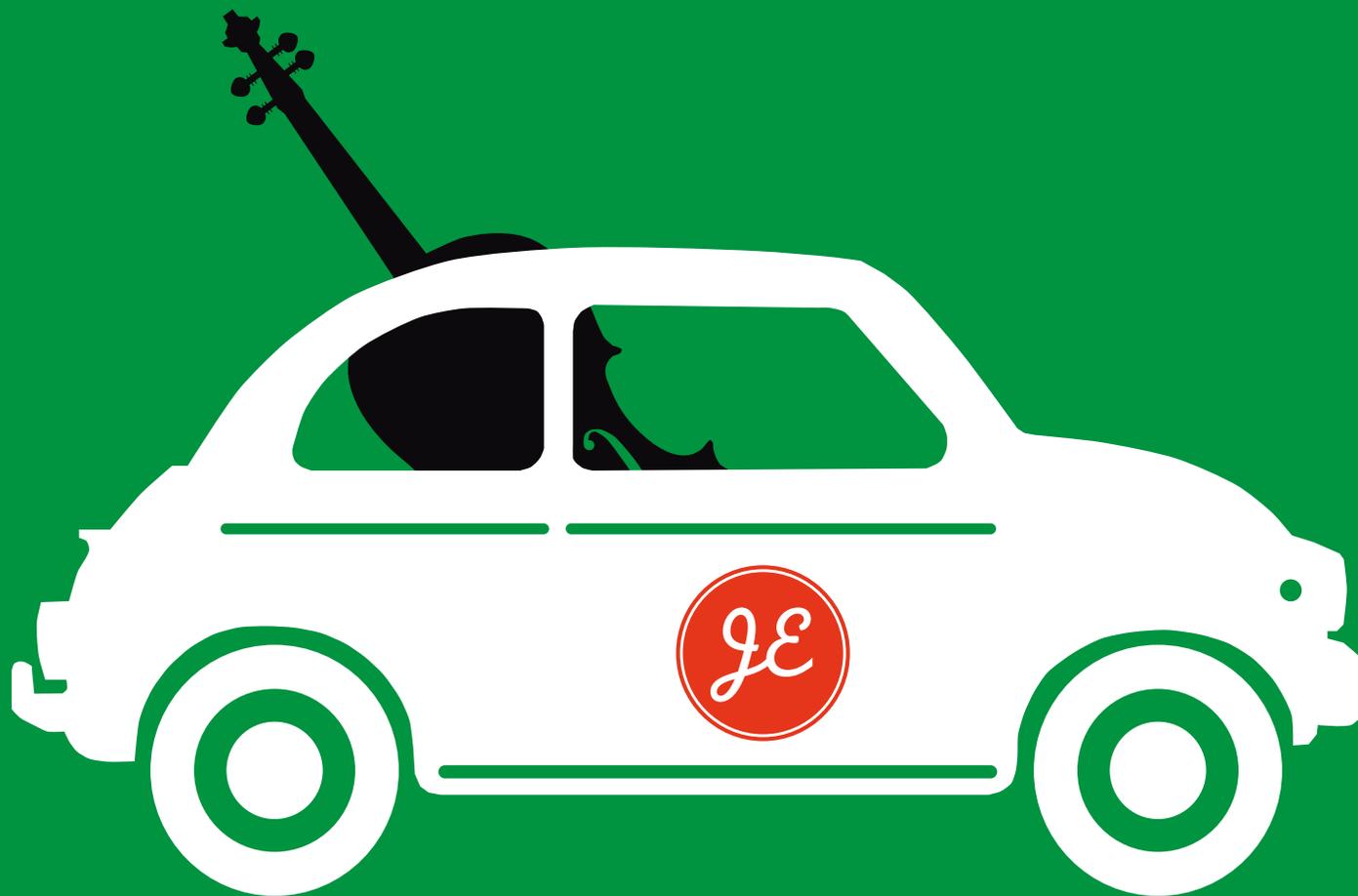


SEQUENTIA!

PIATTI & DALL'ABACO *caprices*

JOACHIM EIJLANDER *cello*





JOACHIM EIJLANDER

Joachim Eijlander is a multifaceted musician.

The core of Joachim's unaccompanied concerts are with the Cello Suites of Bach which he performs throughout Europe, the U.S.A., Russia and Asia.

He often collaborates with visual artists or dancers/choreographers to build bridges and enhance the audience experience.

In addition to performances in traditional concert halls Joachim also brings his music to unconventional locations (i.e. theaters, bookstores, church towers, boats, beach pavilions, piers, breweries and wine cellars) in an attempt to have more personal and direct contact with new audiences.

