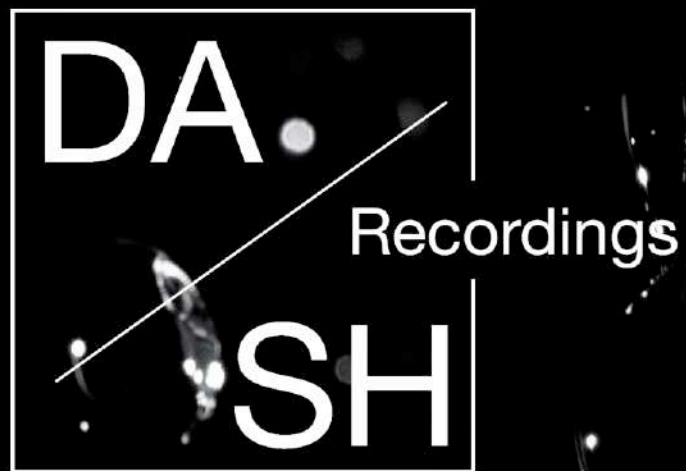




Antonio Celso Ribeiro

Duncan Gifford
piano



Tears of Eros
piano works



In this solo piano album, sound becomes a vessel for exploring the fragile convergence between eroticism, solitude, and impermanence. Inspired by Georges Bataille's meditation on the sacred and the profane, the music traces the persona of Eros — not as a god of pleasure, but as a wounded figure, weeping at the threshold between ecstasy and death. Eros cries because desire, at its most profound, is inseparable from loss. Every touch anticipates absence; every climax, a fading. Here we have death as transcendence; eroticism as sacred rupture and the gaze as a site of vulnerability and power.

The music also dialogues with Edward Hopper's canvases: sparse, luminous, and haunted by silence. Each piece evokes the emotional architecture of urban loneliness — figures suspended in time, framed by windows, lit by artificial moons. The piano becomes both observer and participant, echoing the stillness of a diner at midnight, the melancholy of a sunny emproom too quiet. Here we have isolation in public spaces; the viewer as a silent intruder and stillness as emotional weight.

Threaded through this landscape also is the spirit of Japanese haiku, where the moon watches over fleeting lives. These miniature poems of sound reflect the impermanence of all things — the breath between notes, the shadow of a chord, the hush after resonance. In this space, solitude is not emptiness, but presence distilled. Here we have nature as a mirror of emotion; death as quiet interruption and the moon as eternal witness.

The Tears of Eros invites the listener into a world where longing is luminous, and melancholy is not a void, but a mirror. It is a meditation on the beauty of what slips away — a requiem for desire, a nocturne for the soul. The Tears of Eros is a meditation on the sacred tension between intimacy and absence — a sonic elegy for what we love, and what we must let go.

