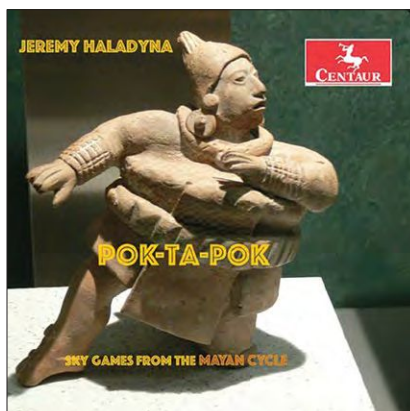


MUSIC ●●●●○ SONICS ●●●●○

**The Chamber Music of Thomas de Hartmann.** Elan Sicroff et al. Nimbus (2 CDs).

De Hartmann was born in Ukraine in 1885; he studied with Anton Arensky, Sergei Taneyev, and Felix Mottl, but his relationship to the mystic and philosopher George Gurdjieff is what he is most known for. Sicroff and his companions have worked miracles in bringing his post-Gurdjieff legacy to light. The 30-minute Violin Sonata is a glistening, ravishing masterpiece, filled with spacious modal themes and endless lyricism. Romanticism and impressionism take on unique hues in de Hartmann's hands. The even-longer Cello Sonata sheds sunny ecstasy for devotional sobriety and vigorous dances. The Trio for flute, violin, and piano has beauty and mystery, but it suffers some from rather obvious restatements of its material. The Double Bass Concerto has value but needs a stronger soloist. The Amstel Saxophone Quartet comes on board for *Koladky*, a set of Christmas carols inspired by Ukrainian folk melodies. *La Kobza*, for cello, evokes the titular plucked instrument and the hurdy-gurdy. Other tasty miniatures are sprinkled among the bigger pieces. The engineering varies from less-than-ideal to quite good; performances are generally passionate and enjoyable. Don't miss this terrific music. **SE**

**Further Listening:** De Hartmann: Songs (Lejderman, Sicroff/Nimbus); Piano Music (Sicroff/Nimbus)



MUSIC ●●●●○ SONICS ●●●●○

**Haladyna: Pok-ta-Pok.** Jeremy Haladyna et al. Centaur.

Jeremy Haladyna's career-spanning Mayan Cycle evokes a vanished world from fragments—what Brazilian composer Luigi Irlandini calls a “neo-cultural” practice. The pieces are programmatic: mimetic of cosmic structures and episodes from myth, legend, and ritual. The title cut of this third selection opens with the splitting of Cosmic Turtle's shell, whence the listener plummets through rushing stars to land amidst the notorious sudden-death ball game in Chichen Itza's stone court. Employing acoustic, electronic, and synthesized instruments along with vocalizations and processed samples of natural sounds, the album shows the influence of Haladyna's mentor Henri Dutilleux in its angular, dynamic lines and unorthodox note clusters. Some pieces employ an equal-tempered chromatic scale. Others use one of three original scales that divide a frequency gamut according to Mayan calendrical/zodiacal math, yielding unequal intervals uncorrelated with western pitches. The final piece overlays all three scales so pitches from any are permitted, while three simultaneous tempi propel the concentric wheels of galactic time. The Mayan Cycle is an important essay in basing pan-American music on non-European premises, and a hugely atmospheric auditory experience. **Randall Couch**

**Further Listening:** Haladyna: *Selections from The Mayan Cycle* (Innova)



MUSIC ●●●●○ SONICS ●●●●○

**Piazzolla: Cien Años.** Mosalini. Ben-Dor, Pro Arte. Centaur.

Bandoneón virtuoso Juanjo Mosalini, also an accomplished composer and arranger, is joined by Gisèle Ben-Dor for another release marking Astor Piazzolla's 100th birthday year. The dualities of Piazzolla's music are underscored—classical discipline vs. spontaneous impulse, Baroque angularity vs. the sensual melancholia of *nuevo tango*. The program opens with a performance of Piazzolla's 1979 Concerto for Bandoneón that, thanks to Mosalini's fluent virtuosity and conductor Ben-Dor's propulsive support, is as effective as any I've heard. Four world premiere recordings follow the Concerto, including two original works by Mosalini. *Take It, Play It* is dedicated to Piazzolla's electric guitarist, Tomás Gubitsch, and *Cien Años*, commissioned by Ben-Dor, honors Mosalini's grandfather and also serves to mark the Piazzolla centenary. Mosalini's music channels the style and mood of the earlier Argentinian composer without seeming imitative. The album's highlights are two Mosalini arrangements. *The Four Seasons of Buenos Aires* is a 24-minute suite based on four stand-alone pieces conceived for Piazzolla's quintet, and the disc closes with an exhilarating version of *Libertango*. The program has been vividly recorded by Brad Michael with the bandoneón forward in the mix, though not oversized. **Andrew Quint**

**Further Listening:** *Piazzolla Reflections* (Sidorova)