime Vachier-Lagrave    Andre Escarameia
Jennifer Shahade          Martin Brief
Yasser Seirawan            Bradley Bailey
Maurice Ashley             Francis M. Naumann
John Donaldson             Mary Gould
Ben Finegold               Matt Strauss
Jean Hoffman               Bruce Burton
Rex Sinquefield            Sarah Robayo Sheridan
Hikaru Nakamura            Ben Kaplan
Lennart Ootes              Shannon Bailey
Chris Bird                 Peter Manion
Levon Aronian              Paul Ha
Fabiano Caruana            Liliya Lifánova
Veselin Topalov            Larry List
Tony Rich                  Christian Burton
Magnus Carlsen             Glenn Kaino

WORLD CHESS HALL of FAME

4652 MARYLAND AVENUE, SAINT LOUIS, MO 63108
(314) 367-WCHF (9243) | worldchesshof.org

HOURS: Mon (Q Boutique Only) 10 a.m.–5 p.m., Tues/Wed/Sat 10 a.m.–5 p.m.,
Thurs/Fri 10 a.m.–9 p.m., Sun Noon–5 p.m.