Transfigurations

The *Naked Composer* Drawings

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

Donna L Dralle

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

Transfigurations

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

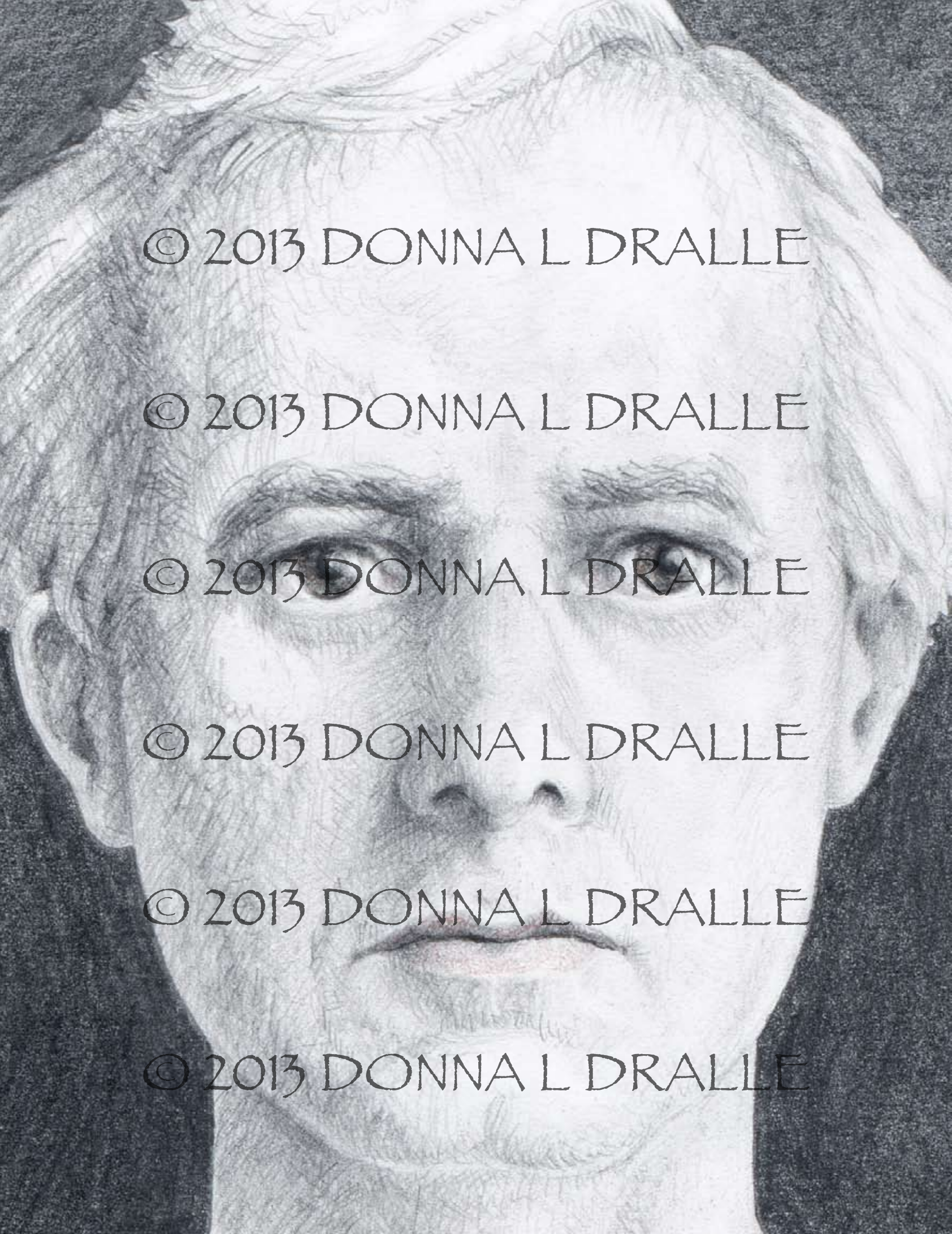
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE


© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

Transfigurations

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

The *Naked Composer* Drawings

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

Donna L. Dralle

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

Publisher

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE


© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

In loving memory of my parents,
Dorothy and Howard

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

Music: breathing of statues. Perhaps:
silence of paintings. You language where all language
ends. You time
standing vertically on the motion of mortal hearts.

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

—Rainer Maria Rilke
From "To Music"

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE


© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

Contents

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE


© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

The *Naked Composer Series*

I always have had a deep love of music and a profound admiration and respect for those who create it. I began this series in the late 1990s, and it consists of drawings of composers whose work I revere. Whenever I exhibit these portraits or show them to friends, they invariably ask the same questions: Why do you picture the composers naked? How do you know what their bodies looked like? Why do you choose the musicians you do?

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

In answer to the first question, I specialize in drawing nudes. Nudity serves as a great equalizer. If I pictured the composers clothed, they would be dated by their dress and lost in their eras. They just would be sterile representations of an ideal, like those plastic little busts sold in music stores. Shown naked, the composers become timeless and human at once. They were, after all, real people who lived their lives and experienced the same joys and tribulations as the rest of us. They were ordinary beings with extraordinary talents.

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

Secondly, I do not know for certain what they looked like nude. But to determine that, I search for eye-witness descriptions of their appearance and consult any paintings, prints, or photographs that were done of them. And, of course, there are certain tried-and-true rules that apply when picturing the human form. The most basic and reliable one utilizes the dimensions and shape of the head or skull. Artists have relied on this method for thousands of years. One can gauge bone structure and closely approximate a person's height and build from the length and breadth of the skull.

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

So I begin every drawing with the head and then block out the body. I also have spent a great deal of time studying anatomy and sketching from life. For these portraits, I model for the poses myself. Once I have decided the stance that fits the subject's temperament, I depend on my experience to picture the figure. Frankly, intuition always comes into play as well. And although I start with a general idea of the composition, that changes as the process unfolds. I might think I know how the finished work will look, but it never turns out that way. In fact, I never really know what the final image will be until it completes itself. Sometimes, that takes several attempts. Beethoven "sat" for his portrait four times, and Shostakovich, twice, because each proved to be very difficult to represent with only one drawing.

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

The third question has the simplest answer of all: I choose my subjects because I adore their music and want to spend time with them. They either need to be one of my favorites or have contributed something important to their discipline that I admire. For example, I don't listen to Haydn often but he devised the string quartet, a musical form I especially enjoy, and Haydn's quartets are absolutely wonderful. But the composer's popularity or historical significance is not enough for inclusion. The music has to have a profound effect on me and touch something deep inside. These drawings are, after all, extremely personal and have been a very intimate experience for me. To create these presences, I need to have a profound empathy for the sitters and a sincere desire to honor them as musicians and fellow human beings. My intention with the series, then, is not to give a lesson in music history but to make a collection of love notes to certain composers and to thank them for enriching my life.

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

That connection began when I was little, for as a child, I heard all kinds of music: classical, jazz, big band, and whatever else was popular at the time. My father was a devoted lover of music, and he routinely had something fun spinning on the record player on weekends. Saturday afternoons,

we listened to radio broadcasts of the New York Metropolitan Opera. When I turned 11, my parents gave me a portable stereo of my own, and I would check out various recordings from the public library and play them for hours in my room.

In college, I took both music and art classes, but discovered I did not have the necessary tenacity for intense musical studies. But I did have the requisite skill and drive to make art. I trained as a sculptor and continue to apply those techniques to drafting. When I work I'm often reminded of something the famous graphic artist Al Hirschfeld once said about sculpture: that it "is a three-dimensional drawing, a drawing you trip over in the dark." When I draw, I use an easel and utilize the same aesthetic processes I did when cutting stone or wood. The only real difference is that drawing is a lot less messy and more flexible. For this series, I have experimented with different types of rag paper, including Stonehenge, Rives, and Fabriano. But since 2006, I have been using Arches 140-lb. hot-press paper almost exclusively because it has an excellent surface and stands up to the punishment I give it: frequent erasures and redrawing.

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

I regard working in my studio as a somewhat religious endeavor that is tempered by science. It seems to combine ritual and mechanics. I always have believed that an artist is a vessel that channels creative forces. But the visual artist first must have acquired the manual skills to produce the object. And because I have an abiding respect for the process of creation, I think of composers as kindred spirits. They put me in awe of their abilities and cause me to approach them tentatively. As I strive to capture them on paper, I wish not only to acknowledge their talent but also to portray their dignity and mortality.

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

Every artist's method is different but I believe creativity reveals the essence of one's being. It exposes vulnerabilities as well as strengths. For me, the best time to shut out the clutter and noise of the everyday is at night. So that's when I normally work and feel closest to my subjects. Surrounded by the studio's dark corners, I listen to the sitter's music and begin to draw. What happens next is not usually easy or pleasant: I sweat a lot, my breathing changes noticeably, and, sometimes, I even weep.

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

The experience becomes so intense that the composer actually feels present in the room, becoming manifest in the sound and cadences of the music. The interaction is so emotionally draining that I need to take breaks from the series and concentrate on other themes. And frequently, that's when I draw myself, as a conscious act to reclaim my individuality and distinctness. At those times, I often consider whether or not all creative works should be thought of as self-portraits. But that is fuel for another discussion entirely. For now, look at the drawings of my friends, read about their lives, and remember their humanity while you contemplate your own.

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

Donna L. Dralle

Minneapolis, Minnesota

November 22, 2012

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE


© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

Hildegard von Bingen

German, 1098–1179

Hildegard's music has a dreamlike quality and always transports me to another world when I listen to it. Hildegard herself was a Benedictine nun, which gave me pause before committing to portray her naked. But ultimately, I decided she would not have minded being shown nude, for she believed in enlightenment and the beauty of the unfettered natural world.

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

"There is the Music of Heaven in all things," she once said, "and we have forgotten to hear it until we sing." As a composer, Hildegard wrote 69 liturgical works, and one of them, *Ordo Virtutum* (*Play of the Virtues*), a morality tale about the Anima (human soul) and 16 virtues, is often considered the first operetta.

Hildegard's compositions can best be described as monophonic, consisting of single-line melodies with no harmony or counterpoint. But her soaring works are complicated and utilize a greater vocal range than most medieval chants. And when I hear them, I experience an ethereal realm and can almost hear the singing of angels.

