

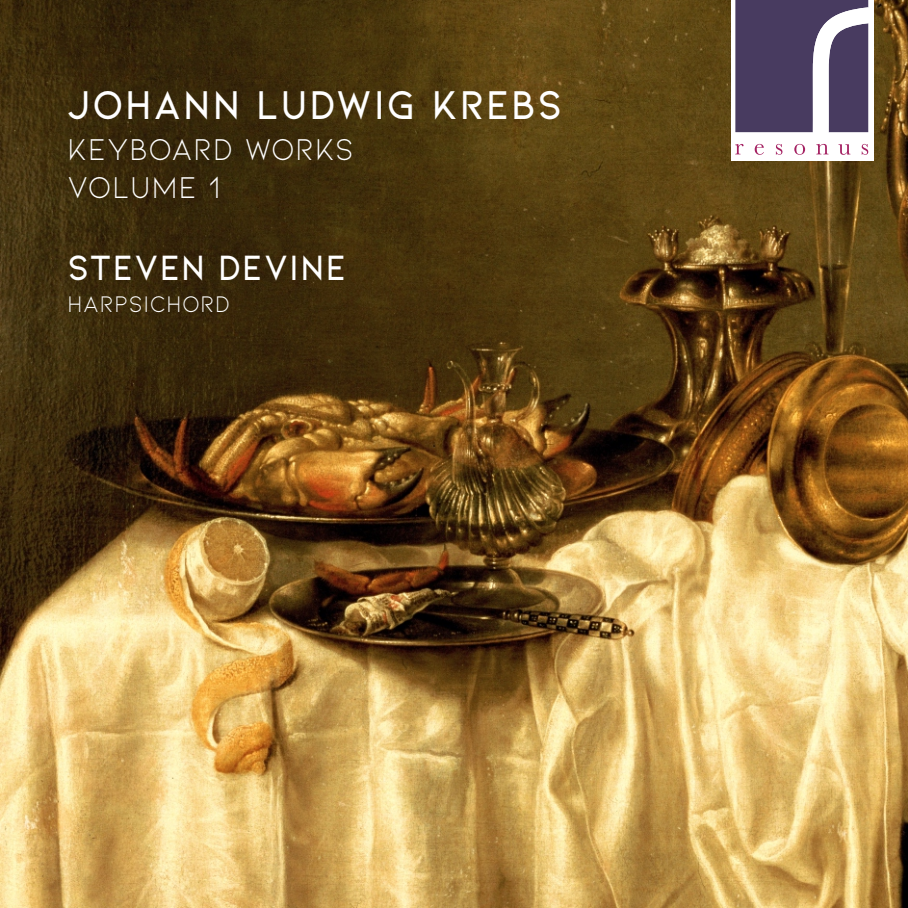
JOHANN LUDWIG KREBS

KEYBOARD WORKS

VOLUME 1

STEVEN DEVINE

HARPSICHORD



Johann Ludwig Krebs (1713–1780)

## Keyboard Works, Volume 1

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Steven Devine *harpsichord*

*Double-manual harpsichord by Colin Booth (2000) after a single-manual by*

*Johann Christof Fleischer (Hamburg, 1710)*

*Pitch: a=415Hz;*

*Temperament: Werckmeister III (1691)*

About Steven Devine:

*'[Devine] is authoritative, suave, technically dazzling and delivers immaculately manicured ornaments that lend brilliance and expressive introspection when required'*

BBC Music Magazine

*'[The harpsichord's] sonorities are clear and penetrating yet never strident, and lend themselves both to the music and to Devine's meticulous technique'*

Gramophone

### **Partita in A minor, Krebs-WV 825**

Version: 1st Edition, c. 1743

1. Fantasia	[3:31]
2. Fuga	[4:05]
3. Allemande	[6:36]
4. Courante	[4:09]
5. Sarabande	[5:25]
6. Bourrée	[1:26]
7. Pastorelle	[4:14]
8. Menuett	[2:01]
9. Gigue	[2:15]

10. **Fugue in C major, Krebs-WV 843** [2:20]

11. **Fugue in E major, Krebs-WV 844** [2:48]

12. **Fugue in F major, Krebs-WV 845** [4:55]

13. **Fugue in F minor, Krebs-WV 846** [3:23]

14. **Fugue in G major, Krebs-WV 847** [2:34]

15. **Fugue in A minor, Krebs-WV 848** [5:03]

### **Concerto in G major**

**"in Italiänischen Gusto", Krebs-WV 821**

16. Allegro	[6:21]
17. Andante	[6:47]
18. Vivace	[3:56]

Total playing time [72:00]



### Johann Ludwig Krebs – Works for Harpsichord Volume 1

Many factors play a part in ensuring a composer's legacy; in the case of Johann Ludwig Krebs, those factors worked both for and against him in terms of posthumous fame but were most definitely positive in terms of creative output.

