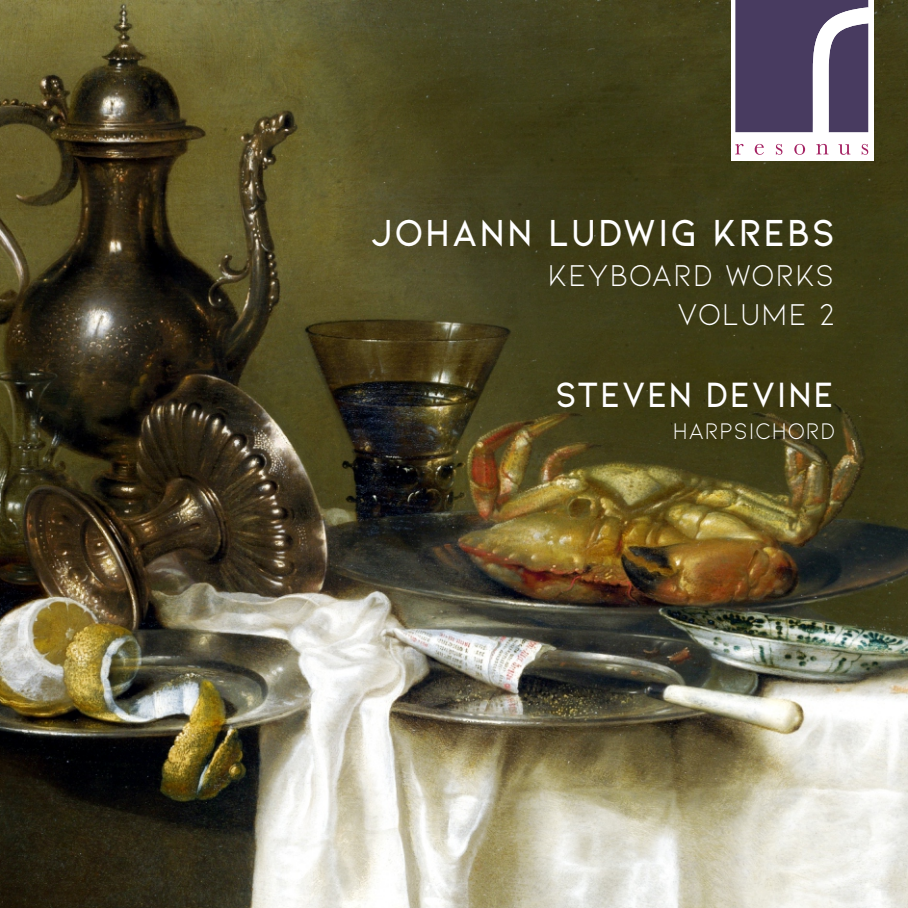




JOHANN LUDWIG KREBS
KEYBOARD WORKS
VOLUME 2

STEVEN DEVINE
HARPSICHORD



Johann Ludwig Krebs (1713–1780)

Keyboard Works, Volume 2

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

Overture 'nach dem Franzoischen [sic] Gout', Krebs-WV 820

1. Ouverture	[9:23]
2. Lentement	[5:12]
3. Vivement	[2:47]
4. Paisan	[2:02]
5. Menuett I & Menuett II en Trio	[5:12]
6. Gavotte	[1:33]
7. Air avec Doubles	[7:26]
8. Passepied I & II	[2:07]
9. Rigaudon	[0:42]

Partita in B-flat major, Krebs-WV 823

10. Preludio	[3:15]
11. Fuga	[3:16]
12. Allemande	[3:58]
13. Corranta	[2:45]
14. Sarabande	[5:08]
15. Bourlesca	[4:11]
16. Menuets I, II & III	[6:02]
17. Gigue	[2:27]

Sonata in A minor, Krebs-WV 838

18. Fantasia – Allegro	[3:43]
19. Allegretto	[2:52]
20. Allegro Assai	[3:04]

Total playing time [77:17]



Johann Ludwig Krebs – Keyboard Works Volume 2

The three works on this disc, at first listening, may appear to be from completely different composers, such is the diversity of compositional style. In fact the twenty-four years that separates the publications of the Partita in B flat Major and the Sonata in A minor represent quite a significant sea-change in musical taste and composers seeking employment or even simply approval had to follow the fashion. The difficulty in this turbulent time – now conveniently identifiable as the closing of the Baroque Period and the ‘interregnum’ before the Classical Period – was deciding in which direction to strike out compositionally. Johann Sebastian Bach’s sons, Carl Philipp Emmanuel, Johann Christian and Wilhelm Friedemann created the most clearly-defined routes out of the long shadow of their father and their differences could not be more striking. The charming melody-led craftsmanship of Johann Christian was as far from the maniacal energy of Wilhelm Friedemann as they both were from the harmonic and textural daring of Carl Philipp Emmanuel. Johann Ludwig Krebs, a student of J. S. Bach (who described him as ‘a musician of distinction, a player of the keyboard, violin and lute and a proficient composer’ in an

oft-quoted testimonial from 1735), provides an intriguing guide to the shifting tastes in both harmonic and technical changes in keyboard compositional technique. It is tempting to see him as the diplomatic solution to the diverse opinions between the Bach sons whom he must have been close to, working as he did in all aspects of the Leipzig musical establishment including being a very important copyist of J. S. Bach’s works.