Joachim's CD recordings of the *Cello Suites* by J.S. Bach, for the Navis Classics label, was lauded by critics internationally. *Sequentia!*, a sequel to the cello suites by Bach, comprises the brilliant and beautiful caprices for solo cello by Joseph dall'Abaco and Alfredo Piatti.

As a dedicated chamber musician he has been privileged to share the podium with such artists as the Borodin quartet, Lisa Larsson, Robert Holl, Klara Wurtz, Inon Barnatan, Karl Leister and Olivier Patey.

Joachim has been a regular guest in the music festivals of Sitka Alaska, I.M.S. Prussia Cove (GB), Schleswig-Holstein and Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (Germany).

His fascination with new frontiers has led him to work with composers including Louis Andriessen, Henri Dutilleux, Sofia Gubaidulina, György Kurtag and Joey Roukens.

Besides being a visiting lecturer at various Dutch conservatories Joachim has been invited to teach at Indiana University, Kansas University, Milwaukee Conservatoire, Oklahoma University, Texas University, the Ljubljana Conservatoire in Slovenia, the Dutch String Quartet Academy, and numerous international festivals.

Joachim was a founding member of the acclaimed Rubens String Quartet for sixteen years. Joachim received his training in Utrecht, Amsterdam and Berlin.

He has been mentored by members of the Amadeus Quartet, the Hagen Quartet, Clemens Hagen, Paul Katz, Stefan Metz, Elias Arizcuren and Jan Hollinger.

Joachim plays on a cello by Gaetano Chiocchi (Padova 1870) and with a bow by Nikolaus Kittel (St. Petersburg 1860), made available to him by the generosity of the Nationaal Muziekinstrumenten Fonds (National Music Instrument Fund).

www.joachimeijlander.com





SEQUENTIA!

The *Sequentia* or 'sequence' lies at the heart of this recording. Listen carefully to the caprices of these two composers, and you will often hear that the building blocks of the music consist of sequences in couplets: themes or material introduced and then repeated, and into which the performer can throw subtle variations if the sequence invites such exploration. There are other associations that can be drawn from this title. Fairly or not, sets of caprices such as these are rarely performed in their entirety during concerts, so their use as a 'sequel' to other music is an important consideration. These solo cello works also form a sequel to Joachim Eijlander's previous recordings of J.S. Bach's *Cello Suites* on Navis Classics NC15003 and NC15007, both in the chronology of their production and that of their composers.

Both composers represented in this recording were superb performers, and in their day at least as well known for their concert appearances as for their compositions. Finding the balance between technical prowess and satisfying musicality is always a challenge for both players and composers, and when virtuosos write for their own instrument there is always the temptation to resort to an impressive 'box of tricks.' While there is no shortage of technical display from both Dall'Abaco and Piatti there is in each case an unspoken assurance that it is the music that comes first. Piatti's legendary mastery of cello technique and his love for the effective demonstration of this aspect of performance plays a significant role in his *Caprices*, but it is the skill of the interpreter that brings out the musical essence in even the most challenging and flamboyant of these pieces and, once found, that essence will deliver its own timeless rewards.

The endless fascination of the cello as a solo instrument can be found in its width of range, from real bass notes to highs that have the same expressive potential as the viola or violin. These qualities can all be heard in these virtuoso *Capriccios* or *Caprices*, with the cello able to accompany its melodic lines highly effectively in both harmony and counterpoint. Such attributes are of course true of other string instruments, but there is something about the resonant depth and 'human voice' like scale of the cello that uniquely excites and satisfies the ear. This it has done for the three centuries since its emergence in around 1690 and its rising popularity in Europe at the turn of the 18th century, seeing it take over from its direct ancestor the *basse de violon*.

One performer who became a pioneering exponent in the mid-18th century was the Italian violoncellist and composer Joseph Dall'Abaco (his name sometimes shortened to Abaco: full name Joseph (Giuseppe Clemens) Marie Clément Ferdinand Dall'Abaco). Dall'Abaco was born in Brussels in 1710, at that time the capital of the Spanish Netherlands, and he received his earliest musical training from his father, Evaristo Felice Dall'Abaco. He entered into the service of the Prince-elector of Cologne at Bonn at the age of nineteen as a member of the court chamber orchestra, becoming its musical director in 1738. Despite his duties at court, and indeed perhaps aided by the connections offered by his post, he was able to travel, visiting London in 1740. He left Bonn for Verona in 1753 where he worked as a member of the Philharmonic Academy, but remained highly regarded by the Bavarian court, being granted the

title of Baron in 1766 by Prince Maximilian. Dall'Abaco died in Italy in 1805 at the ripe old age of 95 – a remarkable lifespan that took him from the age of Vivaldi's *Le quattro stagioni* to the year in which Beethoven's Third Symphony was being given its première.

