

David Schulenberg
The Music of Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach
Supplement 8.1. More on Krause and Bach

Krause is cited today especially as a theorist of *lieder*, but his book actually is more concerned with arias, both Italian and German. This doubtless reflected the higher status of the aria in the hierarchy of musical and poetic types that prevailed at mid-century in Berlin.¹ Krause's ideal opera—which he doubts can be achieved—is one whose melodies “flatter the ears less than they move the heart.” The opera as a whole, and especially the arias, is shorter than was customary at the time and is sung by singers who are good actors; it also restores the “chorus of antiquity.”² This could have been taken as an oblique criticism of the recently established royal Berlin opera; Graun's works for the latter are conventional Italian *opere serie*, without chorus. Krause's comments are the typical complaints of those who preferred French to Italian opera, and although Bach might have been sympathetic to some of Krause's opinions, he hardly avoided long virtuoso arias in his own Italianate works. Thirty years later Friedemann Bach would echo Krause's hackneyed statement about ancient choruses, although nothing survives of the opera that he is supposed to have been working on at the end of his life.³

Both Bachs might have read Krause with respect but also with circumspection. Krause observes, conventionally, that *Kunststücke*—by which he means fugues, as the index makes clear—have their place in “grand church pieces.”⁴ But for Krause the problem with counterpoint, or with having the bass imitate the melody, is that different affects are then expressed simultaneously. The possibility that fugues might nevertheless be expressive is foreign to him as he draws the distinction, customary at the time, between melody, which is expressive, and harmony—that is, counterpoint—which composers use to demonstrate their “abilities and diligence” (*Kräfte und Fleiß*). Krause disparages the products of such technical display as *Intellectualmusik*, which is outlandish or provincial, characterized by “a barbarian overflow of ornaments”—an early instance of the identification of “ornament,” here in the sense of a contrapuntal device, with the “Gothic,”

¹ Krause does not explicitly rank the various genres of poetry or music, but he does distinguish between “historical” and other types of vocal music, as his contemporaries did for painting.

² “Der Chor der Alten könnte wieder hergestellt werden” (*Von der musikalischen Poesie*, 435).

³ At Berlin after Emanuel's departure, Friedemann was at work on an opera that would “return the choruses of the ancients to the stage” (“die Chöre der Altere . . . wider auf die Bühne zu bringen”), according to Carl Martin Plümicke, *Entwurf einer Theatergeschichte von Berlin* (Berlin, 1781), 338.

⁴ “prächtige Kirchenmusiken” (*Vom musikalischen Poesie*, 33). The first edition of Krause's book, available on Google Books, lacks the *Register* added for the 1753 edition (facsimile, Leipzig, Zentralantiquariat der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik, 1973).

that is, something hearkening back to an earlier, less civilized Germanic culture.⁵ Emanuel knew better than this, thanks to his father's music, and although he rarely introduces contrapuntal “crafts” into his vocal music, he does so more often than his contemporaries—even in his songs, although chiefly in the Cramer Psalms, published at Hamburg.

⁵ “Hieraus ist der gothische Ueberfluß in der Auszierungen entstanden. Es sind gewisse Länder und Oerter, wo man mehr Geschmack an den harmonisch vollkommnen Stücken, als an denen, die durch die Melodie reißen” (*Vom musikalischen Poesie*, 32–33).