Hildegard herself was equally complex. Born in West Franconia, she was the tenth child of a noble family and as such was offered to the Catholic church as a "gift" to God. To fulfill this tithe, Hildegard's parents sent her to a convent in 1106 to study with the famous abbess Jutta. While there, Hildegard learned Latin and was exposed to many disciplines. During this time, she also met the monk Volmar, who taught her to play the psaltery and instructed her in the rudiments of musical composition.

When Jutta died in 1136, her fellow nuns unanimously elected Hildegard to be the head of their community and thus began her remarkable career. As a polymath who excelled at many things, Hildegard not only wrote about theology but on geology, literature, herbal medicine, and natural biology. She painted and even studied human sexuality. In fact, feminists credit her as being the first woman to describe the female orgasm and to offer practical advice on dealing with menstrual cramps.

To draw her, I relied on images she painted of herself. Although simplistic, they are well wrought and provide enough visual information to compile a fairly accurate likeness of her features. For each of her paintings shows the same face: one that is broad and quite round with wide-set eyes and a Roman nose. Given her geographical birthplace, she probably would have been fair and small but solidly built.

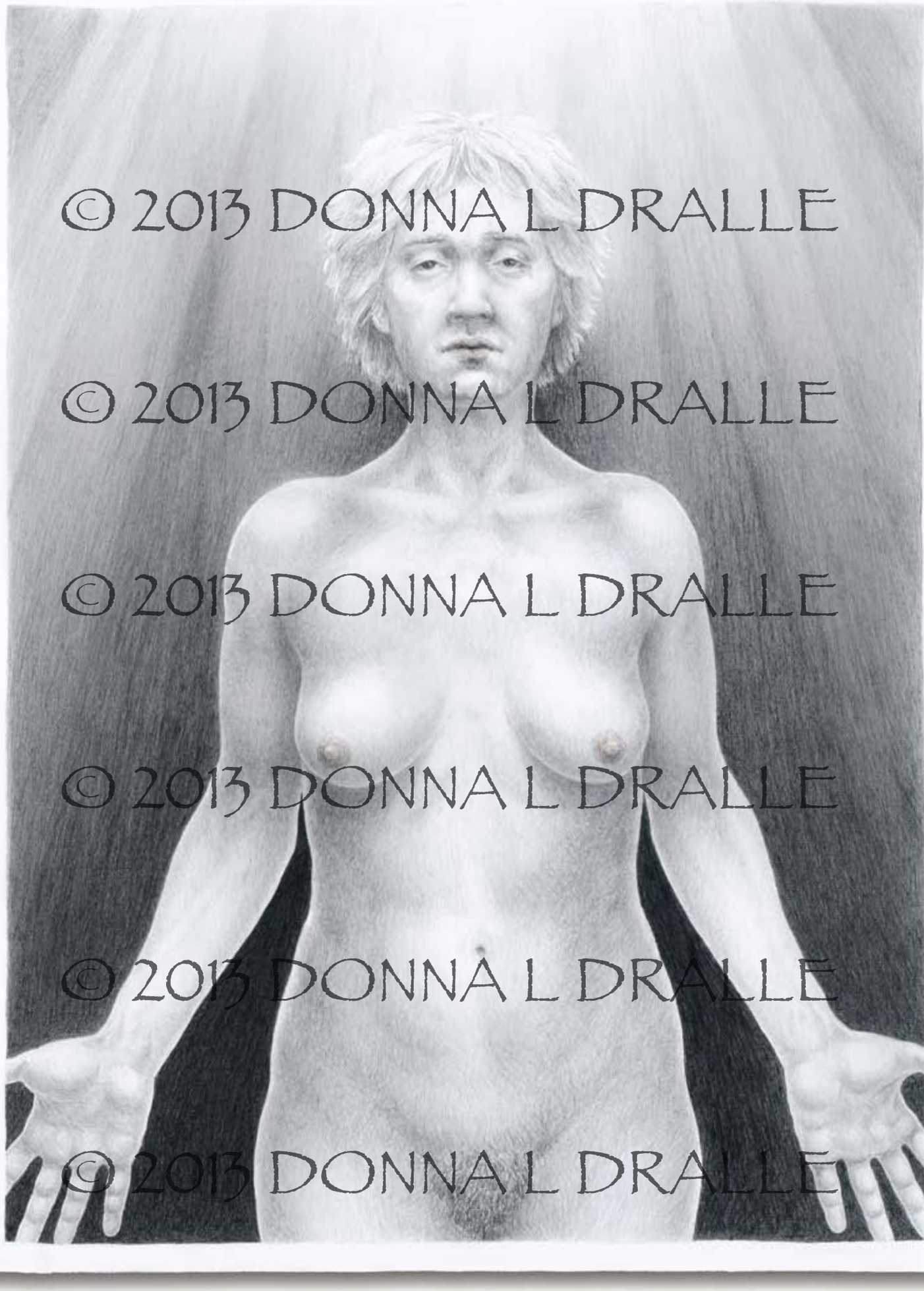
Hildegard also experienced religious visions her entire life and frequently wrote about them. And whenever she pictured herself, it was during those moments of spiritual awareness. My portrait shows her surrounded by what she called "a fiery light of the greatest flashing brightness" that came "out of a cloudless sky" and "flooded [her] entire mind and kindled [her] whole heart and breast with a warming flame."

Recommended Listening: *Ordo Virtutum*, *Meditation Chants*, and *Canticles of Ecstasy*

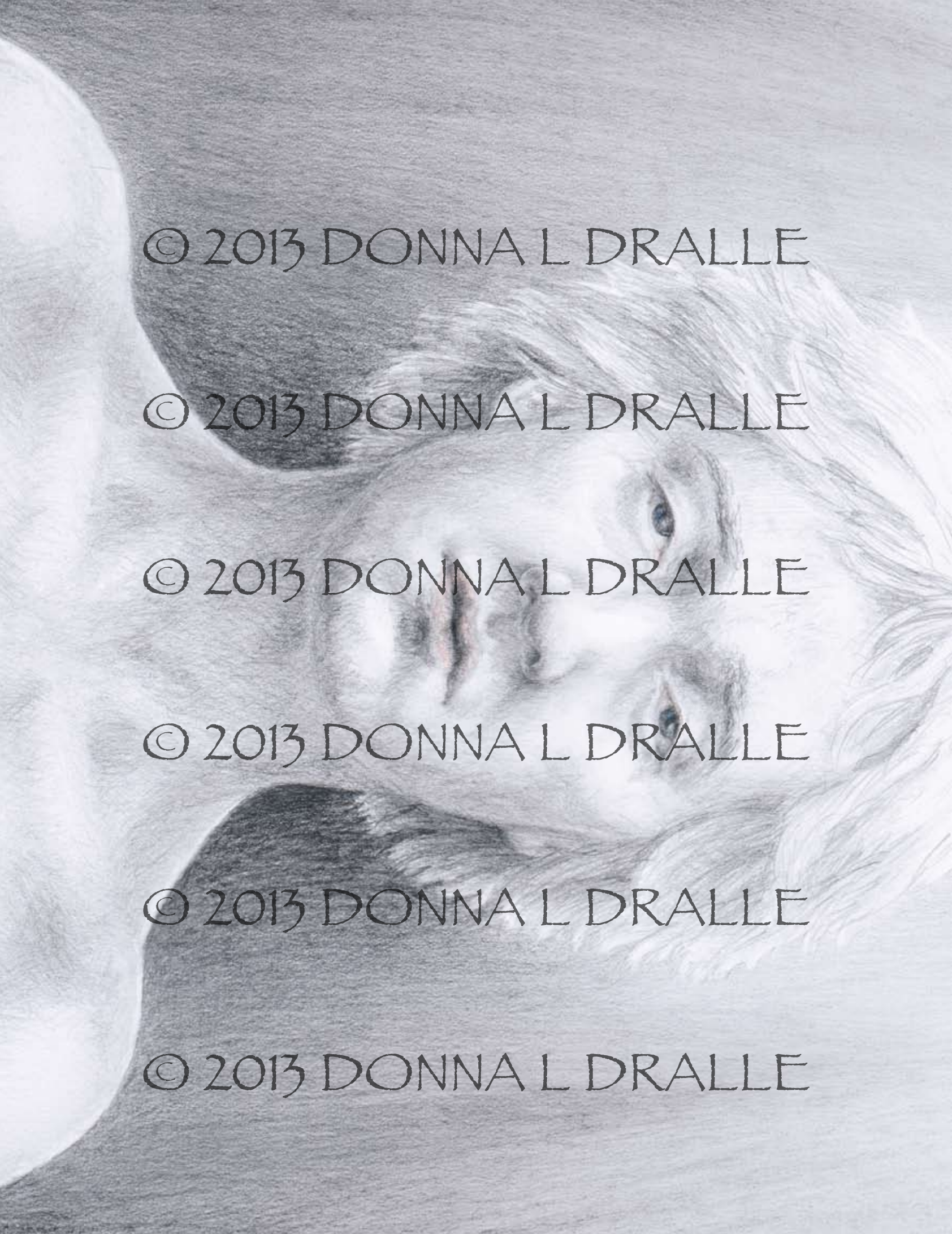
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

Above: Medieval illumination of Hildegard receiving a vision and describing it to the monk Volmar

Opposite: *Naked Composer Series*: *Hildegard*, 2012, graphite and colored pencil on paper, 30 x 22 inches


© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE


© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

Claudio Monteverdi

Italian, 1567–1643

Claudio Monteverdi's music has a very fresh—yet ancient—sound and combines what he called "the old practice," the polyphonic ideals of the Renaissance, with "the new practice," the Baroque use of a single dramatic melody. But above all, Monteverdi wanted his compositions to capture the emotional texture of poetry. They have an intimacy that other works from that era lack. "The text," he said, "should be the master of the music, not the servant," and to create it Monteverdi listened to his own soul.

Born in northern Italy, Monteverdi was the oldest son of an apothecary who secretly practiced medicine. As a child, Monteverdi studied music with the chorus master of the Cremona Cathedral and sang in the choir. He wrote his first motets and sacred madrigals by the age of 15 and attended the University of Cremona. At 20, he published his first book of secular madrigals and secured a position in Mantua with the Duke of Gonzaga. There, he worked as a singer and violist, and eventually became the duke's music director. While at court, Monteverdi also met and married his wife, the singer Claudia de Cattaneis.

