

## **Four Slovak folksongs**

**Bela Bartok** (1881 - 1945)

Wedding song from Poniky  
Song of the hayharvesters from Hiadel  
Dancing song from Medzibrod  
Dancing song from Poniky

In the same way that Vaughan Williams, Cecil Sharp and others went out and recorded for posterity the folksongs of England, so Bartok and Kodaly systematically collected their native Hungarian peasant-music. This was to become a very important influence on Bartok's own music, with its distinctive unequal rhythms and modal harmonies. Bartok wrote very little vocal or choral music, but these short settings of four traditional Hungarian folksongs are attractive examples of his lighter style. The piano accompaniment is not simply an instrumental support for the singers; it is an independent musical element, providing a varied harmonic and textural context for each song.

*programme notes by John Bawden*

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