It was not uncommon for players to perform their own works in the 18th century, but as the cello was relatively new its repertoire as a solo instrument was still very limited. Joseph Dall'Abaco's eleven *Capricci for Violoncello Solo* vary widely in terms of their mood and technical demands, at times referring to or reminding us of J.S. Bach's *Cello Suites* in their use of counterpoint. Dall'Abaco largely held onto the weightier Baroque style at a time in which pre-Classical and galant styles were dominant, though elements of the newer fashions can be detected in some of the *Capricci*: in the relatively simple grace of numbers 7 and 10 in particular. Joachim Eijlander feels a connection in some of these *Capriccios* with the miniature sonatas of Domenico Scarlatti. In the case of the *Capricci* Dall'Abaco's reasons for drawing on baroque models are understandable. The techniques established by Bach and others suit the cello perfectly, offering the complete package when it comes to expressive range and harmonic support from a solo instrument. Dall'Abaco may also have taken a hint from J.S. Bach in the way he worked the letters of his name into the notes of some of his pieces, for instance at the beginning of the Sarabande in the Suite No. 3, BWV 1009. Dall'Abaco's signature can be detected in the *Capriccio* No. 2, which uses the notes G (F) D'ABAC, the B in this case being the German 'Bes', or B-flat. Contrast and striking imagery tease the imagination at every turn in these pieces, from the stormy G minor of the *Capriccio* No. 2 with its air of C.P.E. Bach's *empfindsamer Stil*, to the amorously elegant and lyrical counterpoint of the *Capriccio* No. 4 in F minor; not to forget spectacular virtuoso displays such as the double-stopping leaps of the *Capriccio* No. 8 in G major. The most virtuoso of these, the *Capriccio* No. 11, reminds Eijlander of the bizarre violin capriccio 'il labirinto armonico' by Pietro Locatelli (1695-1764).

The original manuscripts of Dall'Abaco's *Capricci* are lost, and the earliest source is that of a copyist who left no movement titles or performance instructions. The interpreter is therefore given the challenge of altering the occasional note if correction seems in order, and a large degree of freedom to experiment with different options in terms of the final sound, such as plucking the strings (*pizzicato*) and playing close to the bridge (*ponticello*), which creates a glassy sound.

The term *Capriccio* has been used in a disconcertingly wide variety of ways from the 16th century onwards, and as a catch-all title for a collection of solo works it allows a composer to go in any direction their imagination takes them. Dall'Abaco's *Capricci* often have the feel of dance movements in ways that would have been familiar to audiences in the later 17th century, where those of Piatti are more overt vehicles for exploration into the technical limits of the cello. In this regard, Piatti's *Caprices* have a relationship with the way Liszt explored the limits of the piano or Bottesini that of the double bass. These share the signature of virtuosity represented in 19th century instrumental performance that had already been established in opera in previous centuries. Composers by no means ignored the power of dramatic narrative when it came to

non-vocal music and this can often be heard in Piatti's *Caprices*, where aria-like melodies and on occasion hints at recitative can be found, for instance in the construction and musical 'plot' of his *Caprice* No.10 with its dramatic build-up and feverish, inescapably galloping drive towards a recitative-like cadenza before its closing flourish.

Alfredo (Carlo) Piatti was an Italian cellist, teacher and composer, the son of violinist Antonio Piatti, who was leader of the Bergamo orchestra. He originally began studies on the violin with his father before switching to the cello, studying under his great-uncle, Gaetano Zanetti. After Zanetti's death he went to the Milan Conservatory as a pupil of Vincenzo Merighi, making his concert debut in 1837. He made his first European tour in 1838 but this turned into a financial disaster, Piatti being forced to sell his cello to cover his medical costs after falling ill in Pest in 1843. A turning point in his fortunes arose on his journey home when Franz Liszt invited him to share a concert in Munich and, impressed by what the young man could do on a borrowed instrument, later presented him with a superb Nicolò Amati cello in Paris in 1844. Piatti subsequently toured Great Britain, and after some time in Russia and Milan he settled in London, establishing a long and influential career as both a celebrated performer and a much sought-after teacher. Despite his brilliance as a musician, Piatti's character was introvert, his playing style notably non-showy and his home life kept well beyond any glare of publicity. He was held in the greatest respect by his contemporaries, playing alongside the great violinist Joseph Joachim in his string quartet and maintaining contact with the leading composers of the day. He possessed musical sketches by Schumann and those of an unfinished cello concerto intended for him by Mendelssohn, and counted Liszt and Verdi among numerous such friendships. There can be few cellists today who do not know his *Méthode de violoncelle*, and Piatti's significance in the history of the cello should never be underestimated.

