Classical Systems

By

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For my children, Adoria, Athanasia and Dimitrios

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Dear readers,

It is with great pleasure that I am able to welcome you to this fourth, penultimate volume on the King’s Indian Defence. This volume is dedicated to the rest of the systems that have a Classical flavour, namely the Gligoric, the Makogonov, the Petrosian, the Averbakh, the Karpov, and several types of Exchange Variations. These are obviously systems that required a lot of elaboration on my part, endless hours of analytical work, difficult decisions and a lot of explanation. I hope that the result will vindicate not only me, but also the faithful devotees of the King’s Indian all around the world – those who have put their faith and creativity into this wonderful opening, and supported me with their comments and reviews along the way.

At this point, I feel the inner desire to stress something: undertaking the responsibility to write such a repertoire was a task entailing a lot of risk, as the King’s Indian has some of the richest tactical and positional content in the whole range of chess openings. In a way I consider myself rather brave for trying to classify and put some order in the chaos, while in another way I feel like a pawn of fate that was destined to do just that. After all, if there is no complete repertoire series on the King’s Indian, then chess literature is lacking a vital spark. I would go as far as to say that it is like a family which is missing one of its most charismatic children, flamboyant and adventurous, fighting and full of creativity.

That said, I want to thank all my predecessors who tried to fill this gap. Although I don’t know him personally, David Vigorito stands out as a composed writer and analyst, whose articles and surveys have helped me with their accuracy and evaluations. Other prominent examples who guided me with their previous works are GMs John Nunn and Victor Bologan. I hope I will be forgiven by those whose names I have failed to mention in this preface, but they can be sure they have my respect and gratitude for creating the first solid ground I stepped upon in order to explore an exotic and dangerous land.

Vassilios Kotronias
Athens, February 2016
Contents

Introduction 3
Key to symbols used & Bibliography 6
Exercises 7

Exchange Variation
1 9.\textit{d}d5 14
2 9.\textit{g}g5 – Introduction 25
3 Various 12th Moves 38
4 12.\textit{d}d6!? 56

Classical Variation
5 8.dxe5 77
6 8.\textit{e}e3 93

Gligoric
7 Various 8th Moves 120
8 8.\textit{d}d2 139
9 8.0–0 151
10 8.d5 181
11 11.\textit{h}h4 196
12 13.a3 208

Petrosian
13 Various 8th Moves 235
14 8.\textit{g}g5 253
15 11.0–0 Main Line 274
Makogonov
16 Exchange Variation and 8.\(\text{d}3\) 296
17 8.\(\text{e}2\) and 8.\(\text{e}3\) 317
18 8.\(\text{g}5\) 344

6.\(\text{e}3\) Systems
19 Karpov 373
20 Larsen 387
21 \(\text{e}2/\text{e}3\) 398

Averbakh
22 7.dxc5 407
23 7.d5 415
24 8.\(\text{f}4\) Main Line 442

Variation Index 457
Chapter 19

6.\textit{e}3 Systems

Karpov

Variation Index

1.d4 \textit{f}6 2.c4 \textit{g}6 3.\textit{c}3 \textit{g}7 4.e4 d6 5.h3 0–0 6.\textit{e}3

6...c5!

A) 7.dxc5 374
B) 7.\textit{f}3 378
C) 7.d5 e6!
   C1) 8.\textit{d}3 379
   C2) 8.\textit{f}3 exd5 380
      C21) 9.cxd5 \textit{e}8 382
          C211) 10.\textit{d}2 382
          C212) 10.\textit{d}3 383
      C22) 9.exd5 385

A) after 9.e5!?  
B) after 17.f4!?  
C212) after 11.\textit{xe}4

9...\textit{h}5!  
17...\textit{xb}2!N  
11...c4!N
1.d4  transf 2.c4 g6 3.d3 g7 4.e4 d6 5.h3 0–0 6.e3

This move has been used extensively by Anatoly Karpov, particularly in rapid chess. Its main virtue is keeping open the option of developing the knight to e2 later on. This may prove extremely helpful in a Makogonov structure similar to the ones we’ve encountered in the previous three chapters, as the set-up of pawns on h3 and g4, and knight on g3, will stifle Black’s kingside play and offer White long-term attacking chances.

6.g5 and 6.ge2 will be covered in Volume 5 of this series.

6...c5!

The logical and best reaction. Ladies and Gentlemen, it’s time for a Benoni!