- Antonio Celso Ribeiro



Antonio Celso Ribeiro

Associate Professor - Chair of Composition in the Department of Art and Music Theory at the Federal University of Espírito Santo, Vitória, and Collaborating Professor in the Graduate Program in Music at the Federal University of Paraná, Curitiba, Brazil. Ribeiro has won awards in several international composition competitions, including: 4th International Brazilian Composition Competition - Brazil (2004); BAMdialogue – Amsterdam; (2009); Shizhu Music Composition Contest - Taipei (2011) and Al-Quds International Composition Award - Jerusalem (2011) and Atlas Ensemble Composition Contest - Amsterdam (2014). His works are commissioned, performed, and recorded by renowned artists and ensembles around the world, including: Michael Hall, Aaron-Larget Caplan, Michelle LaCourse, Daniel McCarthy (USA), Rafaell Altino and Morten Friis (Sweden), Tania Sikelianou (Greece), Gina Choe (Korea/USA), Dirk Amrein (Germany), António Luis Silva (Portugal), Alvin Wong (Australia), Luciane Cardassi (Brazil/Canada), Luis Fonseca, Jing Shao, Duncan Glifford (Spain), Luiz Cojal (Barcelona), Shien Lee and Lily Lin (Thailand), Omnibus Ensemble and Ravshan Tukhtamishvili (Uzbekistan), Chai Found Music Workshop and Jiuan-Reng Yeh (Taiwan), Hun Qiao (China), Atlas Ensemble and Nieuw Ensemble (Netherlands), Duo Altbass and Duo Diamant (Barcelona), Les Itinérantes (France), DuoBrasil Project, Qualea Trio, Duo Santoro, Trio de João Pessoa, Sonia Ray, Beatriz Pavan, Abnader Domingues, Alexandre Rosa, Antonio Eduardo, Daniela Carrijo, Ernesto Hartmann, Willsterman Sottani (Brazil), Duo Harpverk (Iceland), Madrid Doublebass Ensemble and Dash_Ensemble (Spain), Dúo Xistra (Galicia), Tongue Stuff (England), XelmYa Trio (Germany). In 2013, he was composer-in-residence at the 9th TICF – Thailand International Composition Festival promoted by Mahidol College of Music, Bangkok. He is developing a multidisciplinary project involving music and visual arts with Portuguese-American artist Leonor Brazao, having also collaborated with Portuguese painter António Gonçalves, Colombian illustrator Alejandro García Restrepo, American illustrator Julianna Swaney, and the Ukrainian digital illustrator Tetyane Erhart. He has also collaborated with several poets, such as Leonor Alvim (Portugal), Wayne Miller (USA), Cintia Kallás (Brazil), and G. Mend-Ooyo (Mongolia). Ribeiro holds a PhD in Music Composition from the Federal University of Minas Gerais, Brazil, and completed postdoctoral studies in Jewish music at the Salti Institute for Ladino Studies at Bar-Ilan University, Tel Aviv, Israel. His research comprehends compositional processes dealing with the presence of extramusical objects (urban landscapes, poetry, painting, photograph, literature, etc.) as a starting point for his musical creations, both acoustic and electroacoustic. Currently he is preparing for his second postdoctoral studies at Real Colégio das Artes at the University of Coimbra, Portugal, whose project involves reflections about involving philosophical and practical reflections on Migration of meanings, Transmedialization, Intertextuality, Artificial Imagination (in the context of generative AI) and Ecphrasis applied to music.



Duncan Gifford

Australian pianist Duncan Gifford firmly established himself as a major artist of his generation with international successes of 1st Prize in the Maria Callas Grand Prix de Piano in Athens, Greece (2000), 1st Prize in the Concours Prix Mozart in Lausanne, Switzerland (1999) and 1st Prize in the prestigious Jose Iturbi International Piano Competition in Spain (1998). Other competition successes included 3rd Prize in the Sydney International Piano Competition (1992), 3rd Prize in the Montreal International Piano Competition (1996), and 4th Prize in the Dublin International Piano Competition (1994).

Duncan Gifford was a student of Margaret Hair at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music. In 1991 he commenced study at the Moscow State Conservatory in the class of Professor Lev Vlassenko, graduating with a Master's Degree in Piano Performance. Gifford later completed his postgraduate studies with Professor Joaquin Soriano in Madrid, where he currently resides.

Duncan Gifford has performed in recital throughout Europe, Asia, Russia, and Australia. As soloist he has appeared with all the major Australian symphony orchestras, Australian Chamber Orchestra, Orchestre de la Camerata Mozart of Rome, Czech National Orchestra, National Orchestra of Ireland, Metropolitan Orchestra of Montreal, Radio Orchestra of Rumania, Russian State Chamber Orchestra, the Orchestra of Valencia, the Malaga Philharmonic Orchestra and the Madrid Community Orchestra. In 1999 he made his US debut, performing in Carnegie Hall in New York and the Cerritos Center for the Performing Arts in Los Angeles.

In February 2003 he made his Viennese debut, performing with the Vienna Chamber Orchestra in the Vienna Konzerthaus. In October 2003 he appeared for the first time in China, playing with the Shanghai Symphony Orchestra. In 1993 Duncan Gifford released his first CD featuring the music of Tchaikovsky and Rachmaninov. His 1995 CD recording of the complete Debussy Preludes received great critical acclaim in Australia and the United States and was nominated for 'Australian Classical Record of the Year'. In 2004 he released his third CD of works for piano and orchestra by Saint-Saens, Franck and D'Indy, together with the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra.

On Melancholy

The work is deeply inspired by the stunning paintings of American artist Edward Hopper (1882-1967), pioneer in expressing the experience of human isolation in the modern city. Hopper had the rare gift of being able to perceive reality as a whole in the forms of the outside world, of actually seeing the truth. In his intuitive perception the objects of the world confronted him with a vitality of their own. Thus, it was not only justifiable but also necessary for Hopper to hold to the empirical forms of the world. They were his starting point, his goal, as well as the means of his art, the unique qualities of which will continue to question any form of abstractionism. On Melancholy comprises five short compositions, each one dealing with one painting by Hopper. Loneliness is the motto and this feeling interconnects the pieces in the manner of a baroque suite. The music isn't programmatic but rather an expression of the inner feeling of Hopper's characters.

