



resonus

JOHANN LUDWIG KREBS
KEYBOARD WORKS
VOLUME 3

STEVEN DEVINE
HARPSICHORD



Johann Ludwig Krebs (1713–1780)

Complete Harpsichord Works Volume 3

Steven Devine *harpsichord*

*Double-manual harpsichord by Colin Booth (2000)
after a single-manual by Johann Christof Fleischer (Hamburg, 1710).
Tuned and maintained by Steven Devine.*

Pitch a=415Hz

Temperament based on Werckmeister III (1691)

*Performing editions by Steven Devine (Six Sonatas)
and Felix Frederich (Partita, published by Carus)*

Six Keyboard Sonatas

Partita VI in E-flat major, Krebs-WV 827a

- | | |
|--------------|--------|
| 1. Präludium | [4:34] |
| 2. Fuga | [3:29] |
| 3. Allemande | [4:38] |
| 4. Courante | [2:13] |
| 5. Sarabande | [4:05] |
| 6. Gavotte | [1:27] |
| 7. Polonoise | [1:38] |
| 8. Scherzo | [1:49] |
| 9. Menuet | [1:03] |
| 10. Gigue | [2:37] |

Sonata I in C major, Krebs-WV 832 *

- | | |
|----------------|--------|
| 11. Allegro | [4:04] |
| 12. Andante | [1:46] |
| 13. Allegretto | [2:04] |

Sonata II in G major, Krebs-WV 833 *

- | | |
|----------------|--------|
| 14. Allegro | [3:43] |
| 15. Andante | [2:00] |
| 16. Allegretto | [3:04] |

Sonata III in B-flat major, Krebs-WV 834 *

- | | |
|-------------|--------|
| 17. Vivace | [3:33] |
| 18. Andante | [1:29] |
| 19. Vivace | [2:43] |

Sonata IV in D major, Krebs-WV 835 *

- | | |
|----------------|--------|
| 20. Allegro | [4:07] |
| 21. Allegretto | [1:19] |
| 22. Presto | [1:57] |

Sonata V in F major, Krebs-WV 836 *

- | | |
|-------------|--------|
| 23. Allegro | [4:34] |
| 24. Andante | [1:55] |
| 25. Allegro | [2:27] |

Sonata VI in D minor, Krebs-WV 837 *

- | | |
|------------------------|--------|
| 26. Allegro non troppo | [4:23] |
| 27. Andante | [2:20] |
| 28. Allegro | [2:16] |

Total playing time [77:30]

* *World premiere recording*



(fig 1.)

Johann Ludwig Krebs – Keyboard Works Volume 3

Biographical note

Johann Ludwig 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 (1684–1748) 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']

An authenticated testimonial by Bach from 1735 – referring to a job application – confirms this:

'one who has so distinguished himself here [in Leipzig]..in respect to the clavier,

the violin and the lute as well as composition...and [I] herewith recommend him again most heartily'

(Translation The Bach Reader David and Mendel, published JM Dent, 1966)

Krebs also played at the Collegium Musicum, the university-based concert society, founded by Telemann and directed by Bach which held concerts at Zimmerman's Coffee House: it is tempting to imagine him taking one of the solo parts in one of Bach's concerti for multiple keyboard instruments alongside Carl Philipp and Wilhelm Friedemann Bach.

The Music

This volume features one of the three surviving **Partitas** from a presumed set of six. The Partita here recorded is described as the sixth and the two other extant works are numbered as the second (Krebs-WV 823 recorded on Volume 2 – RES10300) and fourth (Krebs-WV825 recorded on Volume 1 – RES10287). No date for composition exists for any of the Partitas, although in a copy of the A minor Partita (Krebs-WV 825) in the hand of Johann Christian Kittel (1732–1809) Krebs is described as the organist in Zeitz – a small town south of Leipzig – which was a post he held between 1744 and 1755.

As with the other two Partitas, an autograph manuscript (fig.1) exists titled 'Partita Sesta. | per il | Clavicembalo. | [at bottom right:] di | Monsieur | Joh: Lud: Krebs:'. This is a beautiful, neat copy which contains fewer movements than the (presumably) later manuscript (fig.2) which Felix Friedrich identifies as being in the hand of J G Walther. The inscription on this later copy is 'Suite | pour le | Clavecin | di | J. L. K.' The differences between the two manuscripts are striking and point to Krebs' constant revision and desire to demonstrate his assimilation with the latest stylistic fashions. Movements featured in the revised Partita include a charming Gavotte and a very witty Scherzo. The two versions of the Sarabande offer a glimpse of the changing tastes towards ornamentation: the earlier (Krebs) manuscript detailing elaborate figurations whereas the Walther MS shows simplification in the ornamentation and in some of the accompaniment. The Gigue and Polonoise [sic] are substantially different compositions in the two copies.