6...e5 7.d5 a5 (7...a6 8.f3 takes play into a Makogonov proper, but without the pawn on a5, tricking us into a line I have chosen not to recommend in the present volume.)

8.g4! a6 9.ge2 h5 10.f3 c5 11.d2 h7 12.0–0 h4 13.g1 The more I looked at this, the less I liked Black’s position, as he is unable to exchange dark-squared bishops and is reduced to passivity. Therefore 6...c5! is almost forced in the strategic sense, even though this may sound like an exaggeration on move six.

White options are A) 7.dxc5, B) 7.f3 and C) 7.d5.

A) 7.dxc5

8.d2 xc5 (8...dxc5?? 9.e5 df7 10.f4 d6 11.f3 d8=, intending ...f6, should also be fine for Black) 9.f3

9...bd7 (or 9...e6??) 10.e2 b6 11.0–0 c7 12.c3 b7 13.d2 e6 14.c1 a6 15.b4 ac8 16.b3= A balanced Hedgehog had arisen in Ravikumar – Fuller, Fyn 1980.

8.dxc5 9.e5!

Trying to block the radius of the g7-bishop
by following up with f2-f4 next, but it seems that this plan cannot successfully materialize.

9.\text{\textipa{f}f3}  \text{\textipa{c}c6} 10.0-0  \text{\textipa{d}d7} is a typical position where Black's control over the dark squares in the centre gives him a slight edge.

9...\text{\textipa{h}h5}!

Golod's move is the best. The knight cannot be captured without consequences, in view of the mounting pressure along the d-file.

10.\text{\textipa{g}g4}

This move, throwing caution to the wind, does not yield White any advantage, but is obviously the only critical choice.

10.\text{\textipa{f}f3}  \text{\textipa{c}c6} 11.\text{\textipa{g}g4}  \text{\textipa{d}d8} is just a transposition to our main line.

10.\text{\textipa{f}4}? \text{\textipa{g}g3} 11.\text{\textipa{h}h2}  \text{\textipa{d}d8} 12.\text{\textipa{c}c2}? (12.\text{\textipa{f}f2} \text{\textipa{f}f5} 13.\text{\textipa{e}e2} \text{\textipa{c}c6} is awful, but had to be tried) 12...\text{\textipa{c}c6} 13.\text{\textipa{d}d1}  \text{\textipa{b}b4} 14.\text{\textipa{b}b1}  \text{\textipa{x}xd3} 15.\text{\textipa{x}xd3} \text{\textipa{f}f5}† This was a complete disaster for White in Arcuti – Gallagher, Graechen 2013.

10...\text{\textipa{d}d8}!

Fully justifying Black's unorthodox knight move.

11.\text{\textipa{f}f3}

11.\text{\textipa{g}g5}? \text{\textipa{f}f5}† is, of course, out of the question.

11.\text{\textipa{c}c2} is strongly answered by:

11...\text{\textipa{x}xe5}! 12.\text{\textipa{d}d2} \text{\textipa{f}f4} 13.\text{\textipa{d}d5} \text{\textipa{e}e2} 14.\text{\textipa{x}xa5}  \text{\textipa{x}xd5} 15.\text{\textipa{x}xb5} \text{\textipa{b}b2} 16.\text{\textipa{b}b1} \text{\textipa{c}c3}† 17.\text{\textipa{x}xc2} \text{\textipa{x}xa5} Black has a slight advantage in this ending.

11.\text{\textipa{c}c2} is considered by Mikhalevski, who gives the following line in his ChessBase commentary: 11...\text{\textipa{c}c6} 12.\text{\textipa{e}e4} \text{\textipa{d}d4}! 13.\text{\textipa{d}d1} 13...\text{\textipa{x}xe5}! 14.\text{\textipa{d}d2} \text{\textipa{f}f4} 15.\text{\textipa{d}d5}† \text{\textipa{e}e6} 15.\text{\textipa{d}d2} \text{\textipa{e}e4} 16.\text{\textipa{b}b3} \text{\textipa{c}c7} 17.\text{\textipa{x}xe5} \text{\textipa{d}d5} 18.\text{\textipa{f}f4} \text{\textipa{e}e6} 19.\text{\textipa{f}f2}  \text{\textipa{d}d7}† deserves attention.) 14.\text{\textipa{d}d5}† \text{\textipa{e}e6} 15.\text{\textipa{g}g2} \text{\textipa{c}c6} 16.\text{\textipa{b}b3} (16.\text{\textipa{a}a4}?! \text{\textipa{x}xa4} 17.\text{\textipa{x}xa4} \text{\textipa{b}b4} 18.\text{\textipa{f}f1} [18.\text{\textipa{e}e2} \text{\textipa{c}c2} 19.\text{\textipa{f}f3}? \text{\textipa{e}e3} 20.\text{\textipa{c}c3} \text{\textipa{h}h6}† 21.\text{\textipa{g}g5} \text{\textipa{f}f8}†] 18...\text{\textipa{c}c2} 19.\text{\textipa{g}g5} \text{\textipa{x}xa1} 20.\text{\textipa{x}xd8} \text{\textipa{f}f4}† is better for Black) 16...\text{\textipa{d}d4} 17.\text{\textipa{d}d1}† With a repetition.
11...\textit{\texttt{Nc}}6!
A strong retort, with the idea of ...\textit{\texttt{N}}b4 winning back the piece with an advantage, in case of 12.gxh5?.

