

Joseph Martin
KRAUS

Arias and Overtures

**Proserpin • Äfventyraren • Geburtstags-Kantate
Parvum quando cerno Deum • Sentimi, non partir!**

**Monica Groop, Mezzo-soprano
Helsinki Baroque Orchestra • Aapo Häkkinen**



Joseph Martin Kraus (1756–1792)

Arias and Overtures

Joseph Martin Kraus, one of the most talented composers of the eighteenth century, was born in the central German town of Miltenburg am Main, the son of a local state official. He received his earliest formal education in nearby Buchen and at the Jesuit Gymnasium and Music Seminar in Mannheim, where he studied German literature and music. Following additional schooling at the universities in Mainz and Erfurt, Kraus spent a year at home in Buchen from 1775 to 1776 while his father was undergoing indictment for misuse of office, before resuming his studies in law at Göttingen University. In 1778 he published his treatise *Etwas von und über Musik*, which is one of the few actual theoretical works devoted to the adaptation of *Sturm und Drang* literary philosophy to music.

In 1778 Kraus decided to seek employment in Sweden at the court of Gustav III. Although anticipating an official position, he found it difficult to break into the cultural establishment of Stockholm, and it took him two years to overcome the various political obstacles. Finally, in 1780 he was commissioned to compose a trial opera, *Proserpin*, the text of which had been drafted by the king himself and versified by the poet Johan Kellgren. Its successful private performance at Ulriksdal in 1781 brought an appointment as deputy *Kapellmästare* and in 1782 he undertook a grand tour of Europe at Gustav's expense to observe the latest in musical and theatrical trends. This took him throughout Germany, Austria, Italy, England, and France, where he met major figures of the period such as Gluck and Haydn, gaining their respect and admiration, as well as attending significant events such as the Handel Centennial Celebration in London.

Kraus returned to Stockholm in 1787 and the following year was appointed as *Kapellmästare* and director of curriculum at the Royal Academy of Music. For the next several years he achieved a reputation in Stockholm for his modern method of conducting, his activities as a composer, and his rigorous pedagogical standards. He was a participant in the Palmstedt literary circle and contributed much to the establishment of Stockholm as one of the leading cultural centres of Europe. Nine months after the assassination of Gustav III in 1792, Kraus himself died at the age of thirty-six.

As a composer, Kraus can be seen as one of the most

progressive of the late eighteenth century. His earliest training brought him the Italian style of the Mannheim composers, the contrapuntal rigour of Franz Xaver Richter and J. S. Bach, as well as the dramatic style of C. P. E. Bach, Gluck, and Grétry. A man of many talents, he was also theorist, pedagogue and author (a book of poetry and a tragedy). His compositional style features the unexpected, as well as the dramatic, and it is not surprising therefore to find many forward-looking stylistic devices that anticipate music of the next century. His talent for thematic development, his colourful orchestration, and his penchant for a theatrical flair in his works caused Haydn to proclaim him one of only two "geniuses" he knew (Mozart being the other one).

This disc presents a compendium of individual arias and overtures, including several that have not been recorded previously. The overtures span a wide variety of works. The first overture is to his opera *Proserpin*, consisting of a languid slow introduction followed by a long *Allegro* characterized by a single unison motive. The influence of Gluck is felt in the frequent use of suspensions and the insistent principal unison melody that dissolves easily into a lyrical line before a strong cadence. In 1782 Kraus, on the first leg of his grand tour, visited Wismar, then a Swedish province. Here he came into contact with the Gröning brothers, both local lawyers and literati. They persuaded the composer to set to music a text written in honour of their sovereign, Gustav III. Kraus apparently wrote the entire ten-movement score in the space of only about a week, beginning with this triple metre overture that starts with a smooth flowing theme before erupting into a brilliant statement in which the trumpets are used in a percussive manner. The lyrical continuation sets the tone for the royal panegyric before concluding with a bright flourish. In 1790, Kraus, along with eight other composers resident in Stockholm, was asked to write music for a play by Johan Magnus Lannerstierna entitled *Äfventyraren* (The Adventurer), which takes place somewhere on a fantastical island in the southern reaches of the Red Sea (localized off the coast of what is now Somalia). There the High Priest of Freya has decreed that any stranger appearing without invitation is to be sacrificed. As the bucolic fisher-folk and peasants go about their mundane tasks, a castaway