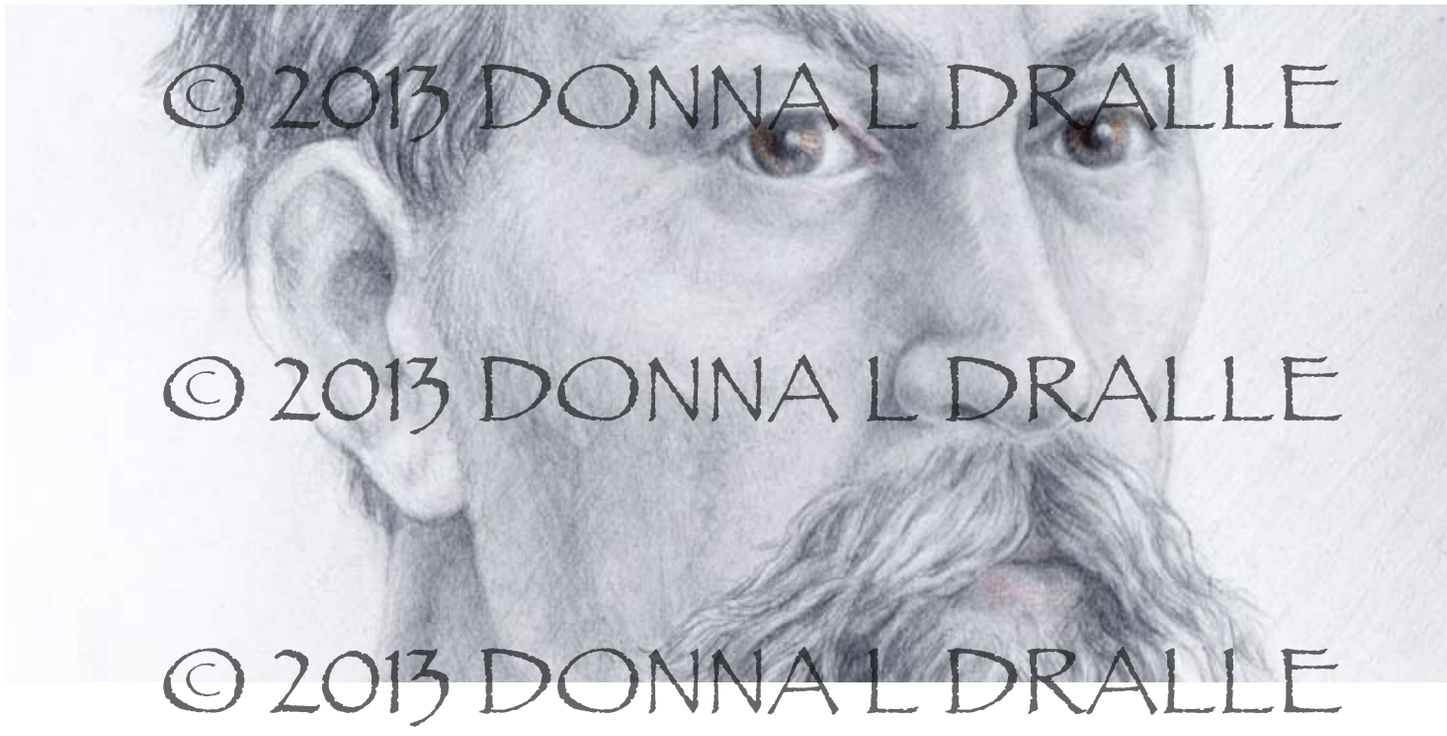
In 1613, he and his family moved to Venice, where he became the principal conductor at Saint Mark's Basilica. Already famous, Monteverdi finished his sixth, seventh, and eighth books of madrigals in Venice and continued to write operas and ballets. To infuse his music with the expressiveness and emotion he so desired, he invented the *stile concitato* (agitated style) and introduced such novel sound effects as the tremolo and the pizzicato.

Later in life, having lost his wife and several children to illness, Monteverdi decided to become a priest and took holy orders in 1632. But when the Venice Opera House opened in 1637, his interest in music reignited. During his last decade, he composed his final two operas: *The Return of Ulysses* and *The Coronation of Poppea*, which he based on the Roman emperor Nero and is considered to be his crowning achievement.

When Monteverdi died in 1643, he was entombed in the Frari near the great Venetian painter Titian. Monteverdi's fame also resulted in several life portraits being done of him. One of the best of these is by the Italian artist Bernardo Strozzi, and it served as one source for my image of him, along with a few other contemporaneous portraits. They all portray Monteverdi with a long narrow skull, which indicates his bones were elongated as well and that he had a tall, thin frame. In keeping with the fashion of the time, he wore his hair closely cropped and had a flamboyant mustache and beard.

Recommended Listening: Any of the madrigals, *L'Orfeo* (*Orpheus*), and *Vespro della Beata Vergine* (*The Vespers of the Blessed Virgin*)

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE


© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

Naked Composer Series: *Monteverdi*, 2011, graphite and colored pencil on paper, 30 x 22 inches


© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE


© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE


© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

George Frideric Handel

German, 1685–1759

Beethoven called him "the greatest of us all" and slept with the score of the *Messiah* under his pillow. First performed in Dublin in 1742 as a benefit concert, the *Messiah* remains one of the most popular and well-known pieces of music in the world. Its creator, George Frideric Handel, wrote it in 24 days, and when he completed the Hallelujah Chorus he wept and said to his servant, "I did think I saw all of Heaven before me and the great God Himself!"

Such exuberance and frenzied productivity epitomized the German composer, who by all accounts was larger than life in every way. A big man in physique as well as personality, Handel was gloriously fat and always wore expensive clothing and large rings. And when he performed or conducted, he donned a fabulous wig and tossed his head dramatically about to display its luxurious tresses. He never married and kept his private life secret, which fueled rumors that he was bisexual. He also was a savvy businessman and made—and lost—several fortunes during his lifetime.

Born in Saxony to a prosperous surgeon, Handel expertly played the harpsichord by age seven and started composing music two years later. Despite his obvious talent, he studied law as a young man, a pursuit he gladly abandoned when his father died in 1703. In quick succession, Handel became the organist in Halle for the Calvinist Cathedral, then a violinist in Hamburg at the Opera House, where he wrote *Almira* and developed his enduring passion for opera. Three years of study in Italy followed, as did the patronage of numerous princes and cardinals. Then, when Handel turned 25, German royalty summoned and he became the conductor to the Elector of Hanover.

But a visit to England in 1710 changed everything, and he moved to London permanently in 1712. Ambitious and industrious, Handel not only received a pension from Queen Anne but formed three opera companies of his own. All told, he wrote 50 operas, 23 oratorios, and many church and instrumental pieces, including his famous *Water* and *Fireworks* music.

In fact, he could compose a new opera every two to three weeks, and that outsized fervor and creativity informed every fiber of his being. When upset, he spoke in a confusing mixture of German, Italian, and English and became even more agitated when subordinates had trouble understanding him. Obstinate and overbearing, he also had a fiery temper and would terrorize his soloists when they displeased him. And once, when a celebrated soprano refused to sing an aria the way he wanted, he grabbed her and dangled her out a window.

Among the Baroque era's many accomplished composers, Handel possessed an unequaled intellectual intensity and a physical lust for life. And his many works remain unique because of their unparalleled grandeur and dignity. To picture him, I did refer to a few well-executed portraits, but found the many anecdotes and written descriptions much more helpful. He was a joy to draw, and when I finished, I actually missed him.

Recommended Listening: *Xerxes*, *The Messiah*, and *Music for the Royal Fireworks*

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

Naked Composer Series: *Handel*, 2004, graphite and colored pencil on paper, 30 x 22 inches


© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE


© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE


© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

Johann Sebastian Bach

German, 1685–1750

The great Baroque composer Johann Sebastian Bach has always been a musician's musician. Mozart openly admired his skill, and because *bach* means brook in German, Beethoven famously praised him by saying, "His name should be Ocean, not Brook." But the 19th-century Romantics revered him even more. In 1829, Mendelssohn staged the first performance of Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* in 75 years. Liszt transcribed his organ pieces for the grand piano. And Schumann helped create the Bach Society in 1850 to promote his works and to publish a comprehensive catalogue of them.

Besides being supremely gifted and amazingly prolific, Bach was a deeply spiritual man and devoted to his Lutheran faith. He signed many of his scores with the words *Soli Deo Gloria* ("To God Alone the Glory") and often said, "The aim and final reason of all music should be nothing else but the Glory of God and the refreshment of the spirit."

Born in Eisenach in 1685, Bach came from a long line of professional musicians. His father played the trumpet, and his older brother and uncles performed as church organists and chamber musicians. After receiving instruction from them, he won a prestigious choral scholarship to St. Michael's School near Hamburg and by the age of 18 landed his first important position, as organist at St. Boniface's Church in Arnstadt. Over the years, he served in many posts all over Germany and spent his last decades in Leipzig, where he was the musical director of St. Thomas's Church and taught singing in addition to his duties as choirmaster, keyboardist, and composer.

During his lifetime, though, Bach was not well known outside of Germany. But as the country's finest organist, he traveled frequently, often to oversee the installation and tuning of new pipe organs and to give inaugural concerts afterwards. He also gained recognition as an expert teacher and proved to be a loyal husband and loving father. Once, upon returning from a working trip, he found his children weeping at the door and discovered his beloved first wife had died during his absence. He was crushed by guilt, leading some historians to think that the chaconne from the ethereal *Unaccompanied Partitas and Sonatas for Violin* was intended as his personal memorial to her.

