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The Game Gets a Moment in Pop Culture's Spotlight

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Is chess cool? Judging by a new movie, Vogue magazine, a book and a pop star's comments, it is.

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Then there is the singer Carly Rae Jepsen, whose song "Call Me Maybe" has been the biggest hit of the year. In a recent [interview with The San Francisco Examiner](#), she said that she loved chess but that no one in her band could play and her assistant is not very good. She said she had asked her stepfather to teach her the game so she could impress a boy when she was in high school.

The August issue of Vogue included a photographic spread [that featured Alexandra Kosteniuk](#), 28, the former women's world champion. It was not an unusual assignment for Kosteniuk, who has been modeling for years.

And finally, articles about the historic 1997 match in which the I.B.M. computer Deep Blue defeated Garry Kasparov have [appeared in The Washington Post](#) and [Wired magazine](#), inspired by a book by Nate Silver, who also writes the FiveThirtyEight column on politics for The New York Times. In the book, "The Signal and the Noise," which is about the science of predictions, Silver writes that Deep Blue's crucial move in the match might have been caused by a computer bug.

It is not the first time that chess has bridged cultural divides. In August, an unusual blitz game in New York pitted Magnus Carlsen, 21, a Norwegian who is ranked No. 1 in the world, against Kenneth Rogoff, 59, a Harvard economist who is considered one of the world's leading authorities on government debt. Rogoff is also a grandmaster, but even he was surprised when the game ended in a draw.

Kenneth Rogoff versus Magnus Carlsen, Exhibition blitz game played before a live audience, New York, August 28 2012

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 Nf6 5.O-O Be7 6.Re1 b5 7.Bb3 O-O 8.c3 d6 9.h3 Nb8 10.d4 Nbd7 11.Nbd2 c5 12.Nf1 Re8 13.Ng3 Bf8 14.a4 Bb7 15.Ng5 c4 16.Bc2 d5 17.dxe5 Nxe5 18.f4 Nd3 19.Bxd3 cxd3 20.e5 Ne4 21.N3xe4 dxe4 22.Qh5 Qb6+ 23.Kh2 Qg6 24.Qxg6 hxg6 25.Nxe4 f6 26.axb5 axb5 27.Rxa8 Rxa8 28.Nf2 fxe5 29.Nxd3 e4 30.Nf2 Ra1 31.Bd2 Ra2 32.Bc1 Ra1 33.Bd2 Ra2 1/2-1/2

Magnus Carlsen



Kenneth Rogoff Position after 21 ... de4; click to replay

In an e-mail last week, Rogoff said he was nervous because he had not played in over 30 years, not even for fun. He said he calmed down a bit when Carlsen played the Breyer Defense in the Ruy Lopez, an opening that Rogoff remembered from his youth.

He said that he was surprised Carlsen let him play 22 Qh5 and that he thought Carlsen's 25 ... f6 was a mistake because it let him force trades of pieces.

In the end, Rogoff said in the e-mail, “I understand better than anyone that this was a total freak occurrence, even taking into account that it was a friendly blitz game.”