

Presstext CHESS003
(4556 Zeichen)

Graz, Austria: „Chess 003“ brings the World Computer Chess Championship to Graz.

Graz does it! Among the many activities the European cultural capital 2003 is hosting this year, there is a specialty for all chess and computer freaks in November Called “Chess003”, and running from Nov. 22 – 30, this event brings a wide range of events relating to the topics “chess” and “computer games”. Its absolute highlight will be the World Computer Chess Championship under the auspices of the ICGA, having the best programs fight for the title of World Champion.

Chrilly Donninger, Austria’s own champ in this field, will also be present with his program *Brutus* to go up against reigning World Champion *Junior* and others like *Shredder*, *Fritz* or Peter McKenzie’s *Warp*. As *Deep Junior* vs. Kasparov (3:3) and *Deep Fritz* vs. Kramnik (4:4) have already proven this year, man and machine are almost at the same level. Thanks to advanced multi-processor techniques of some programs Graz may be a milestone to a spectacular dominance of the machines.

Kurt Jungwirth, president of the Austrian chess federation, together with the Styrian media artist Richard Kriesche, were the first ones to promote the idea of the championship in Graz. In corporation with the organizers of the cultural capital as well as the International Computer Games Association (based in Maastricht) this event was made possible. When visiting Graz last May, David Levy, President of the ICGA was very pleased with the surroundings that are presented in Graz. Especially the site of the championship, the *Dome in the Mountain*, a high-tech space with multimedia equipment, located in the center of the *Schloßberg*, brings memories of James Bond’s *Moonraker*.

What can participants and visitors expect from Chess003 and Graz, the capital of Styria, one of the 9 federal states of Austria? Second largest to Vienna with a population of about 280.000, Graz, located about 200 kilometers south-west of Vienna, charms its visitors with its almost Mediterranean flair caused by the mild climate and open mentality of its residents, as well as its architecture and art. In Austria, Graz is also called *Murtropolis* (Metropolis at the River Mur).

Located in the center at the left and right banks of the river Mur you can find one of the oldest and best preserved old towns of Europe that has also been named a world cultural estate by UNESCO. Architecture from late medieval times, to Renaissance, Baroque and Biedermeier form a very pleasant ensemble, mingling with the latest buildings. These include the *Kunsthau* (Arthouse) of Cook and Fournier, the very futuristic island in the river Mur of New York-based architect Vito Acconci, as well as the new event-halls *Stadthalle* and *Helmut-List-Halle* with the best attested acoustic of all of Europe. Since the 1960s the college town also is well known as capital of German speaking literature, as well as the renowned art festival *Steirischer Herbst*, the *Graz School of Architecture*, the oldest jazz school in Europe and, last but not least, the *Styriarte* with the internationally renowned star conductor Nikolaus Harnoncourt. Space science, high technology and car industry make Graz an economic centre between the north and south of Europe.

Graz also looks back to its great tradition in the game of chess. Johann Berger developed the basics of the modern end game theory in his book *Theorie und Praxis der Endspiele* that was published in 1890. Moreover, he gained merits in the field of problem chess as well as co-author of the Sonneborn-Berger-Systems. In 1971 Kurt Jungwirth transferred the site of the Austrian Chess Federation from Vienna to Graz. Acting Vice president of the FIDE and co-founder of the European Chess Union Jungwirth sets important marks internationally. Numerous international events such as the FIDE congress in 1985, various world championships (students 1971 with Anatoli Karpov, youth 1978, juniors 1981 with Garry Kasparov), zonal tournaments 1991 and 1993 as well as the international success of serial state champion *Merkur* make Graz a vibrant chess metropolis.

Chess003 will increase pulsation even more with live webcasts of all games via **www.chess003.at** and a multimedia appearance on site. Besides the chess world championship there will also be an extensive frame program that will certainly generate the interest of the media, participants and visitors. Part of the frame program will be the *first. EU Youth Championship*, *Advances in Computer Games Conference*, *Computer Games Olympiad*, start of the *Austrian chess division* and the *Open Styrian Championship*.

Indeed, Graz does it, as promised in the slogan of the cultural capital of 2003 of Europe.