12.0–0! \textit{\texttt{Nxe5}}!

12...\textit{\texttt{N}}b4?? 13.\textit{\texttt{Nd5+–}} would now be a horrible blunder.

13.\textit{\texttt{Qxe5}} \textit{\texttt{Nxe5}} 14.\textit{\texttt{Qd5}}

Mikhalevski points out in ChessBase that 14.gxh5? is bad due to: 14...\textit{\texttt{Qxc3}} 15.bxc3 \textit{\texttt{Qf5!}} 16.hxg6 hxg6 17.\textit{\texttt{Qf3}} \textit{\texttt{Qxd3+}} Black has regained his piece with a considerable advantage.

15...\textit{\texttt{Qh8?!}} is also fine, with a sample line being: 16.\textit{\texttt{Qe2}} \textit{\texttt{Qc7}}

17.f4 (17.\textit{\texttt{Qxc8}} \textit{\texttt{Qxc8}} 18.\textit{\texttt{Qad1}} \textit{\texttt{Qf4=}}) 17...\textit{\texttt{Qxe7}} 18.\textit{\texttt{fxe5}} \textit{\texttt{Qxe5}} 19.\textit{\texttt{Qf4}} (19.\textit{\texttt{Qf4}} \textit{\texttt{Qd4†}} 20.\textit{\texttt{Qf2}} \textit{\texttt{Qe6}} 21.\textit{\texttt{Qe5}} \textit{\texttt{Qxd3}} 22.\textit{\texttt{Qxf6†}} \textit{\texttt{Qg8}} 23.\textit{\texttt{Qxd8}} \textit{\texttt{Qxd8=}}) 19...h5 20.\textit{\texttt{Qaf1}}

16.\textit{\texttt{Qc2}}

This move is logical, since the e5-bishop is a bit unstable. However, it is not incisive enough.

16.g5?!N \textit{\texttt{Qh5}} 17.\textit{\texttt{Qd5}} \textit{\texttt{Qe6!}} (17...\textit{\texttt{Qxh3?}} 18.\textit{\texttt{Qd2}} \textit{\texttt{Qa6}} 19.\textit{\texttt{Qe1±}} with the idea 19...\textit{\texttt{Qd4}} 20.\textit{\texttt{Qf3}} \textit{\texttt{Qe6}} 21.\textit{\texttt{Qc7}}) 18.\textit{\texttt{Qc4}} \textit{\texttt{Qd7}} 19.\textit{\texttt{Qe1}} \textit{\texttt{Qe8=}} Black has coordinated all his pieces and
looks equal to me, although this was the best possibility for White.

16...\textit{c7} 17.f4!\
Fressinet's risky move, which should objectively lead to a slightly worse position for White.

17.\textit{xc8} \textit{axc8} 18.\textit{ad1} has been given as equal by Mikhalevski, but after 18...\textit{f4} 19.\textit{fe1} h6 Black has a modest edge.

17...\textit{xb2}!N
This bold move should give Black the advantage.

17...\textit{d4}? 18.g5! \textit{h5} 19.\textit{d5}\textdagger was slightly better for White in Fressinet – Golod, Biel 2006.

18.\textit{xb2} \textit{xe7} 19.\textit{e2} b6! 20.\textit{ae1}\
20.\textit{ad1} \textit{b7} is also excellent for Black.