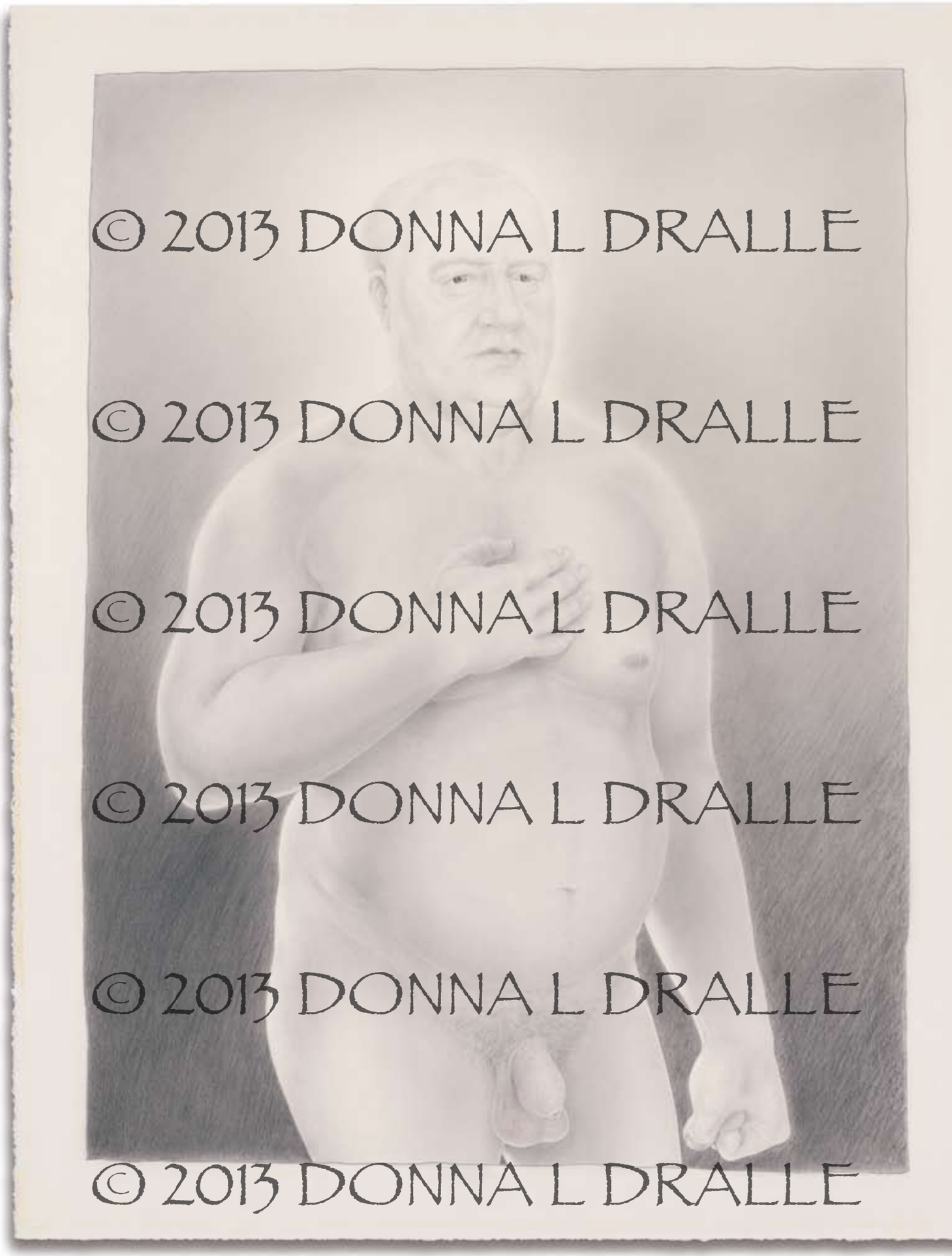
Despite his many attributes, Bach had a temper and could be extremely obstinate. When he was young, he brandished a sword at a student who crossed him. In middle age, he spent a month in jail for breach of contract. And during his many years in Leipzig, he frequently squabbled with city officials over fees and other money owed him.

In my rendering, he has one hand over his heart and the other clenched in a fist: as Bach, the humble servant of God, and Bach, the mere mortal struggling with the day-to-day. To determine his physical appearance, I relied on a photograph of his skull and a few extant portraits. From these, I could ascertain that he had large bones and a very prominent nose. Of sturdy peasant stock, he would have been heavy set and possibly taller than average.

Recommended Listening: *Unaccompanied Partitas and Sonatas for Violin*, *B-Minor Mass*, and *Concerto for Two Violins in D Minor*

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

Naked Composer Series: *Bach*, 2001, graphite and colored pencil on paper, 39 x 30 inches


© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE


© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

Franz Joseph Haydn

Austrian, 1732–1809

Although I don't listen to Joseph Haydn's music often, I deeply admire the man who created it. As one of the masters of the Viennese school, Haydn was prolific, influential, and widely regarded as both the "Father of the Symphony" and the "Father of the String Quartet." During his 60-year career, he laid the foundations for the classical style in his concise, highly polished compositions. He was Ludwig van Beethoven's first teacher in Vienna and had a close friendship with Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.

Born in an Austrian village near the Hungarian border, Haydn came from a working-class family. His father was a wheelwright, and his mother, a cook for a local aristocrat. But the family often sang folk songs together, and Haydn's parents recognized his innate gift for music. Knowing that he needed proper training, they sent him away to study at the age of six. He excelled quickly, and the beauty of his voice soon earned him a place in the choir of St. Stephen's Cathedral in Vienna. During his nine years there, he also learned Latin and how to play the violin and the harpsichord.

But when Haydn turned 16 and his voice changed, his days as a choirboy ended. Living in a small garret in Vienna, he did any project he could find, giving music lessons and even street performances. In 1752, he took a job as a valet and accompanist to Nicola Porpora, who taught him the fundamentals of music theory and composition. As his skills and reputation grew, Haydn secured noble patrons and eventually became employed by the Esterházys, extremely wealthy Hungarians known for their love of the arts. During his almost 30 years at court, Haydn produced some of his best-known works and directed a chamber orchestra, an opera company, and a marionette theater.

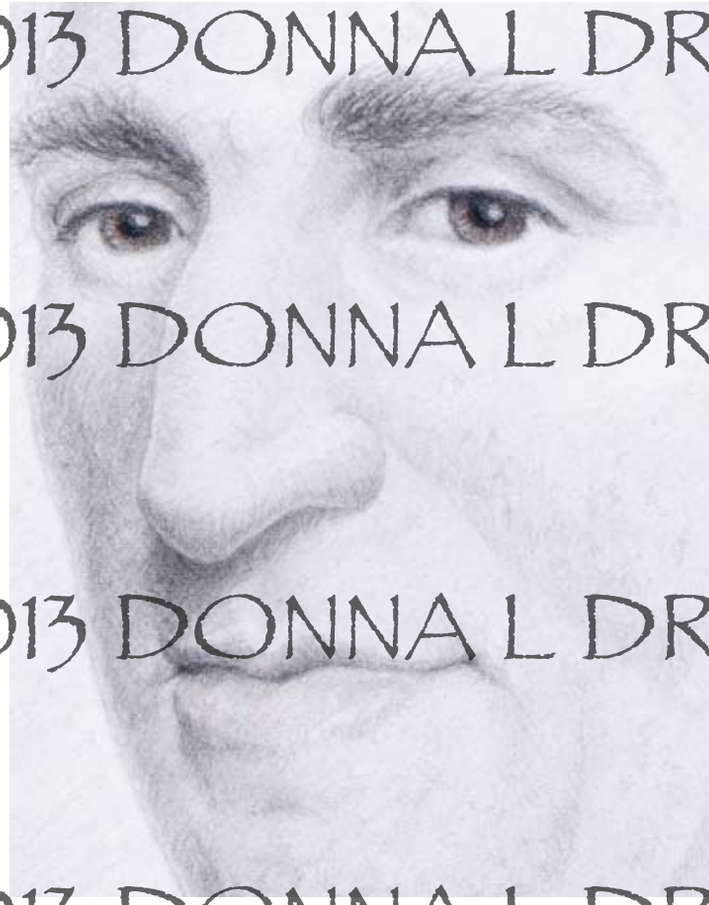
"My Prince was always satisfied with my works," Haydn said. "I not only had the encouragement of constant approval but . . . I could make experiments, observe what produced an effect and what weakened it, and was thus in a position to improve, alter, make additions or omissions, and be as bold as I pleased. I was cut off from the world . . . and I was forced to become *original*."

That originality made him famous throughout Europe. And after Prince Nikolaus died in 1790, Haydn accepted invitations to perform in London and elsewhere. Those concerts made him financially independent as well. When he returned to Vienna in 1795, he bought a large house in the suburbs and composed two of his best oratorios—*The Creation* and *The Seasons*—and such popular string quartets as the *Emperor* and *Sunrise*.

Haydn always had a wonderful sense of humor and enjoyed practical jokes. He was equally fond of musical pranks and amused his listeners by including sudden loud noises or passages that sounded like the musicians were drunk or playing out-of-tune. Endlessly cheerful, he had many friends, a wife, and several lovers.