Krebs was born near Weimar in October 1713. He was the eldest son of Johann Tobias Krebs (1690–1762) who had regularly studied with Johann Gottfried Walther (1684–1784) and Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750). Johann Ludwig Krebs himself studied with Bach at the Thomasschule in Leipzig and from contemporary reports seems to have been a much-favoured student.

A pun on both Bach's name (translating as 'brook' or 'stream') and Krebs' ('crayfish' or 'crab') was published by C.F. Cramer in 1784 in the *Magazin der Musik*, attesting to Bach's great fondness for Krebs:

*'In diesem großen Bach sey nur ein einziger Krebs gefangen worden.'*

*'In this great brook only a single crayfish has been caught'*

It is possible that Krebs never really found

the perfect job in terms of financial reward and quality of employment but he spent his final fourteen years as Court organist at the Schlosskirche in Altenburg until his death in 1780. His lifetime thus straddles a great period of transition when the contrapuntal complexities and formal dance structures of the Baroque were being supplanted by the various Enlightened experimental strands which would eventually lead to Classical stylistic conventions and sensibilities.

Much has been written about the fact that towards the end of Bach's life his compositional and harmonic style was thought of as somewhat old-fashioned. His sons – especially Johann Christian, Carl Phillippe Emmanuel and Wilhelm Friedemann – were each exploring different musical avenues towards new styles. These new avenues, although based in their Father's meticulous and painstaking education, were always striking in their break with Baroque traditions. Thus with Johann Christian we see a perfect balance of simpler harmonic frameworks with a new interest in melodic patterns; with Carl Phillippe Emmanuel the emotional and dramatic gestures are used as a means in themselves and with Wilhelm Friedemann the formal structure and virtuosic contrasts of the music move us quickly away from Johann Sebastian's musical legacy.

In Krebs' music we see the process of renewal and refreshment in the compositional process and a number of his own musical revisions of compositions reflect his desire to adapt to shifting musical tastes.

One of the best examples of this is the **Partita in A minor – Krebs-WV 825**. The second in a cycle of six Partitas, of which only three still exist, this magnificent work is a perfect synthesis of Krebs' received influences from his teacher and colleagues, and his desire to find his own voice with regards to harmony, structure and keyboard texture. The two principal sources are an autograph manuscript and a copy in the hand of Johann Christian Kittel (1732–1809) – another student of Bach's. These two sources differ considerably in number of movements and details of the common movements. It is known that the sixth Partita in E flat major (KrebsWV 827) exists in two autograph versions which also contain significant differences, it is not beyond possibility that Kittel's copy represents a later version copied from a (now lost) secondary autograph. The opening Fantasia, which is missing from the autograph, strongly echoes Bach's Chromatic Fantasia and Fugue (BWV 903) in its figuration with lightning cascades of

brilliance contrasted with searching arpeggiando harmonic developments. This movement is missing from the autograph, which starts with the extensive fugue on a subject with an augmented fourth and contrary chromaticism. Krebs clearly appreciated a fugue subject with plenty of potential – something which surely he would have picked up from his teacher. An extensive and almost meditative Allemande is followed by a Courante, here performed in the (presumably) later version. This recorded version is very similar to the autograph but for a repetition of the opening statement in octaves – an almost Sturm und Drang gesture very popular with CPE Bach, amongst others, for a dramatic rhetorical effect. The Sarabande, with large gestures and textures calling to mind the second English Suite of J S Bach, is here followed by only one Bourée: the second Bourée (in the autograph) having been replaced by a more fashionable – presumably – Pastorelle. The Gigue which concludes the Partita is only slightly altered from the original with a tightening of harmonic gestures and movement, particularly in the second half.