(speaking Swedish in a French accent much like Gustav III himself) appears, insinuates himself with the High Priest's wife and daughter, and eventually gets himself out of his predicament by lifting his wig to scratch; apparently the feat of strength of being able to lift his own hair from his scalp is evidence of supernatural powers. The comedy was meant to showcase the efforts of the court composers, and Kraus, as *Kapellmästare*, wrote this overture and the first seven movements. The work begins with a slow, clucking gavotte, with the music taken from the first chorus of fisher-folk who are mending their nets. It then suddenly develops into a madcap, urgent *Allegro*, in which the strings scurry about frantically before finally being brought to rest by a dominant oboe solo. One can almost anticipate the manic attempts by the High Priest and his minions to safeguard their land from intruders, only to be stopped by the mocking derision of the Adventurer, who foils their machinations at every turn. In all three of these works, the music of the overture leads directly into an opening chorus, so there is a short transition that does not allow them to stand alone apart from their stage works. In order that they be performable apart from the stage works, a concert ending has been added or taken from contemporaneous sources.

In March 1792 Gustav III was shot at a masked ball, succumbing to his wounds several weeks later. Kraus, a loyal supporter of his controversial monarch, was asked to write two pieces for the funeral, a symphony and a cantata. This "*Introduzione*" was intended to serve as a preface to the latter, providing a solemn, mood-setting prelude. For this Kraus borrowed much of the opening from a first movement to a church symphony from two years earlier, which itself framed a fugue that he arranged from the overture to *Die Pilger auf Golgotha* by Johann Georg Albrechtsberger. The angry unisons at the opening are like horrified interrogatives, which are answered by soft placating chordal responses. This in turn dissolves into a poignant bassoon theme, almost a sentimental reminiscence, only to be stopped by a strict and implacable fugue, which itself dissolves into soft, mournful concluding chords. The work is highly dramatic, reflecting Kraus's own emotional state at the murder of his sovereign.

The arias reflect a range of works, some of which are performed here for the first time in over two centuries. The earliest of these is the sacred aria *Parvum quando cerno*

Deum (VB 5), a work that was written in Buchen in 1776, possibly for one of the outlying churches. Scored for alto or mezzo-soprano as the soloist, it is a sort of non-liturgical Christmas song, the text of which is taken from the twelfth century *Repertorium Hymnologicum*. The work is revealing of the young Kraus's talents, for it contains an extensive solo violin part, in addition to well-integrated pairs of woodwinds (originally clarinets but performed here by alto oboes to emphasize the pastoral nature of the text) and horns, all of which alternate freely with the voice extolling the feelings of Mary as she nurses her child. Nonetheless, the music is virtuoso, resulting in a more operatic style, replete with intertwining solos and cadenzas. Two other vocal pieces on this disc are recreations of insertion arias commissioned by the Royal Dramatic Theatre to be performed as musical interludes within spoken comedy. The first, *Hör mina ömma suckar klaga* (Hear my tender sighs' lament) (VB 26) was meant to be sung by a secondary character, the Secretary, in *Visittimmen* (The Visiting Hour), an adaptation of a French play by Poinsinet in a translation by Karl Ristell from 1787. A simple set of strophes, it gained popularity as a published song. The original score was burned in a theatre fire in 1827, and all that remains is a portion of Kraus's draft of the end of the orchestral introduction and vocal entrance, thus it cannot be determined whether it was through-composed or strophic. Here the aria has been reconstructed based upon this fragment, with each verse accompanied by a different instrument, as may well have been Kraus's original. The second of these is Zelda's insertion aria to Nils Sparrschöld's comedy *De Mexikanske Systrarna* (The Mexican Sisters), *Du i hvars oskuldfulla blick* (You, in whose innocent glance), from 1789, which likewise has been lost save for a version published as a song. Fortunately, a transcription from Turku, in Finland, for voice and cittern allows for the original to be reconstructed to some extent. Originally probably strophic, all of the verses save the first have not survived, and so the work is most probably much shorter than the original. Here, the entire aria is performed without and then with voice; the orchestration has been reconstructed by the editor.