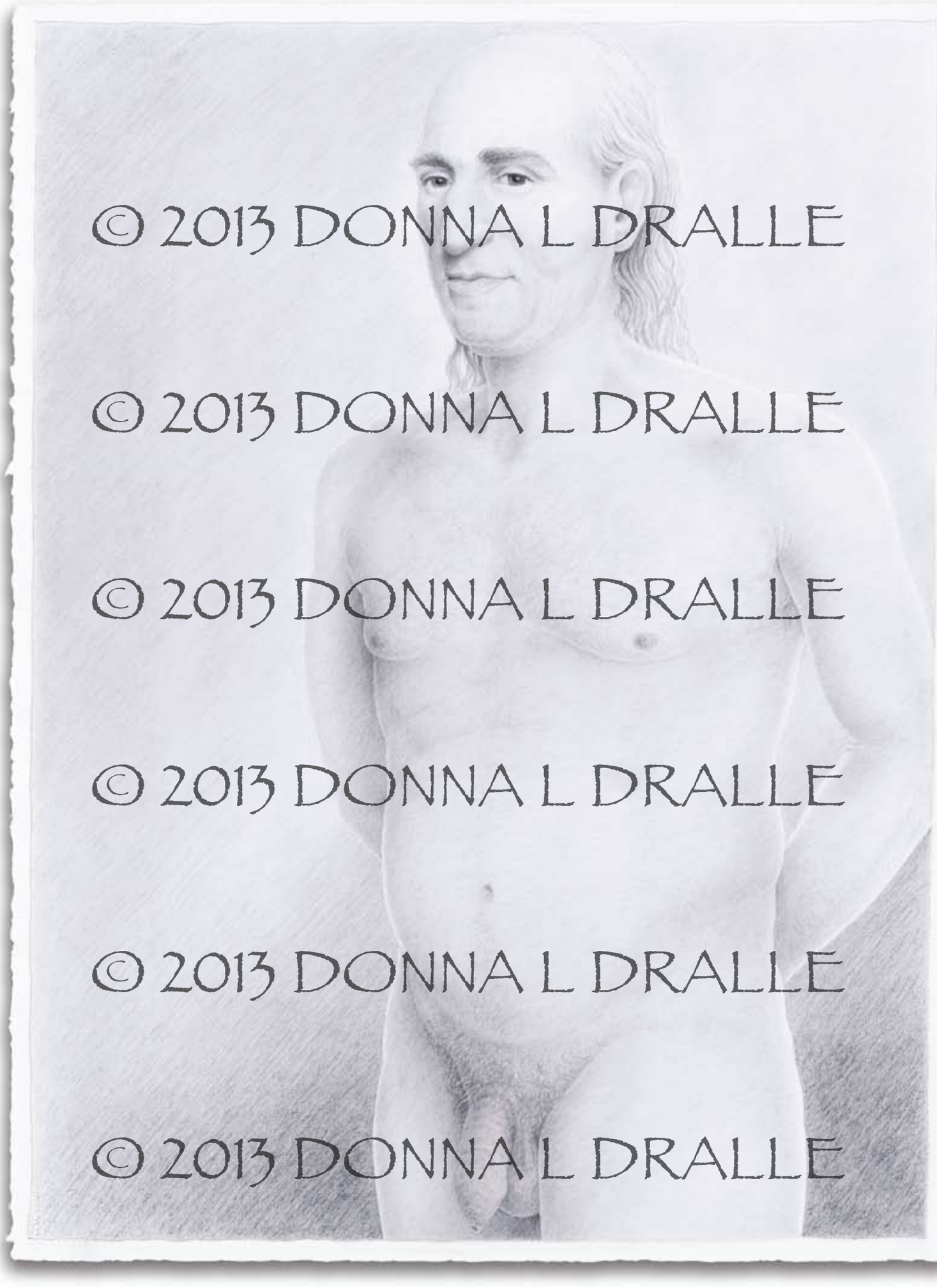
Numerous paintings and prints of Haydn exist, and I utilized those, as well as a photograph of his skull, for my drawing. Underfed as a child, Haydn was small in stature and had fine bones. Dignified and kindly, he had a pleasing disposition and a generous soul. And unlike Mozart and Beethoven, he always accepted his place in the strict hierarchy of Viennese society and never complained.

Recommended Listening: The string quartets, the piano trios, and *The Creation*



© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

Naked Composer Series: *Haydn*, 2005, graphite and colored pencil on paper, 30 x 22 inches


© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE


© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

Ludwig van Beethoven

German, 1770–1827

This is my fourth attempt at drawing Beethoven. He should be an easy subject: There are countless descriptions of him and entire books on his appearance. A plaster life mask of his face exists, as does a photograph of his skull. He left indelible impressions on everyone who encountered him because he physically resembled his music: independent, volcanic, confrontational, unorthodox, and deeply intelligent. Intensely aware of his own self-worth, he once told an aristocratic friend, "Prince! What you are, you are through the accident of birth. What I am, I am through my own efforts. There have been many princes, and there will be thousands more. But there is only one Beethoven!"

The grandson and son of professional German musicians, Ludwig van Beethoven gave his first public concert at the age of seven and became assistant court organist before he turned 12. His first teacher was his father, an abusive man who wanted to exploit his son's talent as a child prodigy. As his father succumbed to alcoholism, the teenage Beethoven financially supported his mother and two younger brothers.

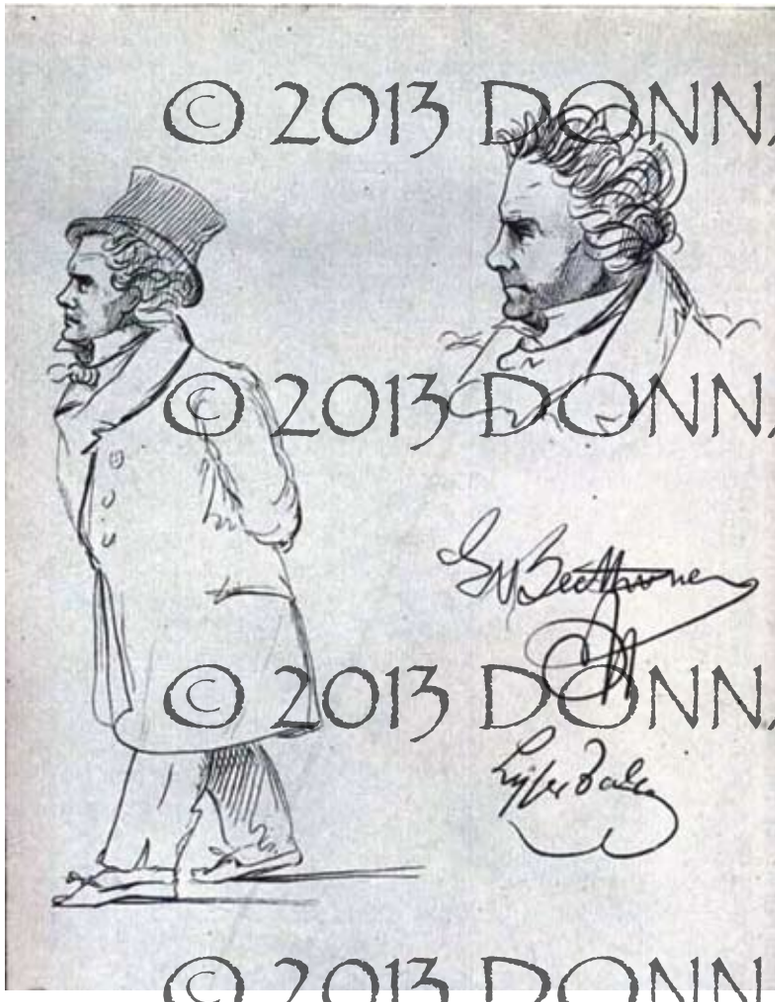
Hoping to study with Mozart, he went to Vienna in 1787, but soon after arriving received word that his mother was dying of tuberculosis. He returned home immediately and remained in Bonn for another five years to take care of his family. But at Haydn's insistence, he moved to Vienna permanently in 1792 to learn from the master. He also took lessons from the Italian composer Antonio Salieri, which he kept secret from Haydn.

By 1793, Beethoven had made a name for himself as a piano virtuoso and began publishing his revolutionary compositions to great acclaim and profit. He always referred to himself as an "artist" and unlike his predecessors, who needed to work for either the nobility or the church, maintained his autonomy by supporting himself with annual stipends, subscription concerts, music lessons, and the sale of his works. In addition, he collaborated with several piano makers, and his ideas to extend the traditional keyboard and reinforce the strings contributed to the development of the modern piano.

Despite his successful career, Beethoven's personal life was often turbulent. He quarreled with relatives and associates, fell in love with unobtainable women, and never married. He also suffered from chronic health problems. As early as 1796, he began to notice that he was losing his hearing and considered suicide. "Only art it was that withheld me," he later wrote. But it was a devastating condition for which there was no cure, and by the time of his death at age 56, he had become almost completely deaf.

Physically, though, Beethoven had a powerful build with short thick bones and small strong hands. He stood about five foot five and had unusually broad shoulders. He was very hirsute and even had hair on his knuckles. His head was large but his lower jaw disproportionately small. He leaned forward when he walked and held his gaze upward. He was clumsy; he hated shaving; he broke pianos; and the more his hearing loss progressed, the more irritable and misanthropic he became. But he had a good, generous heart and liked to joke and laugh. And I've always thought of him as a dear and intimate friend.

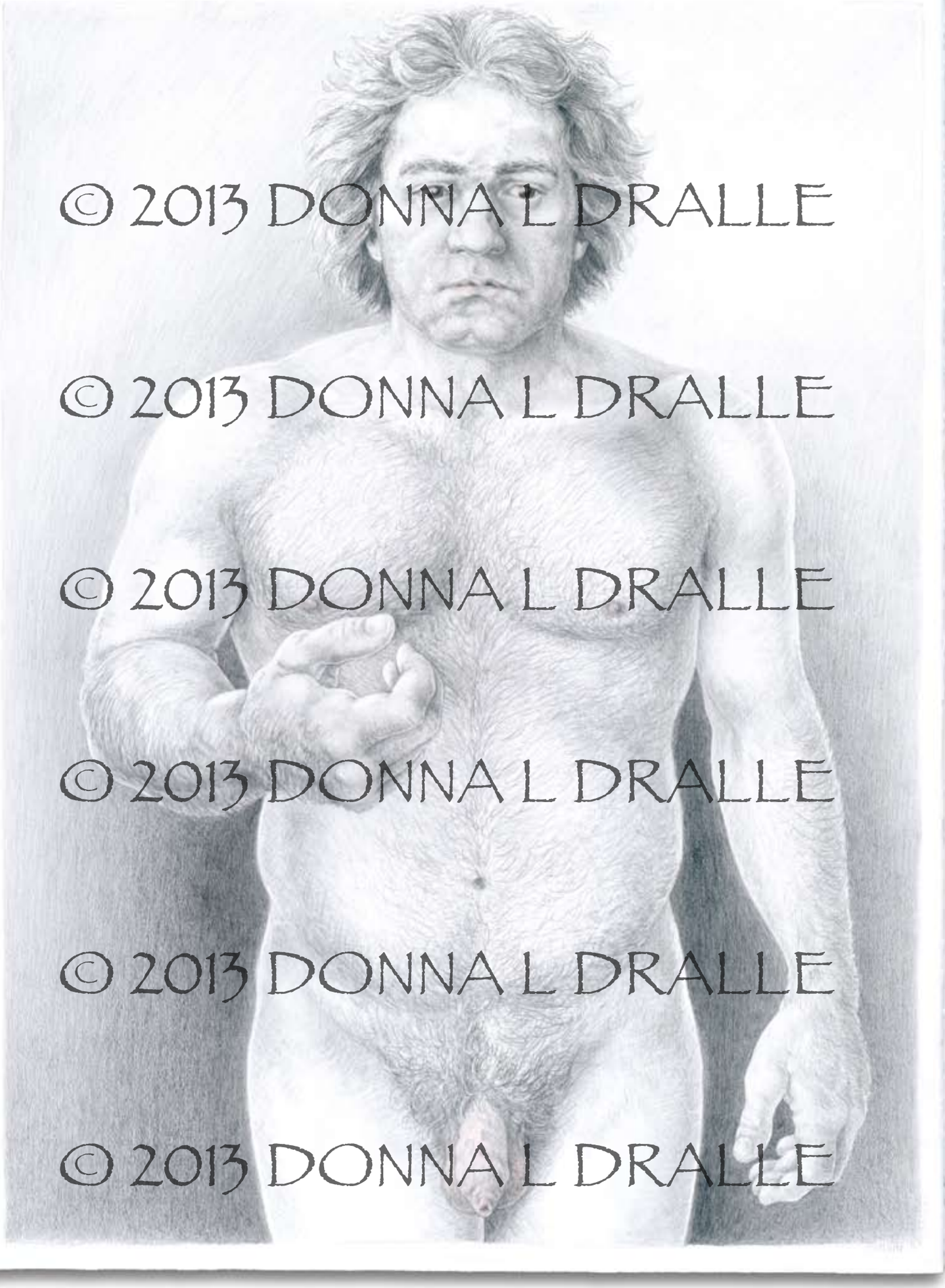
Recommended Listening: *Bagatelles*, Op. 126, the late string quartets, and the *Missa Solemnis* (*Solemn Mass in D*)



© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

Above: Early 19th-century caricatures of Ludwig van Beethoven walking by Johann Theodor Lyser

Opposite: *Naked Composer Series*: *Beethoven*, 2012, graphite and colored pencil on paper, 30 x 22 inches


© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE


© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE


© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

Johann Strauss II

Austrian, 1825–1899

As an undergraduate, I studied in Austria and while there heard many Viennese waltzes. Perhaps because they remind me of those happy and carefree days, waltzes have a powerful effect on me. I especially like to listen to them while I'm driving and often "dance" to the music while singing along at the top of my lungs. And usually, the ones that elate me most were all written by the same person: Johann Strauss II, who during his own lifetime was called "The Waltz King" and generally is credited with their enormous popularity.

Born near Vienna in 1825, Johann Strauss II was named after his father, another famous composer of dance music and operettas. The elder Strauss wanted his son to become a banker and refused to teach him how to play. But Johann Jr. secretly took lessons from a violinist in his father's own orchestra, and when Johann Sr. discovered this betrayal, he beat the boy severely.

But when his father abandoned the family for his mistress, Johann Jr. gained his freedom as well. To pursue his musical dreams, he studied counterpoint and theory with Joachim Hoffmann; harmony with composer Joseph Drechsler; and violin with Anton Kollmann, who served as the ballet master for the Vienna Court Opera. Armed with recommendations from these illustrious teachers, Strauss applied for a license to perform publicly and at the age of 19 formed his first ensemble.

He debuted some of his earliest waltzes and polkas in October of 1844 at the Dommayer's Casino in Hietzing, a Viennese suburb. This setting had been the stage for many of his father's successes, and when Strauss Sr. learned that his son was playing at the club, he became furious and vowed never to perform there again.

During the March Revolution of 1848, this enmity deepened further when Strauss Sr. supported the monarchy, and his son sided with the dissidents. Although this political affiliation led to a career setback for the younger Strauss, it proved short lived. And after Strauss Sr. died in 1849 from scarlet fever, Strauss Jr. soon became famous and started touring internationally. He also combined his father's orchestra with his own and even composed patriotic songs like the *Kaiser Waltz* to flatter Franz-Josef, Austria's new emperor.

"I am sure that my father will be reconciled with me in his grave," Strauss said, "if I can prove that I am worthy of my artistic profession." And prove himself he did. Over the course of his lifetime, he wrote 170 waltzes, 140 polkas, several operettas (including his well-known *Die Fledermaus*), and a ballet. His dance music, especially, was wildly successful and led to numerous commissions and the adulation of such prominent contemporaries as Richard Wagner, Johannes Brahms, and Maurice Ravel.

Strauss's personal life, though, was far more difficult. He had a nervous breakdown in 1853 from constant touring and the professional demands made on him. After his recovery, he had several musical rivals who both challenged and conspired against him. He also had three wives and to divorce the second one needed to denounce the Roman Catholic Church and become a Protestant. He even changed nationalities, becoming a citizen of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha in 1887. Then, in 1899 at the age of 73, he contracted pneumonia and died within a few weeks. And after his burial, his brother Eduard burned many of his original manuscripts to prevent them from being plagiarized by a rival composer.

Strauss's fame, however, ensured that numerous paintings and photographs exist of him. Some of these date to 1872, when Strauss toured the United States and in Boston conducted a thousand performers who paid homage to him by playing his *Blue Danube* waltz. The photographs, especially, always picture a virile man who is tall, slender, and handsome, with a full head of wavy brown hair. Looking very Bohemian, he has dark eyes, a large nose, and moustaches of various sorts, sometimes with flamboyant muttonchops or a soul patch.

Recommended Listening: *Tales of the Vienna Woods*, *The Emperor Waltz*, and *The Blue Danube*

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

Naked Composer Series: *Strauss*, 2012, graphite and colored pencil on paper, 30 x 22 inches


© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

Gustav Mahler

Austrian, 1860–1911

"I have always adored Mahler," Paul McCartney said, "and he was a major influence on the music of the Beatles. John and I used to sit and do the *Kindertotenlieder* and *Wunderhorn* for hours and take turns singing and playing the piano." Yet during his own lifetime, Gustav Mahler received little critical acclaim for his romantic, technically brilliant symphonies and songs, and after his death, they were neglected for decades.

But starting in the late 1940s, a new generation of audiences heard them, and his compositions became some of the most performed and recorded music of the century. And while I don't listen to Mahler a lot, when I do it's exactly what I want to hear. It takes me to a faraway, yet familiar place and to the intellectual, elegant world of late 19th-century Vienna. But it also makes me melancholy, especially when I remember Mahler's belief that he constantly felt like "an intruder" who was "never welcomed" anywhere.

That feeling of exile began during his childhood in eastern Bohemia, which is now the Czech Republic. Part of a German-speaking minority, the Mahler family also was Jewish and of humble origins. Mahler's grandmother had been a street peddler, and his father, a footman who eventually became an innkeeper and a distiller. The second son of 14 children, Gustav discovered his grandparents' piano at the age of four and by ten had given his first public recital. At 15, he went to the prestigious Vienna Conservatory of Music, where he attended lectures by the famous Austrian composer Anton Bruckner and became enthralled with the operas of Richard Wagner. At 18, he continued his musical studies at Vienna University and became interested in German philosophy.

He got his first professional appointment in 1880 at a summer opera house near Linz. A dynamic and demanding conductor with a reputation for excellence, he soon secured more important positions: in Kassel, Prague, Leipzig, Budapest, and Hamburg. All the while he conducted and staged other people's operas, he was composing works of his own in his spare time.

Then at 37, he finally landed the most coveted job in the Austrian Empire: as director of the imperial Vienna Opera. But to qualify for it, he needed to convert to Roman Catholicism. By doing so, he hoped to avoid the anti-Semitism that ran rampant in the city. Now "I am thrice homeless," he said in 1897. "As a Bohemian born in Austria. As an Austrian among Germans. And as a Jew throughout the world."

Over the next ten years, he experienced triumphs and tragedies and countless intrigues against him. Initially, his extravagant productions met with success, and by 1898 he also was named director of the Vienna Philharmonic. But his management and conducting style were dictatorial and unforgiving, and he angered his singers, instrumentalists, and administrators regularly and in similar measure. "Humanly I make every concession," he admitted, "Artistically—none!"

His personal life was equally tumultuous. He had a stormy marriage to a beautiful, but unfaithful wife. His eldest daughter died at five from scarlet fever, and he himself was diagnosed with heart disease soon thereafter. He also had migraines and chronic throat problems. In late 1910, when he was in New York City to conduct the Philharmonic Orchestra, he came down with another sore throat. That infection worsened, and after languishing for several months, he died of heart failure at the age of 51 and was buried in Vienna beside his daughter Maria.

Despite his various illnesses, he had a robust appearance and loved to go hiking in the mountains. Many photographs and drawings exist of him, as do numerous cartoons and caricatures. The ones that show him conducting proved especially helpful for my rendering of him.

Recommended Listening: *Das Lied von der Erde* (*The Song of the Earth*), any of his nine symphonies, and *Das Kindertotenlieder* (*Songs on the Death of Children*)

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

Above: Early 20th-century caricatures of Gustav Mahler conducting by Hans Schliessmann

Opposite: *Naked Composer Series*: *Mahler*, 2006, graphite and colored pencil on paper, 30 x 22 inches


© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE


© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

Béla Bartók

Hungarian, 1881–1945

The *Naked Composer Series* began with a drawing of Beethoven and was reignited after a four-year hiatus with this portrait of Béla Bartók. Bartók has long been one of my favorites, and his music, like Beethoven's, always comes from the heart and has an emotional core. Bartók's works, though, are modern in sensibility and make him one of the greatest composers of the 20th century. But he never thought of his creations as revolutionary. "In art there are only fast or slow developments," he once wrote. "Essentially it is a matter of evolution, not revolution."

For Bartók, that evolution began in the late 19th century in the small Hungarian town where he was born. As an infant, he got a smallpox vaccination that left him with severe eczema. Sickly and small, he spent his first five years at home and isolated from other children. But his doting mother amused him by playing the piano, and Bartók himself soon showed a talent for music. At the age of nine, he wrote his earliest dances and two years later gave his first public performance.

After graduating from high school, he studied piano with one of Franz Liszt's protégés and composition at the Royal Academy of Music in Budapest. There, he met Zoltán Kodály, who would become his closest friend and colleague, and Richard Strauss, who was in Hungary to premiere *Thus Spake Zarathustra*. Strauss, Bartók later recalled, "showed me there was a way of composing which seemed to hold the seeds of a new life." Combining this influence with his innate nationalism, he wrote his first symphony in 1903 to honor Lajos Kossuth, the leader of the 1848 Hungarian Revolution.