Mikhalevski remarks that 20.\textit{fe1} \textit{g8} 21.\textit{ad1} \textit{b7} 22.g5 \textit{h5}\textdagger gives Black dangerous pressure on the a8-h1 diagonal.

20...\textit{g8} 21.f5 \textit{b7} 22.c2 \textit{e4}?!\
My idea, and a natural move at that.

Mikhalevski gives 22...\textit{e5} (to which he attaches an exclamation mark), but after 23.\textit{f4} \textit{xe2} 24.\textit{xe2} \textit{a6} 25.\textit{b3} the position is only unclear.

22...\textit{e8}?! is another move I looked at, yet there seems to be nothing more than a draw after the following complicated sequence: 23.\textit{a4}! \textit{e4} 24.\textit{h2} \textit{xa4} 25.\textit{hxg4} \textit{g4}\textdagger 26.\textit{f2}

23.\textit{f3}!\
23.c1 \textit{d4}! 24.b2 \textit{d6} 25.\textit{xd4} \textit{g3}\textdagger 26.g2 \textit{g2}\textdagger 27.xg2 \textit{d2}\textdagger 28.f2 \textit{cxd4}\textdagger gives Black the slightly better ending.

23...\textit{d7} 24.fg6 \textit{hxg6} 25.\textit{c1} \textit{e8}

\textbf{26.\textit{f4}! \textit{d6} 27.\textit{a4} \textit{c6} 28.\textit{xc6} \textit{xc6}}
29.\(\texttt{b2}\) \(g5\)

Black has a tiny edge, although White should be able to nullify it and achieve a draw.

**B) 7.\(\texttt{\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{f3}}}}\)***

Karpov’s favourite move. White is trying to keep the position fluid and avoid a Benoni structure, at least for the time being.

7...cxd4 8.\(\texttt{\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{d4}}}}\)

8...b6!?  
Black will opt for a Hedgehog set-up, trying to take advantage of the fact that White has played the rather useless h2-h3. That said, the position is quite delicate and Black has to treat it with care.

9.\(\texttt{d3}\)

This has been Karpov’s preferred move in all his games from this position.

Another possibility is: 9.g3!? \(\texttt{\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{b7}}}}\) 10.\(\texttt{g2}\) \(\texttt{\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{bd7}}}}\) 11.0–0 \(\texttt{\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{b8}}}}\) 12.\(\texttt{\textit{\textit{c2}}\) a6 13.\(\texttt{\textit{\textit{\textit{ad1}}}}\) \(\texttt{\textit{\textit{\textit{a8}}}}\) 14.a4 e6 15.\(\texttt{\textit{b3}}\) \(\texttt{\textit{\textit{\textit{e7}}}}\) 16.\(\texttt{\textit{\textit{b1}}\) \(\texttt{\textit{\textit{\textit{fc8}}}}\) 17.\(\texttt{\textit{\textit{d2}}\) \(\texttt{\textit{\textit{e5}}}}\) 18.\(\texttt{\textit{\textit{fd1}}\) \(\texttt{\textit{\textit{e8}}}}\)  With approximate equality in Tihonov – A. Zhigalko, Minsk 2010.

9.\(\texttt{\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{b7}}}}\) 10.0–0 \(\texttt{\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{bd7}}}}\) 11.\(\texttt{\textit{\textit{\textit{c1}}\) \(\texttt{\textit{\textit{\textit{c8}}}}\)

All the moves so far have been logical and solid for both sides. White would now like to overprotect the pawns at c4 and c6, in order to free the d3-bishop from the burden of defending them.

12.\(\texttt{\textit{\textit{\textit{b3}}}}\) \(\texttt{\textit{\textit{\textit{c5}}}}\) 13.\(\texttt{\textit{\textit{f3}}\) e6 14.\(\texttt{\textit{\textit{b1}}\)

So far we have been following Karpov – Bacrot, Cap d’Agde 2013, when I think Black should have chosen:

14...d5!?N

Despite the fact that this entails some risk and looks rather drastic, I am satisfied with Black’s chances.

15.\(\texttt{\textit{\textit{\textit{b4}}}}\) \(\texttt{\textit{\textit{\textit{a6}}}}\) 16.\(\texttt{\textit{b5}}\)

16.cxd5 exd5 17.e5 \(\texttt{\textit{\textit{\textit{c7}}}}\) 18.f4 \(\texttt{\textit{\textit{\textit{xb4}}}}\) 19.\(\texttt{\textit{\textit{db5}}\) \(\texttt{\textit{\textit{\textit{c4}}}}\) is equal.

