

RECORDS: BARTOK

Folk Idiom Is Prominent In Duets for Violin

By JOHN BRIGGS

THE late Béla Bartók, according to those who knew him well, looked upon his researches in the field of Hungarian folk music as hardly less important than his composing. An avid collector, he had toured the remote towns and villages of his native land before World War I, recording authentic music of the people on old-fashioned Ediphone cylinders, and at his death was probably the world's foremost authority on the music of Hungary.

Bartók drew freely on this rich vein of material for such works as his *Forty-Four Violin Duets*, newly recorded by the violinists, Victor Aitay and Michael Kuttner, and released by Bartók Records.

Like Bartók's piano work, "*Mikrokosmos*," the *Forty-Four Duets* are a series of brief pieces, neither developed nor elaborated, and sounding as if they had come direct from Bartók's notebooks. Titles as well as musical texture suggest their folk origin—*Maypole Dance*, *Cradle Song*, *Pillow Dance*, *Ruthenian Song*, *Hay Song*, *Song of the Harvest*, etc.

Written with the severe economy of which Bartók was a master, the *Forty-Four Duets* compress into limited space music of astonishing richness and variety. The contrapuntal writing for the two violins is masterly. The works are performed by Messrs. Aitay and Kuttner with great skill.

1952

NY Times July 13-52