In 1904, Bartók's lifelong interest in folk music began. Taking time in Slovakia to practice and compose, he overheard a young nanny from Transylvania singing to her charges. Enchanted, he interviewed her to find out what other folk songs she knew. A few years later, he traveled around the Hungarian countryside with Kodály to talk with local peasants and learn about their music. Ultimately, Bartók not only researched and documented the folk songs of Slovakia and Hungary, but those of Romania, Serbia, Croatia, and Bulgaria as well. To broaden his studies, he later went to Turkey and Algeria for the same purpose and became renowned as one of the world's earliest ethnomusicologists.

In 1907, he secured an appointment at the Royal Academy in Budapest to teach piano and with Kodály founded a society to promote contemporary music. Although he was never fond of teaching, Bartók remained at the academy until the outbreak of the Second World War. During his many years there, he continued to write music and often incorporated melodies and rhythms from various folk songs into his works. He also divorced his first wife, with whom he had a son, and married one of his piano students in 1923. And for his second son's music lessons, he composed a six-volume collection of graded piano pieces called the *Mikrokosmos* (*Microcosm*).

When the Nazis came to power in the 1930s, Bartók refused to give concerts in Germany and began to send his manuscripts abroad for safekeeping. An outspoken liberal and atheist, Bartók had Jewish friends and became increasingly uncomfortable with Hungary's pro-fascist policies. Finally, when it became too dangerous for him to stay in Europe, he and his family immigrated to New York City in 1940.

Unfortunately, Bartók was never happy in the United States and found it nearly impossible to compose. Living in relative obscurity, he also began experiencing health problems, first with a stiff right shoulder and then with unexplained fevers. In 1944, he received his fateful diagnosis: leukemia. But as his body failed, his creativity surged and he wrote his final masterpieces, including *Concerto for Orchestra*, his famous commission for the Boston Symphony. "The trouble is," he told his doctor as he lay dying, "that I have to go with so much still to say."

For me, Bartók's music has always had a fearless elegance to it and an unmistakable poignancy. And though slight in stature, Bartók was never lacking in empathy or soul. To picture him, I looked at the few videos and many photographs that are available. While working on his portrait, I thought about the sadness he must have felt leaving his beloved Hungary and the loneliness of being in a strange new land.

Recommended Listening: The string quartets, *Concerto for Orchestra*, and *Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta*

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

Naked Composer Series: *Bartók*, 2011, graphite and colored pencil on paper, 30 x 22 inches


© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE


© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE


© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

Sergei Prokofiev

Russian, 1891–1953

Sergei Prokofiev's face has appeared on Soviet postage stamps and *Time* magazine covers. A contemporary of such celebrated Russians as Sergei Rachmaninoff, Igor Stravinsky, and Dmitri Shostakovich, Prokofiev emerged during a very fertile era for modern music. I started listening to Prokofiev at an early age, and his classics, especially his concertos and ballets, have always been some of my mainstays. So he proved to be very easy to draw because he seems like a reliable old friend.

Born in the Ukraine in 1891, Prokofiev was the only child of a wealthy agricultural engineer. His mother, a pianist, taught him to play, and he composed his first piece at the age of five. By nine, he had written an overture and an opera called *The Giant*, and at 11, a symphony. When Prokofiev turned 13, his parents sent him to the music conservatory in Saint Petersburg.

A piano prodigy and gifted composer, Prokofiev excelled at his studies but his classmates thought him arrogant and aloof. By 1910, he had a reputation for being an *enfant terrible* and started making a name for himself with his dissonant, highly original works. In 1913, he premiered his first concerto to the public and a year later finished his stay at the conservatory by winning the "battle of the pianos" competition and receiving a grand piano as his prize.

Shortly thereafter, he made his first trip to London, where he met Stravinsky and the Russian art critic and impresario Sergei Diaghilev. Diaghilev commissioned Prokofiev's first ballet in 1914 for the Ballets Russes and several other works over the years, including *Chout* (*The Fool*) and *The Prodigal Son*.

To escape the turmoil of the Russian Revolution, Prokofiev left Saint Petersburg in 1918 and went to the United States, where he had a successful solo career and wrote the opera *The Love for Three Oranges*. He also lived and performed in France and Germany, and married the Spanish singer Carolina Codina, with whom he had two sons. But financial difficulties and homesickness prompted him to return to Russia in the mid-1930s. By that time, however, Joseph Stalin had taken control of the country and was enacting his "Great Purge." That widespread oppression led to nearly 800,000 citizens being executed and millions more being deported or sent to prisons or labor camps. Artists were not immune from the terror, although Prokofiev's international fame spared him the worst of it. The government's Composers' Union did, however, accuse him of Formalism, which Prokofiev later defined as "music that people don't understand at first hearing."

Forced to adapt, Prokofiev did a series of "mass songs" based on officially sanctioned poems and began writing for children. *Peter and the Wolf* and *Three Songs for Children* date to this period. Like his fellow outcast Shostakovich, he also composed film scores, including *Lieutenant Kijé*, *Ivan the Terrible*, and *Alexander Nevsky*. And he continued to create such ballets as *Romeo and Juliet* and the operas *Semyon Kotko*, *War and Peace*, and *Zdravitsa* (*Cheers!*), which celebrated Stalin's 60th birthday.

In 1941, the Germans invaded Russia. That same year, Prokofiev had his first heart attack, and his health began to fail. He also suffered from chronic high blood pressure and had a fall and concussion from which he never fully recovered. He died in Moscow on March 5, 1953, from a brain hemorrhage, the exact day that Stalin, too, was pronounced dead from the same cause.

For references to Prokofiev's physical appearance, I looked at the many photographs and portraits that were done of him. Ironically, despite his immense self-assurance (he was even fond of being called the "enfant terrible"), he never thought of himself as handsome and was extremely self-conscious about his looks.

Recommended Listening: *Romeo and Juliet*, *Piano Concerto No. 1*, and *The Love for Three Oranges*

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

Naked Composer Series: *Prokofiev*, 2011, graphite and colored pencil on paper, 30 x 22 inches


© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

Dmitri Shostakovich

Russian, 1906–1975

How do you draw the face of persecution, of unwilling submission, of nervous anxiety and constant fear? That is the picture of Dmitri Shostakovich, a man deeply affected by his time and place, so much so that it physically altered his appearance. "Without Party guidance," he once told a fellow composer, "I would have displayed more brilliance and used more sarcasm. I could have revealed my ideas openly instead of having to resort to camouflage."

That need for camouflage began in 1936, when Joseph Stalin and the Politburo attended a performance at the Bolshoi Theater in Moscow and saw Shostakovich's opera *Lady Macbeth of the Msensk District*. The next day the attacks began in *Pravda*, accusing the composer of Formalism and calling the production "Muddle Instead of Music." And the young Shostakovich, who had enjoyed enormous success until then, fell from favor—and dramatically.

Born in Saint Petersburg in 1906, Shostakovich came from a liberal and educated family. His father was a physicist and engineer, and his mother, a pianist who taught her son to play when he was nine. A child prodigy, he composed his first piece, a funeral march, at the age of 12 and enrolled at the Petrograd Conservatory the next year. He progressed quickly, although his teachers disapproved when he liked the avant-garde music of Igor Stravinsky and Sergei Prokofiev. In 1926 at 19, he wrote his first major work, a symphony, as a final project for graduation. It met with both popular and critical acceptance and launched his career as a concert pianist and composer.

In 1927, he produced his more experimental *Second Symphony* and became aware of Gustav Mahler's works. He also began composing his satirical opera *The Nose*, based on Nikolai Gogol's fantasy about a nose that leaves its owner and starts wearing clothes. Next came Shostakovich's first score for a 1929 silent film and a position at TRAM, a proletarian youth theater, which shielded him from ideological criticism and gave him time to write *Lady MacBeth*. He also married his first wife and eventually became a father of two.

Then in early 1936, when Stalin called his opera "coarse, primitive, and vulgar," Shostakovich's world fell apart. His commissions disappeared, his income plummeted, and he began being monitored by the secret police. Many of his close friends and relatives vanished or were exiled or detained. And he never knew when he might be next.

Stalin actually took pleasure in watching Shostakovich suffer and suffer he did: He started to hunch, as if trying to hide by making himself smaller, and he developed numerous facial tics and grimaces. He also began drinking heavily and smoking incessantly and became obsessed with cleanliness and personal hygiene.

The constant surveillance and stress profoundly affected Shostakovich's creativity as well. To atone for his artistic sins, he began composing conservative works that were understandable to the masses. Soon, his scores fell into three distinct categories: for films, which were facile and apolitical; for historical and official occasions, which redeemed him with the bureaucrats; and for himself, which were kept secret and destined "for the desk drawer." He was even compelled to write music about Stalin, like the *Song of the Forests*, a cantata that praised the leader and glorified him as "the great gardener."

When World War II began, Shostakovich tried to enlist but was rejected for poor eyesight. But gradually, as government restrictions eased and his *Seventh Symphony* met with applause, he regained some of his confidence and social status. Even so, he never could speak freely and always had to endorse Stalinism and the Soviet state. And ultimately, to become the General Secretary of the Composers' Union, Shostakovich had to endure the final subjugation: joining the Communist party, an act that privately reduced him to tears and led to thoughts of suicide.