The three Italian concert arias were written for public concert series in Stockholm. All have texts by Pietro Metastasio and all are intended for modest vocal ranges. The short *Ma tu tremi* (But you tremble) (VB 63) is from the cantata *La Tempesta* and is a brief da capo of only thirty

bars. The gently bouncing accompaniment adds the “trembling,” broken only by a brief central section of rising emotion. The simple format of the work allowed Kraus to recast it as a solo song, adapting the orchestral accompaniment of horns and strings to the fortepiano, and his colleague Johann Christian Friedrich Haeffner later reorchestrated it for bass voice and a darker orchestral accompaniment, as well as intending it to be reformatted as a hymn. The same sort of compact structure can be seen in the rondo *Ch’io mai vi possa* (VB 59), also written at the same time. Scored only for strings and voice of a more limited range, to a text taken from Metastasio’s libretto *Siroë*, this is a far cry from the aria *Sentimi, non partir!* (Listen to me, do not go!) (VB 55), taken from the text of Gaetano Roccaforte’s *Antigona* from 1776. This is Kraus’s arrangement of an aria by Johann Christian Bach composed in 1778 for the castrato Fernando Tenducci. Kraus no doubt acquired it either in Paris (where it had been first performed) or London during his visit there in 1785 with the intent of adapting it as a concert piece for tenor Cristoffer Karsten or possibly mezzo-soprano Caroline Müller, both of whom seem to have sung it at the public concerts in Stockholm in the years that followed. The

dramatic alternations between arioso featuring sonorous solo cellos and recitative leads into a lyrical rondo whose theme is organically derived from the arioso. This idyllic orchestration no doubt captured Kraus’s attention, as he retains large portions of Bach’s original with only the slightest of alterations (and omitting the fortepiano solo), diverging only in the contrasting sections, though never so much as to destroy the musical structure of the model. Finally, composed during Kraus’s visit to Paris beginning in 1784, his brief rondo, *Du temps, qui détruit tout* (VB 58), represents his only concert aria in French and its strophic text by an unknown poet probably reflects *opéra comique* practice. It is, however, a panegyric meant to honour Kraus’s sovereign, Gustav III, though the context is not known. The soft string accompaniment never overshadows the voice, originally a tenor, and the simple tune is eminently singable with a lilting tune. This performance adds a flute, a practice that would not have been out of place in the eighteenth century. It is hoped that this series of pieces will demonstrate the variety and talent that Kraus, noted by his contemporaries as a significant composer of his age, could offer.

Bertil van Boer

Texts

2 Aria “Du i hvars oskuldsfulla blick” (VB 30)

Text: Nils Birger Sparrschöld (1763–1830), from the play *De Mexikanske Systrarna* (The Mexican Sisters)

Du i hvars oskuldsfulla blick
Jag laser glädjen fri från smärta;
Du tänder med förnyadt skick
Förnyadt ömhet i mitt hjerta.

You, in whose innocent glance
I read happiness free from pain.
With renewed ardour you ignite
Renewed tenderness in my heart.

3 Aria “Ma tu tremi” (VB 63)

Text: Pietro Metastasio (1698–1782), from the cantata *La Tempesta*

Ma tu tremi, o mio tesoro!
Ma tu palpiti, cor mio!
Non tremar; con te son io,
ne d’amor ti parlerò.
Mentre folgori, mentre baleni
sarò teco, amata Nice!
Quando il ciel si rassereni,
Nice ingrata! io partirò.

