

# FINANCIAL TIMES

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## Delius: The Complete Songbook Vol 1

By Andrew Clark

### Works from little-known manuscripts by the Bradford-born composer

Next year marks the 150th anniversary of Delius's birth, but don't expect the music business to take any note: the Bradford-born composer, who spent most of his life in self-imposed exile from England, remains deeply unfashionable. Hats off, then, to baritone Mark Stone – best known as a suave Eisenstein (*Die Fledermaus*) – for compiling a two-CD Delius songbook, the first volume of which contains a few surprises.

With fresh-minted accompaniments from Stephen Barlow, Stone proves an expert guide – not just by uncovering little-known manuscripts, but by investing Delius's songs with verve and variety of mood, in part through his intelligent diction. The songs with original English texts (Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, Shelley) were mostly written after Delius found his mature style, and are the least successful.

It's when the aspiring young composer invokes his love of Norway that the imagination – his and ours – takes flight: of the 16 songs inspired by Norwegian poets (sung in English translation), the romantic "Birds' Story", the lullaby "Slumber Song" and the dreamily evocative "Sunset" hint at the original voice that was to inspire *Sea Drift* and *A Village Romeo and Juliet*.

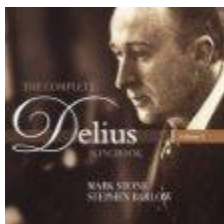
### Delius

*The Complete Songbook Vol 1*

Mark Stone/Stephen Barlow

(Stone Records)

★★★★☆



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