16...\(\texttt{\textit{\textit{\textit{c5}}}}\) 17.cxd5 exd5 18.\(\texttt{\textit{e5}}\) \(\texttt{\textit{\textit{c7}}}\) 18...\(\texttt{\textit{e8}}\) is also possible.
19.\textit{e}1!? 
I don't see any problems for Black after: 
19.f4 \textit{d}fe4 20.\textit{d}xe4 dxe4 21.\textit{d}e2 (21.\textit{d}c6 \textit{d}xc6 22.bxc6 \textit{d}fd8 23.\textit{d}xe5 bxc5 24.\textit{d}a4 e3 25.\textit{d}e4 e2 26.\textit{d}xe2 \textit{d}xc6 27.\textit{d}d3 \textit{d}h8= should be a draw because of the opposite-coloured bishops) 21...\textit{d}fe4 22.\textit{d}c6 \textit{d}xc6 23.bxc6 \textit{d}xc6 24.\textit{d}e2 (24...\textit{d}fd8 22.\textit{d}c6 \textit{d}xc6 23.bxc6 \textit{d}xc6 24.\textit{d}xe4

Despite Black's weakness on the dark squares, there is nothing concrete.

22.\textit{d}d4 
22.\textit{d}d2 \textit{d}fe8=; 22.\textit{d}d4 \textit{d}d8 23.\textit{d}e2 \textit{d}e8 24.\textit{d}f4 \textit{d}g8 25.\textit{d}d2 \textit{d}d6 26.\textit{d}c3 \textit{d}xe1\dagger 27.\textit{d}xe1 \textit{d}c7 28.\textit{d}b4 \textit{d}b8 29.\textit{d}d3 \textit{d}e8= 

22...\textit{d}d6 23.\textit{d}e5 \textit{d}d8 24.\textit{d}e2 \textit{d}c7 25.\textit{d}d4 \textit{d}e8 26.\textit{d}f4 \textit{d}g8= 

C) 7.d5

I was surprised to see that the 12th World Champion has never actually chosen to play this supposedly critical move, and this led me to consider the possibility that it is not as critical as I first thought, which is indeed the case.

7...\textit{e}6! 
Black has an excellent game and the better practical chances.

7...\textit{a}6 
At first I was attracted to this move, but then I realized that White can maintain an edge with accurate play:

8.a4! 
8.\textit{d}f3 \textit{b}5= is excellent for Black.

8...\textit{e}6 

9.\textit{d}f3! 
The position is more appealing for White, who will complete his development in a harmonious way and then try to suffocate Black.
The reason I initially wanted to recommend 7...\textit{a}6 was that the alternative 9.\textit{d}d3 \textit{exd}5 10.exd5 allows Black to equalize with
10...e8!, preparing to play ...h6 under the best possible circumstances:

a) 11.\f3 h6 12.0–0 xe3 13.fxe3 e3† 14.e2 bd7 15.e1 e8 leads to a position where I couldn’t see anything really scary for Black.

b) 11.e2 bd7 12.f3 e5 13.xe5 xe5 14.0–0 f5 15.eae1 fe8 16.e2 xd3 e7= looks quite balanced.

c) If White plays 11.ge2, then Black has available the fine idea 11...bd7 12.0–0 e5 13.g3 x3 14.xd3 d7 15.ge4 e5 16.e2 e7 17.f4 xe4! 18.xc4 f5 19.f2 b5! 20.axb5 axb5= which should eventually equalize.

However, after 9.f3! my efforts to find complete equality came to nought, with the main line being:

9...e5 10.exd5 \f5

Black, as we already know, should play for the liberating ...e4 in such structures.

11.d3! xd3 12.xd3 bd7 13.0–0 h5

14.eae1!

14.g4 ef6! 15.d1 f4 16.e4 xh3† 17.\h2 \e7 18.\g3 f5! 19.gxf5 gxf5 20.\h5 f4 21.d2 g5 22.xg7 xf3† 23.xf3 h4† 24.\h3 \h3† 25.xh3 xg7 26.g1† e6 27.xf4 e5= is just equal.

14...e5 15.xe5 xe5 16.e4=*

After 7...e6! White’s options are C1) 8.d3 and C2) 8.f3.

C1) 8.d3

White keeps the option of \ge2, which seems logical.

8...exd5 9.exd5

In case of 9.cxd5, the typical strike 9...b5! 10.xb5 xe4! leads to a better position for Black.