Are you afraid, my beloved?
Do you tremble, my dearest?
Fear not, I am with you,
Beloved Nysa, and while
Thunder and lighten threaten you,
I shall not speak of love.
When the sky has cleared,
Ungrateful Nysa, then I shall go!

4 Aria “Ch’io mai vi possa” (VB 59)

Text: Pietro Metastasio, from *Siroë*

Ch’io mai vi possa lasciar d’amare,
non lo credete, pupille care;
nemmen per gioco v’ingannerò.
Voi foste e siete le mie faville,
e voi sarete, care pupille,
il mio bel foco, fin ch’io vivrò.

Think not, beloved eyes,
That I could ever stop loving you;
Not even in jest shall I deceive you.
You were and are my sparks,
And you always will be, beloved eyes,
My beautiful fire, as long as I live.

6 Sacred Aria “Parvum quando cerno Deum” (VB 5)

Text: *Repertorium Hymnologicum* from the 12th century

Parvum quando cerno Deum
Matris inter brachia,
Colliquescit pectus meum
Inter mille gaudia.

Gestit puer, gestit videns
Tua mater viscera.
Qualis puro in lucenti
Sol renitet aethere,
Talis puer in lactanti
Matris ubere.

When I see the tiny God
In the arms of his mother,
My heart melts
Amid a thousand joys.

The babe rejoices, your mother rejoices
When she looks upon the fruit of her womb.
As the sun shines clearly
In the radiant sky
So the babe too on the milky breast
Of his mother.

8 Aria “Du temps, qui détruit tout” (VB 58)

Text: Anonymous

Du temps, qui détruit tout,
il craint peu les outrages,
chéri de la postérité.
On citera ses vertus,
on citera ses ouvrages.
Bienfaiteur de l’humanité,
déjà Gustave a mérité
le souvenir de tous les âges.

Of time, which destroys all,
He little fears the ravages.
He will be cherished by posterity,
His virtues exalted,
His deeds extolled.
A benefactor of all mankind
Gustav already deserves
To be remembered throughout the ages.

9 Recitative and Aria “Sentimi, non partir! – Al mio bene” (VB 55)

Text: Gaetano Roccaforte (fl. mid-18th century), from *Antigona*

Sentimi, non partir!
Per tutto ciò
ch’hai di più sacro in cielo
o di più caro in terra,
per quell’istesso tenero amor
che ci legò, t’arresta.
Perdona al padre o almeno,

Listen to me, do not go!
By all that you hold
Most sacred in heaven
Or most dear on earth,
By that same tender love
That bound us, please stay.
Forgive my father, or else,

se brami una vendetta,
aprimi il seno.
Fra noi chi a ciglio asciutto
potria veder estinta
cader vergine pura a pie' dell'ara?
E qual barbaro cuore
non si trova commosso a tanto orrore?

Sposa Antigona,
ah meglio ti consiglia col ciel,
la bianca destra
non imbrattar nel sangue
e d'un sangue innocente.
Ah ch'io vorrei ... ti sdegni ...
Ahimé, voi m'assistete, o dèi.

Al mio bene, a lei che adoro
vo chiedendo invan pietà.
Eppur so che il mio tesoro
sì crudele il cor non ha.
Gira i lumi perturbato
e risolversi non sa,
a quest'alma abbandonata
perché mai tal crudeltà?
Sposa Antigona,
ben mio, mio tesoro,
pur io so che il ben che adoro
sì crudele il cor non ha.

If you must have vengeance,
Pierce my breast instead.
Who among us could
Watch a pure virgin slain at the altar
Without shedding a tear?
And what heart is so barbarous that
It would not be moved by such horror?

O Antigone, my bride,
Ah, take wiser counsel from heaven
And stain not
Your fair hand with blood,
With innocent blood.
Ah, I wish ... you are angry ...
Alas, o gods, you must help me.

