



Bisel Classics

SCORE

Johan
SVENDSEN

ZWEI
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Melodien
Op. 30

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Preface

Composers of precocious ability are rarely blessed by a modest personality but the geniality of the Norwegian violinist composer and conductor Johan Svendsen is outstanding for these very reasons and this generous nature was often transmitted through his work by acts of philanthropy. As a conductor, he enjoyed a somewhat stern and perfectionist reputation and it is said that when he succeeded the aging Paulli as conductor of the Royal Chapel Orchestra in Copenhagen he inherited an orchestra of mismatched players, some of whom were incapable of discharging their duties, one was almost blind and several of the violinists had to rely upon supports to prop themselves up. There were limits to his generous nature and Svendsen's employment met with great criticism in the beginning and not simply because he was a stern taskmaster, within the Copenhagen musical circles there were objections to employing a foreigner in what ought to have been a home candidates position. In the years of his service however, Svendsen won over his critics and transformed the orchestra into one of the finest in Europe. A more benevolent character was often to be found off the podium and Svendsen was always ready to help young musicians with support and guidance.

The signs of Svendsen's munificence (on and off the podium) might be traced back as far as the early 1860's where under the influence of Ole Bull he put together musicians from his community in an orchestra they called the Norwegian Music Society. It would appear that he had benefited from the guidance and support of his teachers and that in his own small way, he began to see himself not