Piatti's *Twelve Caprices for cello solo, Op. 25* was published in Berlin in 1875. Even with little experience of reading music one has only to cast a cursory glance over these scores to see the evolution in technique between these pieces by Piatti and the earlier Dall'Abaco, but it should also be remembered that Piatti was a great lover of Baroque music and Locatelli's works in particular, also making arrangements of Bach's suites for cello and piano. Piatti's *Caprices* take the technical repertoire of the cello much further than Dall'Abaco's world of baroque transition, with multiple stopping, harmonics, wide leaps and the sheer intensity of notes per page pointing to virtuoso demands comparable with those to be found in Paganini's *Caprices* Op. 1 for violin, a Mount Everest of a challenge for any performer and a measure against which players have competed for the last two centuries.

Not all of Piatti's *Caprices* are demonstrative showpieces, and as has been previously mentioned the virtuoso aspect of each piece is always in the service of a more significant musical message. The *Caprice* No. 2 is for instance marked *Andante religioso*, opening with ruminative hymn-like chords that develop into a soft *espressivo* melody over a transparent, filigree accompaniment. Further journeys into expressive melody can be found in the likes of the *Caprice* No. 6, marked *Adagio largamente*, but Piatti is always engaged with the technical idiom of the cello, resisting

any temptation to relax into Italianate operatic bel canto without embellishment. Piatti's own playing was noted for its lack of sentimentality, and this shows through even in the more lyrical moments in these caprices. Where Dall'Abaco was more concerned with counterpoint, the multi-layered techniques in Piatti's Caprices often focus on picking out a melody from its accompaniment: harmonic progressions whose chords are spread over the strings. The Caprice No. 7, in C major marked *Maestoso* is a good example, in this case the accompaniment appearing as a rapid bowed arpeggio figuration with the melody emerging in the bass; the composer ensuring clarity in this regard with an additional instruction from the top: *Ben marcato il basso*. It is interesting to note that Piatti's 12 Caprices were conceived as a complete cycle rather than as disparate pieces brought together into a single volume. There is for instance a relationship between keys that revolves around the central C major of the Caprice No. 7; this in turn answered by A minor for Caprice No. 8: the first six caprices are in flat keys, and the remaining four in sharps. This progression is allied to a careful construction in terms of character and contrast between the pieces, from the prelude-like Caprice No. 1 to the valedictory gigue of the final Caprice No. 12.

While there is an inevitable seriousness to these labyrinthine intricacies there is also plenty of fun to be found amongst the 12 Caprices. There is a witty charm to the double-stopped thirds in Caprice No. 3, and the dancing spiccato of the Caprice No. 9 with its hidden, chorale-like song, has a lightness and feel for joy that is quite compelling. The following Caprice No. 10; that Schubertian, Erlkönig-like ride, rings out with a surprising clarity, its *Allegro deciso* note patterns exploring the higher register of the instrument. The concluding Caprice No. 12 is an *Allegretto capriccioso* in E minor in which Piatti has the cello converse with itself. These busy voices include a 'castrato' character who sings in flageolet or artificial harmonics, the most extreme contrast imaginable with the lower register of the cello.



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JOSEPH DALL'ABACO (1710-1805)

1	Capriccio 1	2.58
2	Capriccio 2	2.21
3	Capriccio 3	4.09
4	Capriccio 4	2.23
5	Capriccio 5	1.29
6	Capriccio 6	2.13
7	Capriccio 7	2.48
8	Capriccio 8	3.20
9	Capriccio 9	2.02
10	Capriccio 10	2.38
11	Capriccio 11	3.04

ALFREDO PIATTI (1822-1901)
12 CAPRICES, OP. 25

12	No. 1	<i>Allegro quasi presto</i>	1.54
13	No. 2	<i>Andante religioso</i>	6.38
14	No. 3	<i>Moderato</i>	2.44
15	No. 4	<i>Allegretto</i>	6.00
16	No. 5	<i>Allegro comodo</i>	4.04
17	No. 6	<i>Adagio largamente</i>	5.25
18	No. 7	<i>Maestoso</i>	3.44
19	No. 8	<i>Moderato ma energico</i>	3.34
20	No. 9	<i>Allegro</i>	2.00
21	No. 10	<i>Allegro deciso</i>	3.43
22	No. 11	<i>Adagio – Allegro</i>	3.52
23	No. 12	<i>Allegretto capriccioso</i>	4.33

total time 77.41

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De Doelen Rotterdam

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Editing

Daan van Aalst and Joachim Eijlander

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Anonymous Italian, around 1730

Bow

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Nationaal Muziekinstrumenten Fonds
(National Music Instrument Fund)

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