The **Overture in G Minor** is the third part of the *Vier Pieces* – which are really collections of pieces – and was published in 1741. The elaborate titlepage describes the Overture as ‘well-appointed according to the French Taste...for a spirit of ecstasy and a pleasant pastime’. In many ways this piece is rather traditional and shadows Bach’s own ‘French Overture’ (BWV 831, published in 1735). The opening movement begins with the expected slow dotted ‘French Overture’ style and the middle section is a lively fugue on a rising chromatic theme. Mixed up with the following dance movements – including a country dance ‘Paisan’ – are abstract movements in the newer two-part galant style, titled ‘Lentement’ and ‘Vivement’.

Krebs’ influence from J. S. Bach is also evident in the set of six Partitas, of which now only three survive. The Partita in A minor, the fourth of the set, recorded on Volume 1 of

Krebs' harpsichord Works (RES10287) is very much about the bravura display whereas the **Partita in B flat major ('Partita Seconda')** recorded here is more inclined to the pastoral. As with the A minor partita there are two principal sources, a manuscript copy with ten movements and another handwritten source which doesn't contain the Allemande, Courante or Gigue. However, apart the omitted movements, the differences are mostly in the details rather than compositional.

The opening movement is a masterpiece of cantabile writing. The single texture – melody against perfectly-voiced left-hand chords – allows the harmonic journey to unfold slowly until the long pedal-points of the final (dominant) conclusion lead us into a typically Krebsian alla breve fugue: texturally straightforward but harmonically eccentric at regular intervals. The dance movements which follow are much more traditional in style and technique; there is more than a hint of Bach in the textures created, especially in the Allemande, Corranta and Sarabande, and yet Krebs' harmonic language is subtly different – sequences move in slightly different directions, cadential figures have a unique flavour, for example. The movement entitled Bourlesca is very reminiscent of Telemann's dance suites.

One interesting side note is that two further sources of the Fuga (second movement) exist, one transposed up a tone into C major. Performance indications in both suggest an instrument with pedals as a pedal entry is clearly indicated. Felix Friederich, the editor of much of Krebs' keyboard music, and the current organist at the church that Krebs spent the final fourteen years of his life, indicates that the transposition also makes the Fuga fit much better on contemporary organs, which often had C as the lowest note.

The third composition on this recording is also the most forward-looking and the most original: published by Breitkopf and Son in 1765 as part of the *Musicalischer Magazin* but also listed in their catalogue two years prior. The first movement is immediately striking: large eight-note chords and thematic material in octaves completely arrest the ear – particularly with the sturm-und-drang style dramatic rests. These gestures are contrasted with *emfindsamer stil* (sensitive style) sighing gestures, so typical of C. P. E. Bach's lyrical writing. The expected slow movement never materialises and instead Krebs provides an Allegretto in 3/8 with simple harmony and a charming naivety that recalls Andante movements of Johann-Christian Bach.





The driving Allegro Assai of the final movement which is (in effect) a two-part texture throughout brings us back into the storm and stress of contrasting rhythms and dramatic pauses that would prove so effective in the music of Josef Haydn's 1770's music.

From an organology perspective, this Sonata is one of the few keyboard works by Krebs to employ the top e''' of the harpsichord keyboard. It was more normal to employ d''' as the highest note of the compass at this time, but all the Bach sons were also experimenting with the extremes of the keyboards and manufacturers were responding to this demand with lower and higher notes on their compasses.

Johann Krebs may not have had the continuous historical re-evaluation of the Bach family, but his well-written music is the perfect snapshot of a time of musical upheaval and is as satisfying and entertaining to play and listen to as so much other music of this period: it deserves our closer attention.

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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 and The Mozartists and performs regularly with many other groups and soloists around Europe. Steven is a regular keyboard player with the Monteverdi String Band and took part in their ground-breaking Monteverdi Combamento 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 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 and has begun an exploration of the complete harpsichord works of Johann Ludwig Krebs, Bach's favourite student.

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 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 is Early Keyboard Consultant to the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire and Royal Welsh Colleges and teaches at the Royal Academy of Music in London.

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.

Musikalisches Magazin

Sechses Stück.

S O N A T A

per il Clavicembalo

dal
Sig. GIOV. LUIGI KREBS, Organista della Corte in Altenburgo.

Fantasia
Allegro.

adagio.

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Recorded in Alpheton New Maltings, Suffolk, on 23–24 February 2021
Performing editions by Steven Devine (Overture) and Felix Frederick (Partita and Sonata – publ. Carus)
Producer, engineer & editor: Adam Binks
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Session & instrument photography © Resonus Limited
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