In vain do I ask my beloved,
The one I adore, to show mercy.
And yet I know my love's heart
Is incapable of such cruelty.
She rolls her eyes, seems troubled
And cannot resolve to act.
Why must this abandoned soul
Endure such torment?
O Antigone, my bride,
My beloved, my love,
I know the heart of the one I adore
Is incapable of such cruelty.

[11] Aria “Hör mina ömma suckar klaga” (VB 26)

Text: Karl Ristell (1744–1829), from the play *Visittimman* [The Visiting Hour] after *Le Cercle* by Antoine-Alexandre-Henri Poinsinet (1735–1769)

Hör mina ömma suckar klaga
Och du hvars skönhet fångslat mig;
Hur svårt det är att dig behaga,
Men ack hur lätt att älska dig.

När dina blickar tändt min låga,
De också tändt ett ljufligt hopp,
Säg om jag än skall nära våga
Den gnista själv du lifvat opp.

Sig kärlek hålst bland liljer döljer,
Han fläcktar om din täcka arm,
Ack lycklig den som dristigt följer,
Och finner honom i din barm.

Hear my tender sighs' lament
For you whose beauty has captivated me;
How hard it is to please them
But oh how easy to love you.

When I had my torch ignited by your glances
It also ignited a sweet hope.
Tell me if I dare nourish
The spark that you yourself have brought to life.

Love itself would rather hide among the lilies.
It flutters about your dainty arm
Oh, happy is he who boldly follows it
And finds it in your embrace.

Monica Groop

Monica Groop enjoys a multi-faceted career based upon an extremely adventurous repertory – a rich and varied mixture of baroque music, classical repertoire and modern masters. Since her professional début in 1987, she has performed with many of the world's major opera companies including Covent Garden, the Munich State Opera, the Royal Opera of Stockholm and the opera houses of Amsterdam, Cologne and Paris. Orchestra appearances include the New York Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony, Boston Symphony, London Philharmonic, Philharmonia Orchestra, BBC Symphony, BR and NDR Orchestras, Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, Dresden Staatskapelle, Wiener Philharmoniker, Wiener Symphoniker and Orchestre national de France, under such conductors as Georg Solti, Carlo Maria Giulini, Zubin Mehta, Colin Davis, Roger Norrington, Philippe Herreweghe, René Jacobs, Bernhard Haitink, Herbert Blomstedt, Kent Nagano, Helmuth Rilling, Esa-Pekka Salonen, Seiji Ozawa, Christoph Eschenbach, Paavo Berglund and Ivor Bolton. An accomplished recitalist particularly respected for her unique interpretation of Scandinavian music, Monica Groop has given solo recitals at New York's Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center, London's Wigmore Hall and Vienna's Musikverein. In honour of the Schubert bicentenary, she joined András Schiff for three Schubert/Brahms recitals at the Salzburg Festival and an all-Schubert recital at the Lucerne Festival.

Aapo Häkkinen

Aapo Häkkinen began his musical education as a chorister at Helsinki Cathedral. He took up the harpsichord at the age of thirteen, studying with Bob van Asperen at the Amsterdam Sweelinck Conservatory and with Pierre Hantaï in Paris, and was also fortunate to enjoy the generous guidance and encouragement of Gustav Leonhardt. In 1998 he won second prize and the VRT prize at the Bruges Harpsichord Competition. He was also awarded the NDR special prize for his interpretations of Italian music. Since then he has appeared as soloist and conductor in most European countries, in Israel, Japan, the United States, Mexico and Brazil. Aapo Häkkinen has recorded for the AEOLUS, Alba, Avie, Cantus, Deux-Elles and Naxos labels. A frequent guest on both radio and television, he hosts his own programme on Classic FM in Finland. Besides the harpsichord, he regularly performs on the organ and on the clavichord. Since 2003 he has been Artistic Director of the Helsinki Baroque Orchestra.