A star move, which was first played by Tigran Petrosian. I believe that Black has good chances, for example:

10.f3

10.ge2 b4 11.b1 b5! 12.xb5

12.e6! 13.cc3 (13.a4 \a5! 14.d2 xb5 15.cxb5 a6+) 13..fxd5 14.xd5

14.e8d5
Chapter 19 – Karpov

(14.cxd5  \=a5\+\) 14...\=xd5 15.\=xd5 \=xb2 16.\=xg6 \=xb5 17.\=xh7\+ (17.cxb5 \=xg6\+) 17...\=xh7 18.\=b1 \=c3\+ 19.\=f1 \=a6 20.\=d3\+ f5 21.\=xc3 \=f6\+ An important line, at the end of which Black seems to have good compensation for his pawn.

10...\=b4!
10...\=c7 was Petrosian’s original treatment, but it may not be so good after 11.a4\+.

11.\=e2\+N
11...\=e5 12...\=f5

Black in Ju Wénjun – Huang Qian, Khanty-Mansiysk 2012.

13...bxc4 14.\=f4
After 14.\=d2 \=d3\+ Black clearly had the upper hand in Aleksandrov – Kokarev, Moscow 2013.

14...\=b7 15.\=d2 \=d3 16.\=xd3 cxd3 17.\=xd6 As played in Barbero – Forster, Switzerland 1998. I would like to recommend the strong exchange sacrifice:

17...c4!\+N 18.\=xf8 \=xf8 19.\=e5 \=xd5\+

With a tremendous position for Black.

11...\=f5 12.\=c1 \=e4! 13.\=xe4 \=xe4 14.a3 \=a6 15.\=d2 \=f6

16.\=c3! \=f8 17.0–0
17...\=g5 is well met by 17...\=f5, when I prefer Black.
17...\texttt{c7}
17...b5?!\texttt{18.e}5 \texttt{f5 19.c}xb5 \texttt{c}7 20.d1 h6 21.f3 Bae8 22.h2?! is double-edged, but White might be better.

18.e5 f5 19.f3 \texttt{e}4= \texttt{A draw by repetition should be the logical conclusion.}

\texttt{C2) 8.f3}
This is what most people would play.

8...exd5
We will examine both recaptures: \texttt{C21) 9.c}xd5 and \texttt{C22) 9.exd5}.

\texttt{C21) 9.c}xd5
This proved a nuisance for me, as existing theory does not provide a convincing route to equality for Black. The following piece of analysis summarizes my efforts to show that such a route exists:

9...\texttt{e}e8
The rarely played 9...b5?! may be possible, when the critical test is of course 10.e5\texttt{b}.

Equally interesting are \texttt{C211) 10.d}2 and \texttt{C212) 10.d}3.

\texttt{C211) 10.d}2 a6 11.a4 \texttt{d}xe4! 12.dxe4 (5
\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\draw[thick, fill=white] (0,0) rectangle (8,8);
\draw[thick] (0.5,0.5) -- (7.5,7.5);
\draw[thick] (0.5,7.5) -- (7.5,0.5);
\draw[thick] (1.5,1.5) -- (6.5,6.5);
\draw[thick] (1.5,6.5) -- (6.5,1.5);
\draw[thick] (2.5,2.5) -- (5.5,5.5);
\draw[thick] (2.5,5.5) -- (5.5,2.5);
\draw[thick] (3.5,3.5) -- (4.5,4.5);
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

Black is poised to recover the piece, but extreme accuracy is still required to equalize the chances.

13.\texttt{e}2?!\texttt{N}
This untried move, playing for positional compensation, looks like the stiffest test of Black’s enterprising play.

13.\texttt{xe}5 f4–+ is much weaker.

13.\texttt{xd}6 Bxd6 14.d4 \texttt{f}6

15.g3\texttt{N} (15.e2? f4! 16.xc5 d7 17.b4 f3 18.gxf3 Bxf3 gave Black a winning position in Barria – Minzer, Torre Blanca 1998) 15...f4! 16.gxf4 Bxf4 17.b3 (17.e2 \texttt{f}6 18.g2 \texttt{f}5 19.0–0 \texttt{d}7\texttt{+}) 17...\texttt{f}3! 18.d6 c4
19...\(\text{c}4\) \(\text{xe}3\)†! 20.\(\text{f}xe3\) \(\text{d}7\) 21.\(\text{xc}8\) \(\text{xe}3\)† 22.\(\text{d}e2\) \(\text{xb}2\) 23.d6† \(\text{g}7\) 24.\(\text{d}d1\) \(\text{e}5\) 25.\(\text{c}7\)† \(\text{h}6\) 26.\(\text{x}b7\) \(\text{g}3\)† 27.\(\text{f}f1\) \(\text{xc}8\) 28.\(\text{xc}8\) \(\text{f}4\)† 29.\(\text{f}f1\) \(\text{f}4\)†= With a draw by perpetual.