Even in the movements where Krebs retains the same music, there are striking features: the Präludium starts as though it intends to be a contrapuntal piece but very quickly Krebs abandons that and turns to a more Fantasia-like series of (presumably arpeggiated) chords. When he returns to a more fugal section, the harmony and

chromaticisms are very exploratory. The Fugue – as with other fugues by Krebs – contains wonderful textural variety and the following Allemande demonstrates Krebs's lyrical compositional style.

The catalogue of Krebs's works assigns numbers for the missing three Partitas: although there is little expectation of them being found, it is hard not to be intrigued by the prospect of new discoveries as happened in the case of the other compositions on this recording.

The Six Sonatas (Krebs-WV 832-837) only came to light during the historic restoration of the archive of the Sing-Akademie to Berlin following its removal to Ukraine during the war in 1943. The archive was re-discovered in Kiev in 1999 and was returned to Berlin in 2001. Until the cataloguing of the collection, these works by Krebs were not known about and this is the first known harpsichord recording of them.

The manuscript shows every sign of careful preparation – there are no corrections and very few errors. There is a title page by Carl Friedrich Zelter (1758–1832), the second director of the Berlin Sing-Akademie, which describes Krebs as having been Bach's pupil for nine years. Zelter was a teacher of Felix and Fanny



(fig 2.)

Mendelssohn, among many others, and possibly the most important person in the awakening of a respect for Bach's music in the Mendelssohn family and he was instrumental in organising the 1829 performance of Bach's *St Matthew Passion* directed by Felix. Beyond Zelter's title page and description, the copy of these sonatas consists of fourteen loose sheets arranged (and numbered) rather eccentrically in that the third movement of each sonata appears first.

Stylistically, these works show leanings towards a more *galant* taste with predominantly two-part writing, slower harmonic movement and exploratory textures. There are great similarities in all of these things with Carl Philipp Emmanuel Bach's music, and while they may not be quite so daring harmonically, there are still surprising chromaticisms and extreme intervallic leaps. The fifth sonata features repeated bass octaves – a very rare texture in harpsichord music before this time – and recalls CPE Bach's continuo lines during in his later compositions. All sonatas are in three movements with all but one (the D major) having a contrasting Andante in the middle of two quick movements.

It is almost impossible to date these compositions with any accuracy but the overall compositional style points to a period later in Krebs' life and the confident, yet straightforward charm hints at a composer comfortable in the new idiom.

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Steven Devine (harpichord)

Steven Devine combines a career as a conductor and director of orchestral, choral and opera repertoire with that of a solo harpichordist and fortepianist. He is Conductor and Artistic Advisor of The English Haydn Festival; Music Director of New Chamber Opera, Oxford and Director of the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment's *Bach the Universe & Everything* series.

On the concert platform he has directed Purcell, Blow, Bach, Handel and Mozart with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment; Bach Easter Oratorio with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales; Haydn, Handel, CPE Bach, JC Bach, Dittersdorf and Viotti with the English Haydn Orchestra; Handel, Vivaldi and Porpora with Ann Hallenberg and Trondheim Barokk; Bach Christmas Oratorio with the Norwegian Wind Ensemble; Handel Solomon with Victoria Baroque Players, British Columbia and Handel Music for the Royal Fireworks with Arion Baroque Ensemble, Montreal; He has also directed programmes with the Academy of Ancient Music, Academie d'Ambronay, the Mozart Festival Orchestra and St Paul's Chamber Orchestra.

Devine's opera repertoire includes works by Purcell, Cavalli, Handel, Haydn and Mozart as well as rarities by Galuppi, Salieri and Cimarosa. His recordings include *Dido & Aeneas* with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and Sarah Connolly in the title role.

As a keyboard player, he is the Principal Keyboard Player with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and also the principal keyboard player for The Gonzaga Band, The Mozartists and performs regularly with many other groups around Europe. He has recorded over thirty discs with other artists and ensembles and made many 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 harpichord works of Rameau (Resonus) has received five-star reviews from *BBC Music Magazine*. Steven has recently released Bach's Well-Tempered Clavier. He is currently engaged in recording the complete harpichord works of Johann Ludwig Krebs, Bach's favourite student.

Steven Devine was educated at Chetham's School of Music before reading Music at St Peter's College, Oxford. He was Director of Opera Restor'd from 2002–2010 and Kurator and Conductor of the Norwegian Wind Ensemble from 2016–2018.

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Recorded in Alpheton New Maltings, Suffolk on 25–26 April 2022

Producer, engineer & editor: Adam Binks

Recorded at 24-bit/96 kHz resolution

Cover Image: Detail of Willem Claesz Heda: Still life with upturned Jan Steen pitcher, crab, & drinking vessels

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