Helsinki Baroque Orchestra

For more than fifteen years Helsinki Baroque Orchestra's performances and recordings have been captivating audiences with a potent combination of emotional eloquence and infectious vitality. Their programmes frequently include first modern performances of unpublished or reconstructed masterpieces, and also shed unexpected and often provocative new light on more familiar works. Their music-making has contributed to the ensemble's reputation as major exponents of Baltic and German Baroque music. At home, groundbreaking productions of operas by Handel and Haydn have earned the orchestra wide recognition. Since 2011 Helsinki Baroque Orchestra's monthly series at the Helsinki Music Centre has reached a large, new and enthusiastic public. A visionary selection of repertoire and guest artists has ignited the audience in an unprecedented way, and in the process catalysed early music's elevation to something of a cult status in Finland. Helsinki Baroque's sound has enthralled listeners from the Amsterdam Concertgebouw to Berlin's Konzerthaus, and at major festivals such as those of Bergen, Bremen, Rheingau and Jerusalem. Recurring soloists and guest directors include Franco Fagioli, Isabelle Faust, Reinhard Goebel, Erich Höbarth, René Jacobs, Julia Lezhneva, Enrico Onofri and Skip Sempé.

Flute: Pauliina Fred, Petra Aminoff • *Oboe:* Jean-Marc Philippe, Mathieu Loux • *Bassoon:* Jani Sunnarborg
Contrabassoon: Karl Nieler • *Horn:* Steinar Granmo Nilsen, Sabine Pranevičius • *Trumpet:* Indrek Vau, Taavi Kuntu
Violin I: Dmitry Sinkovsky (solo), Tuomo Suni (solo), Elena Davydova, Anni Elonen, Minna Kangas
Violin II: Zefira Valova, Dora Asterstad, Irma Niskanen, Anne Pekkala, Lotta Suvanto
Viola: Aira Maria Lehtipuu (solo), Krishna Nagaraja, Kari Olamaa
Cello: Jussi Seppänen (solo), Heidi Peltoniemi (solo), Louna Hosia • *Double bass:* Anna Rinta-Rahko
Timpani: Madis Metsamart • *Fortepiano, harpsichord, organ:* Aapo Häkkinen



Left:
Monica Groop
(Kira Gluschkoff)

Right:
Aapo Häkkinen
(Ville Paul Paasimaa)

Below:
Helsinki Baroque Orchestra
(Heikki Tuuli)



Joseph Martin Kraus was one of the most talented and progressive composers of the 18th century, and regarded by Haydn as one of the only two geniuses he knew, alongside Mozart. Following the successful audition of his opera *Proserpin*, Kraus became closely associated with the court of Gustav III in Stockholm. The highly dramatic *Begravnings-kantat* overture was the composer's emotional response to the assassination of his sovereign. The vocal pieces include works performed for the first time in over two centuries, ranging from Italian concert arias to rare survivals from the Royal Dramatic Theatre.



**Joseph Martin
KRAUS**
(1756–1792)

Arias and Overtures

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|-----------|---|--------------|
| 1 | Overture: Proserpin, VB 19 | 8:19 |
| 2 | Du i hvars oskuldsfulla blick, VB 30*† | 2:02 |
| 3 | Ma tu tremi, VB 63*† | 3:17 |
| 4 | Ch'io mai vi possa, VB 59*† | 4:03 |
| 5 | Overture: Zum Geburtstage des Königs Gustav III, VB 41 | 8:54 |
| 6 | Parvum quando cerno Deum, VB 5*† | 7:43 |
| 7 | Overture: Äfventyraren, VB 32* | 10:30 |
| 8 | Du temps, qui détruit tout, VB 58† | 2:25 |
| 9 | Sentimi, non partir! – Al mio bene, VB 55† | 7:05 |
| 10 | Overture: Konung Gustav III Begravnings-kantat, VB 42 | 6:20 |
| 11 | Hör mina ömma suckar klagas, VB 26*† | 1:45 |

*** WORLD PREMIÈRE RECORDING**

† Monica Groop, Mezzo-soprano
Helsinki Baroque Orchestra
Aapo Häkkinen

Texts and translations may also be accessed at www.naxos.com/libretti/572865.htm

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