13...\(\text{fxe}4\) 14.\(\text{c}4\) \(\text{a}5\)! 15.\(\text{f}4\) \(\text{f}8\)

16.\(\text{b}3\)!?
16.0–0 \(\text{a}6\) 17.\(\text{b}3\) \(\text{b}4\) 18.\(\text{f}3\) \(\text{a}6\) 19.\(\text{d}2\)=

16...\(\text{a}6\) 17.\(\text{b}6\) \(\text{b}8\) 18.0–0 \(\text{b}4\) 19.\(\text{b}5\) \(\text{d}3\)! 20.\(\text{xe}8\) \(\text{xf}4\) 21.\(\text{xc}8\)

21...\(\text{e}2\)†! 22.\(\text{h}1\) \(\text{d}4\)†
The game is approximately equal, with a possible further line being:

23.\(\text{g}3\) \(\text{xc}8\) 24.\(\text{xe}6\)† \(\text{h}xg6\) 25.\(\text{xe}6\)† \(\text{g}7\) 26.\(\text{a}3\)

26.\(\text{xe}4\)† \(\text{f}5\)†

26...\(\text{f}8\) 27.\(\text{e}3\) \(\text{f}6\) 28.\(\text{xe}4\)
28.\(\text{xf}6\) \(\text{xf}6\) 29.\(\text{xe}4\) \(\text{f}7\)† gives Black the better ending due to the idea of ...\(\text{b}5\)

28...\(\text{f}8\) 29.\(\text{g}3\) \(\text{f}5\)
The position is ultimately level, but the material imbalance gives rise to chances for both sides.

C212) 10.\(\text{d}3\)

This looks like the most natural reply, as now White is ready to castle.
I have found this drastic idea to be best here, although other ways of playing are of course possible.

I feel obliged to point out one line of play that caused me some concern, despite it being popular in tournament chess. After the customary 10...c4 11.\texttt{\texttt{x}c2} b5 12.a3 \texttt{\texttt{x}bd7} 13.0–0 a6 14.\texttt{\texttt{d}d}2 \texttt{c7} 15.\texttt{f}e1 \texttt{b7}, Dreev conjured up a quite brilliant idea:

\begin{center}
\begin{game}
16.e2 \texttt{\texttt{x}e4}? (weaker is 16.d4 \texttt{\texttt{x}e5}! 17.h2 because it allows the regrouping 17...\texttt{f}d7\texttt{\texttt{x}d7})
In Dreev – Emms, Hastings 2000, Black had no active counterplay, and White’s mobile kingside pawns gave him good chances of an attack. Black went quickly downhill after: 16...\texttt{c5} 17.d4 \texttt{ab8} 18.g4
\end{game}
\end{center}

11...\texttt{c4}!\texttt{N}

I think that this is an important ramification, ensuring good counterplay for Black.

Weaker is 11...\texttt{f5}?!., as played in Clery – Netzer, Bischwiller 2007, due to: 12.\texttt{\texttt{x}d}6\texttt{N} \texttt{\texttt{x}d}6 13.0–0 \texttt{f4} (13...\texttt{d}7 14.\texttt{c}1\texttt{N}) 14.d2 \texttt{\texttt{x}d7}

26.\texttt{g}3 \texttt{\texttt{xf}4} 27.\texttt{e}7\texttt{f} 28.\texttt{c}3 \texttt{g}5 29.\texttt{h}5 \texttt{\texttt{x}g4} 30.hxg4 \texttt{\texttt{x}e} 31.\texttt{\texttt{x}h}7\texttt{f} 1–0. Although improvements may exist, White’s play looks easier and smoother to me, so I decided to suggest the more concrete text move.

11.\texttt{\texttt{x}e}4

The critical response.
15.\textit{a}4! \textit{f}8 16.\textit{c}3 \textit{xc}3 17.bxc3 \textit{b}6 18.\textit{b}3±

12.\textit{c}2 \textit{f}5 13.\textit{fd}2!