I – morning sun 1952

II – nighthawks 1942

III – automat 1927

IV – chop suey 1929

V – sun in an empty room 1963

World première recording

Sept Douleurs et une D solation

The composition is deeply inspired by classical Japanese Haiku versing about sorrow, loneliness, death and disillusion. Each section tries to translate musically the metaphors of the poetry.

1 - Taneda Sant ka (1882–1940)

働いて 休んで 藁の上 [hatarai te / yasunde / wara no ue]

*I work,
I rest—
on a mat of straw.*

Sant ka, a wandering monk-poet, often wrote about bare, repetitive life. This poem expresses a rhythm of labor and fatigue, with a bed of straw as his only comfort.

2 - Kobayashi Issa (1763–1828)

世の中は かくもむづかし 草の花 [yo no naka wa / kaku mo muzukashi / kusa no hana]

*This world
is so troublesome—
even wildflowers bloom in it.*

Life is hard, and yet nature persists — a reflection of both resignation and quiet endurance. Issa lived in poverty and lost several children — a reason why he often wrote from lived burden.

3 - Yosa Buson (1716–1784)

人去って より木枯らしの 音ばかり [hito satte / yori kogarashi no / oto bakari]

*After they leave,
only the sound remains
of the cold wind.*

An image of departure and emotional emptiness, with winter wind echoing the absence of loved ones.

4 - Yosa Buson (1716–1784)

しら梅に 明る夜ばかり となりけり [shiraume ni / akaruyo bakari / to nari keri]

*The white plum blossoms—
only the bright night
remains with me.*

This evokes loneliness and fragile beauty, with a touch of melancholy. The blossoms are luminous but fleeting — a metaphor for ephemeral joy that leaves behind only silence.

5 - Matsuo Bashō (1644–1694)

ものいへば 唇寒し 秋の風 [mono ieba / kuchibiru samushi / aki no kaze]

*When I speak of it,
my lips feel cold—
the autumn wind.*

A subtle haiku of emotional desolation. Speaking brings no warmth, only the chill of the season. Pain is implied, not shouted — Bashō's hallmark.

6 - Matsuo Bashō (1644–1694)

名月や 池をめぐりて 夜もすがら [meigetsu ya / ike o megurite / yomosugara]

*Full moon —
I circle the pond
all night long.*

A quiet expression of restlessness and emotional turmoil. The poet doesn't say what's wrong, but his all-night pacing under the moon is grief enough.

7 - Yosa Buson (1716–1784)

秋の暮 わけ入れば猶 淋しさよ [aki no kure / wake ireba nao / sabishisa yo]

*Autumn dusk—
the deeper I go,
the lonelier it gets.*

A beautiful metaphor for emotional descent — the further one walks into solitude (or life), the more profound the sense of loss or isolation.

8. Kobayashi Issa (1763–1828)

露の世は 露の世ながら さりながら [tsuyu no yo wa / tsuyu no yo nagara / sarinagara]

*This dewdrop world —
is a dewdrop world,
and yet... and yet...*

This is Issa's most famous haiku, written after the death of his young daughter. The “dewdrop world” is a Buddhist metaphor for the fleeting, illusory nature of life. The repetition shows his disillusionment and resignation, yet also his deep human sorrow — unable to fully detach.

World première recording

Tears of Eros

*The work was deeply inspired by the reading of George Bataille's famous book *The Tears of Eros and Eroticism*, which explores the relationship between eroticism, death, sacrifice, transgression and the sacred – themes that decidedly influenced the colors and moods of each composition. The piece is divided in 8 short movements:*

1 – Oblata [Offering]. *The musical form reflects an initial impression of a sacred nature, drawing subtle inspiration from a slow, melancholic and contemplative religious hymn. On the penultimate beat, a tight chord, almost a cluster, highlights in a slightly rude manner the fear of the divine. That cluster (which I named “Domination Cluster”) will be featured in all the sections of this work.*

2 – Veneratio [Veneration]. *An impression of a sacred nature: a simple, naïve and repetitive melody that acts as a “litany” – an insistent adoration, with the intent of pleasing the divine. Its sweet and delicate harmonies subtly change until they reach complete dissolution by means of the (Domination) cluster, which symbolizes the respect for, and fear of, the divine.*