Six separate fugues (**Krebs-WV 843–848**) have all survived in separate sources – only one (the F minor Krebs-WV 846) has a possible date – proposed by Kittel – of 1747, based on

**Sierte Piece,**  
Bestehend  
In einem leichten, und nach dem Italiänischen Gusto,  
Wohl-eingerichteten  
**C O N C E R T O,**  
Denen  
Siebhabern der edlen Music,  
Besonders des Claviers,  
Zur Gemüths-Ergözung,  
Und  
Angenehmen Zeit-Vertreib,  
Componiret, und öffentlich heraus gegeben  
Von  
Johann Ludwig Krebs,  
Organist bey der Haupt-Kirche zu St. Marien in Zwickau.

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Anno M. DCC. XLIII.



the similarity of the subject to Bach's 'Musical Offering'. All the fugues show the formal training which was clearly the centre of Bach's teaching but all have a lightness and wit that show a composer clearly at home with the genre. Interestingly the fugues are beautifully written for the player – they lie under the fingers very comfortably, possibly indicating what an instinctive and natural keyboard player Krebs was.

The **Concerto in G major, Krebs-WV 821** – "in Italiänischen Gusto" – is dated 1743 and was printed as part of a collection of four Pieces (which are really collections). The first part of the Pieces contain six Preambulum, the second a Suite in A minor ('nach dem heutiger Gusto' – 'in today's style'). The third and fourth Pieces are directly comparable with Bach's second part of the Clavier-Übung (keyboard exercises), published in 1735, in that they are an Overture in the French Style and a Concerto in the Italian Style. Krebs' compositions show a clear knowledge of his teacher's work – forms are similar in both – yet Krebs' work manages to move both pieces into a more up-to-date idiom. In the Concerto, the frequent use of octave writing in the first movement and the virtuosic hand -crossing towards the end of the same movement create a more modern sound-world. Similarly in the second movement,

the repeated left-hand quaver chords with the elaborately ornamented right hand has a much more Classical feel. The Rondo-style last movement has much of the Classical sonata model. In addition the use of piano and forte markings (as Bach does) in the first movement imply a galant approach to repetition of phrases in contrast to the rhetorical expectations of the Baroque.

Krebs' rigorous Baroque background, his professional and personal exposure to the Bach family in Leipzig and his employment in slightly smaller musical centres may have prevented him following the latest musical fashions in the main capitals of Europe but he leaves a compositional legacy fascinating in embracing the new stylistic features he did come across. It is difficult to date many compositions – although much work is being done by musicians such as Dr Felix Friedrich (who is currently organist at Schlosskirche in Altenburg where Krebs was employed) – but the synthesis of Baroque, Galant and Classical forms and harmonic language is subtly different in all his works and points to a highly educated, enlightened and open minded musician who was clearly highly accomplished as a performer.

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### Steven Devine (harpichord)

Steven Devine enjoys a busy career as a music director and keyboard player working with some of the finest musicians.

He is the principal keyboard player with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and also the principal keyboard player for The Gonzaga Band, Classical Opera (The Mozartists) and performs regularly with many other groups around Europe. Steven is a regular keyboard player with the Monteverdi String Band and took part in their ground-breaking Monteverdi *Combattimento* project. He has recorded over thirty discs with other artists and ensembles and made six solo recordings. His recording of Bach's Goldberg Variations (Chandos Records) has received critical acclaim – including *Gramophone* magazine describing it as 'among the best'. The complete harpsichord works of Rameau (Resonus) has received five-star reviews from *BBC Music Magazine* and Steven's latest recording of Bach's Italian Concerto has been voted Classic FM's Connoisseur's choice. Steven has recently released both books of Bach's Well-Tempered Clavier on Resonus.

He made his London conducting debut in 2002 at the Royal Albert Hall and is now a

regular performer there – including making his Proms directing debut in August 2007 with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment. He has conducted the Mozart Festival Orchestra in every major concert hall in the UK and also across Switzerland. Steven is Music Director for New Chamber Opera in Oxford and with them has performed repertoire from Cavalli to Rossini. For the Dartington Festival Opera he has conducted Handel's *Orlando* and Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*. He is currently conductor and Artistic Advisor for the English Haydn Festival in Bridgnorth.

Steven works regularly with the Norwegian Wind Ensemble, Trondheim Barokk, the Victoria Baroque Players (BC, Canada) and Arion Baroque Ensemble (Montreal).

He teaches harpsichord and fortepiano at Trinity Laban Conservatoire in London and is Early Keyboard Consultant to the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire and Royal Welsh Colleges.

Finally, Steven is thrilled to be a member of the ground-breaking Art of Moog: an electronic music group specialising in the performance of Bach.



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