13.\textit{xd}6 \textit{xd}6 14.0–0 \textit{a}6± is much more comfortable for Black compared to the line given above, as the pawn on c4 cramps White.

13...\textit{fxe}4 14.0–0 \textit{a}6 15.\textit{xc}4 \textit{b}5 16.\textit{d}2 \textit{h}4 17.\textit{f}3

17...\textit{c}5! 18.\textit{f}2 \textit{g}5 19.\textit{h}4 \textit{f}4 20.g3 \textit{f}7 21.\textit{xe}4 \textit{xe}4 22.\textit{xe}4 \textit{h}3 23.\textit{e}1 \textit{xb}2 24.\textit{b}1 \textit{c}3 25.\textit{e}3 \textit{b}4=

With a double-edged game, offering chances to both sides.

C22) 9.\textit{xd}5

Obviously trying to keep the position symmetrical is in White’s interests, as he would prefer not to come under pressure on e4 with his kingside still undeveloped.

9...\textit{b}5?  

A bolt from the blue, which is approved by the engines. The idea is somewhat typical, but here it is seen in a very pure, almost primitive, form. Unsurprisingly, it is the great Dragoljub Velimirovic who played this move first.

10.\textit{xb}5 \textit{bd}7!

Black is preparing to pile up on the d5-pawn. This is an improvement over the Serbian Grandmaster’s original treatment of 10...\textit{e}8 11.\textit{e}2 \textit{e}4 12.\textit{xe}4 \textit{xe}4 13.0–0 \textit{a}6 14.a4 \textit{axb}5 15.axb5 \textit{xa}1 16.\textit{xa}1±, which was a bit better for White in Kosic – Velimirovic, Budva 2003.

11.\textit{b}3

11.\textit{e}2 \textit{b}6 12.\textit{b}3 \textit{b}7 13.\textit{d}1 \textit{e}8 14.0–0 \textit{e}4 15.a4 is at least equal for Black, for instance:

15...\textit{c}8! 16.a5 \textit{xc}3 17.bxc3 c4 18.\textit{a}2 \textit{xd}5 19.\textit{xc}4 \textit{xc}3 20.\textit{xf}7† \textit{h}8 21.\textit{d}2 \textit{xf}3 22.gxf3 \textit{xc}3 23.\textit{xc}3 \textit{xd}1 24.\textit{xd}1 \textit{xa}5=

11...\textit{e}8 12.\textit{e}2 \textit{b}7 13.0–0 \textit{b}6 14.\textit{fd}1

Keeping the rook on a1 looks a good idea for White, but Black’s next is really shocking:
14...\texttt{ex}e3!!
In addition to a pawn, Black further sacrifices an exchange – a tremendous conception.

15.fxe3 \texttt{e}7 16.\texttt{h}2 \texttt{w}xe3\dagger 17.\texttt{h}1 \texttt{w}f4
This is a really impressive position with wild complications. It seems to be approximately equal.

18.\texttt{f}3
18.\texttt{f}1 \texttt{w}g3 19.\texttt{f}3 \texttt{w}h4\dagger

18...\texttt{fd}7! 19.a4 \texttt{c}4 20.\texttt{f}1 \texttt{a}5! 21.\texttt{c}2 \texttt{f}5 22.\texttt{e}c1
22.\texttt{e}2 \texttt{w}h4\dagger

22...\texttt{e}5 23.\texttt{e}2 \texttt{w}h4 24.\texttt{d}d2 \texttt{h}6 25.\texttt{f}3 \texttt{xf}3 26.\texttt{xf}3 \texttt{f}4 27.\texttt{e}2 \texttt{e}5 28.\texttt{ab}1 c4 29.\texttt{bd}1 \texttt{b}3 30.\texttt{g}1 \texttt{e}8 31.\texttt{c}3 \texttt{f}7\texttt{w}
Black’s excellent compensation easily proved enough for a draw in Bailey – Mostowik, corr. 2012.

Conclusion

The Karpov Variation is a rather tricky line where Black needs to know a few things to avoid falling into a strategically inferior position. I chose a system based on ...c5, because I think Black has good chances in either a Benoni structure or a double fianchetto Hedgehog – which is what Karpov wants to reach by choosing to play this fluid position. To be honest, I believe this is practically terra incognita, and I expect a lot of developments in this line in the future.