3 – Cuniculi [Rabbits]. *An impression of a profane nature: some of the scenes in the book remind me of rabbits or hares. The rabbit's symbology is wide-ranging: it may stand for abundance, fertility, prosperity, innocence, youth, craftiness and intelligence. In ancient Greek society rabbits were a present wealthy men gave to male youths, who were their lovers in a reciprocal sexual and affective relationship. The music is a lively, frenetic, almost orgiastic waltz, danced by the youth in honor of his lord. The composition also finishes as a cluster, communicating the relationship of domination and obedience between the loved one and his lover. Although Bataille doesn't directly mention rabbits or “forbidden relationships” the theme of dominance and obeying is abundant in his literature.*

4 – Passio e Seductio [Passion and Seduction]. *An impression of a profane nature: an oriental-flavored melody makes the role of a soundtrack for two creatures that throw themselves into a game of passion and seduction, and the cluster of domination once again makes itself visible in this relationship. The melody moves towards a baroque melody, poetically describing a near-recitative with chiaroscuro leanings, engendered by the “sound backdrop” of the cluster and by the slippery phrases of the main melody. Fear and pleasure hold hands.*

5 – Eros dormit [Eros sleeps]. *An impression of a profane nature: a simple, though rhythmically complex melody acts as a somewhat restless lullaby, in accordance with the temperament of Eros, who is constantly arousing human passions and amusing himself with the results. The composition intercalates extremely sweet passages with brusque flourishes, and comes to an end with the domination cluster in pianissimo, as if to say that Eros rules human passions even in his sleep.*

6 – Erastes & Eromenos. *An impression of a profane nature: a paean to the love between an older man and his boy. A delicate theme is repeated with small variations in a bilateral relationship of affection and desire. In the game of seduction, you can never know who is who, hence the idea of a voice (melody) that can stand now for one, now for the other or for the both of them. The domination cluster brings the piece to a close with great softness, as if yielding to love's stratagems.*

7 – Monachus indignum est, non ridet [The indignity of the ape, which does not laugh]. *An impression of a profane nature: the title is a quote from Bataille's book where he compares man to the ape, while making a bold connection between eroticism and death, typically human attributes, including the intentionality of laughter. The musical idea here evokes emotional moods inspired by Sturm und Drang: quick scales, (in)tense tremolos, static chords repeated until they fade out. Could man be more dignified than the ape, because he is gifted with laughter, and therefore irony? The domination cluster comes in at the end, resolute in its condition: it affirms and distorts through the power of its own sarcasm.*

8 – Tragici erotimus [Tragic eroticism]. *An impression of both sacred and profane nature: I quote his words to explain the feelings the music in question conveys: “Even after psychoanalysis, the contradictory aspects of eroticism appear in some way innumerable: their profundity is religious – it is still inadmissible. Probably all the more because it is divine.” The domination cluster manifests resolutely, remorselessly, before the end. The work comes to a close with the memory of ‘veneration’ – the sacralisation of the profane.*

World première recording

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This album was recorded in the Royal Conservatory of Music in Madrid / Spain, between the 31th May and 1st June 2025

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On Melancoly

1	<i>I.</i>	(03:10)
2	<i>II.</i>	(00:47)
3	<i>III.</i>	(00:59)
4	<i>IV. & V.</i>	(04:28)

***Sept douleurs
et une dèsolation***

5	<i>I.</i>	(01:35)
6	<i>II.</i>	(01:06)
7	<i>III.</i>	(01:50)
8	<i>IV.</i>	(03:22)
9	<i>V.</i>	(00:48)
10	<i>VI.</i>	(01:58)
11	<i>VII.</i>	(02:16)
12	<i>VIII.</i>	(01:31)

Tears of Eros

13	<i>I. Oblata</i>	(01:48)
14	<i>II. Veneratio</i>	(01:53)
15	<i>III. Cuniculi</i>	(01:49)
16	<i>IV. Pasio et seductio</i>	(02:23)
17	<i>V. Eros Dormit</i>	(03:53)
18	<i>VI. Erasta et Erômera</i>	(02:02)
19	<i>VII. Monachus indignum est, non ridet</i>	(02:18)
20	<i>VIII. Tragici Erotismus</i>	(02:54)

Total time: **(42:32)**