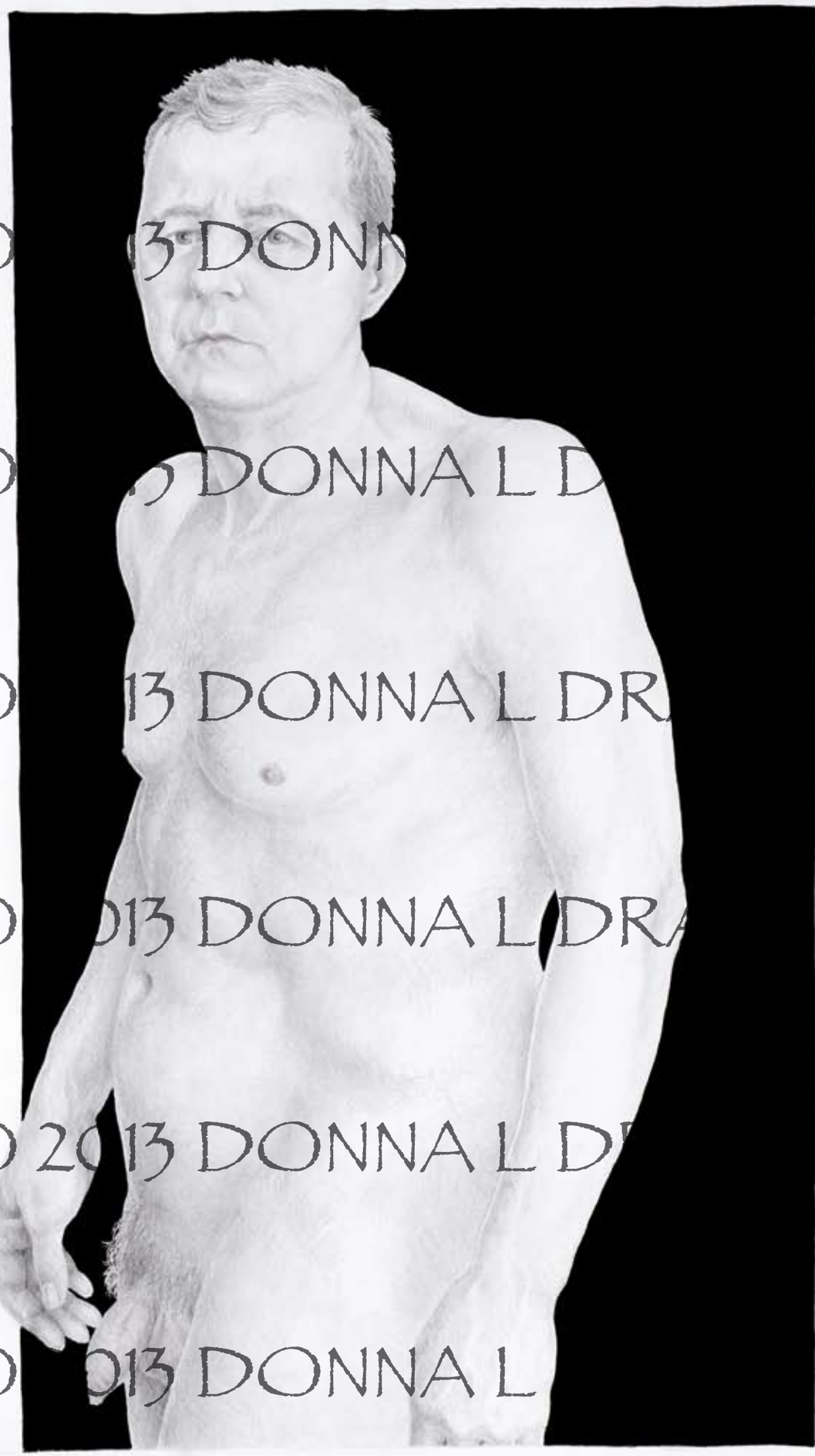
Around the same time, his health began to decline. In 1965, Shostakovich was diagnosed with polio, which crippled his hands and forced him to stop playing. He also started having heart attacks and debilitating falls. He died of lung cancer in 1975 and was buried in Moscow.

Whenever I listen to Shostakovich's music, I hear sorrow, regret, and a profound empathy for all victims of oppression, war, and political madness. I also sense a deep awareness of human frailties, as well as irony and humor. Those qualities, in addition to the many photographs and videos that exist of Shostakovich, informed this drawing. But he is not easy to portray, and this image represents my second attempt to do so.

Recommended Listening: *24 Preludes and Fugues*, *Symphony No. 13* (*Baba Yar*), and *String Quartet No. 8*

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

Naked Composer Series: *Shostakovich*, 2012, graphite and colored pencil on paper, 30 x 22 inches


© 2013 DONNA L DRAKE
© 2013 DONNA L DRAKE
© 2013 DONNA L DRAKE
© 2013 DONNA L DRAKE
© 2013 DONNA L DRAKE
© 2013 DONNA L DRAKE


© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

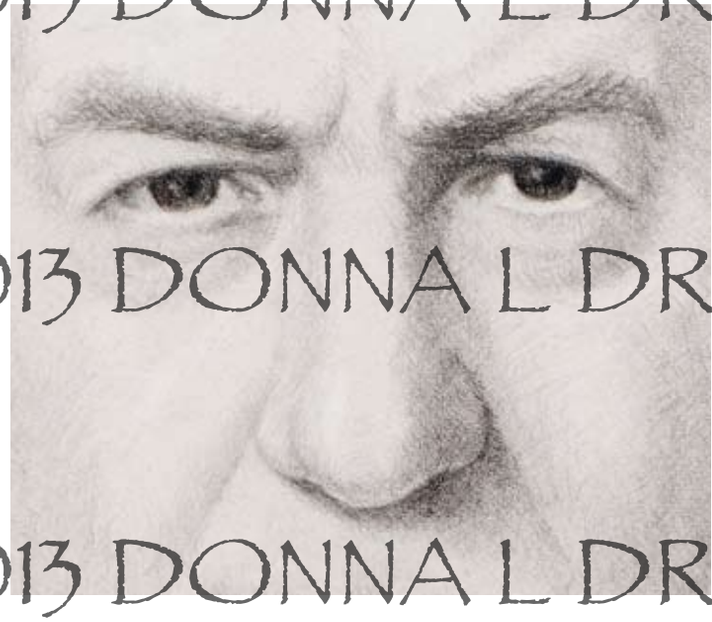
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

Benjamin Britten

English, 1913–1976

I am always surprised when people who know classical music have never heard of Benjamin Britten. A gifted composer, conductor, and pianist, Britten was revered by his peers and universally recognized as a dedicated humanitarian and an outspoken pacifist. Dmitri Shostakovich, in fact, was one of his close friends and admirers, as is Arvo Pärt, who composed a work to commemorate his death. "Why did the date of Benjamin Britten's death—December 4, 1976—touch such a chord in me?" Pärt said at the time. "I was obviously at the point where I could recognize the magnitude of such a loss. Inexplicable feelings of guilt, more than that even, arose in me. I had just discovered Britten for myself. Just before his death I began to appreciate the unusual purity of his music."

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE



© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

When Britten had his fatal heart attack, I was in college and shaken by the news. I have always sensed honesty in his works, as well as a stark, almost sacred quality. A no-nonsense Englishman, Britten explained it this way: "It is cruel, you know, that music should be so beautiful," he said. "It has the beauty of loneliness and of pain: of strength and freedom. The beauty of disappointment and never-satisfied love. The cruel beauty of nature and everlasting beauty of monotony."

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

The youngest of four children, Britten was born in Suffolk in 1913. His father was a dentist, and his mother, an amateur musician who gave him his first piano and notation lessons. Destined to become a composer, he started writing music at the age of five and became proficient on the piano and viola by the time he was ten. At 14, he began studying with the composer Frank Bridge and eventually attended London's Royal College of Music, where he studied composition with John Ireland and piano with Arthur Benjamin. Throughout his schooling, he composed prolifically and had 800 works to his name by the time he turned 17.

In 1930, he attracted international attention with his *Hymn to the Virgin* and in 1934 received a commission from the BBC for *A Boy Was Born*. The next year, he started writing film scores and became friends with the poet W. H. Auden. Then, in 1937, he met the tenor Peter Pears, who would become his life partner and collaborator. The two followed Auden to the United States in 1939, where they became acquainted with Aaron Copland, and Britten began composing song cycles for Pears to present.

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

Britten and Pears returned to England in 1942, at the height of the war, and both applied to become conscientious objectors. In 1945, Britten premiered his opera *Peter Grimes* to great acclaim in London. That same summer, he also traveled to Germany with the great violinist Yehudi Menuhin to play for the survivors of the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp, one of several humanitarian gestures Britten made during his lifetime.

With the success of *Peter Grimes*, Britten devoted the next two decades of his career to writing operas. And with such masterpieces as *Billy Budd* (1951), *The Turn of the Screw* (1954), and *Death in Venice* (1973), he became one of the leading 20th-century creators of the genre. Interestingly, his interpretations often centered on an "outsider" figure, who stood apart from the mainstream and was misunderstood by society. Inspired by Japanese Noh plays and Balinese gamelan music, he also composed such ballets as *The Prince of the Pagodas* (1957). But his finest achievement of all was the *War Requiem*, a 1962 commission for Coventry's newly rebuilt cathedral.

There are many photographs and videos of Britten performing, and I did look at them before starting this drawing. As it turned out, he proved very easy to depict. Probably because I feel as though I've known him my whole life.

Recommended Listening: *Peter Grimes*, *War Requiem*, *Death in Venice*, and *Serenade for Tenor, Horn, and Strings*

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

Naked Composer Series: *Britten*, 2006, graphite and colored pencil on paper, 30 x 22 inches


© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE


© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE


© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

Charles Mingus

American, 1922–1979

"I think my own way," Charles Mingus wrote in 1955 in his open letter to Miles Davis. "I don't think like you and my music isn't meant just for the patting of feet and going down backs. When and if I feel gay and carefree, I write or play that way or when I'm happy, or depressed, even. Just because I'm playing jazz I don't forget about me. . . . Music is, or was, a language of the emotions. . . . My music is alive and it's about the living and the dead, about good and evil. It's angry yet it's real because it knows it's angry."

A talented composer, bandleader, and instrumentalist, Charles Mingus was born in 1922 on an army base in Arizona and raised in the Watts neighborhood of Los Angeles. Both his parents were of mixed race: his mother was African American, English, and Chinese, and his father, African American and white. In his 1971 autobiography *Beneath the Underdog*, Mingus even claims his father was related to Abraham Lincoln. He also says his earliest musical influences came from singing in church and "hearing Duke Ellington over the radio."

At a young age, he played trombone and then cello. But because he was black, he could not become a symphony cellist. Instead, his teachers steered him towards jazz and the double bass, another stringed instrument requiring dexterity and fingering skills. In his late teens, he started taking lessons with the principal bassist of the New York Philharmonic and composition with the legendary Lloyd Reese. He quickly became known as a bass prodigy and during the 1940s toured the country with such bands as Louis Armstrong's and Lionel Hampton's.

As soon as he learned how to compose, Mingus began crafting complex works that often integrated classical elements with jazz. The conductor Gunther Schuller called this kind of hybrid "Third Stream." And while Mingus was not a proponent of the style, he was influenced by it, as well as by gospel, swing, bebop, and free jazz, which utilizes group improvisation. Some of Mingus's early albums, like *The Clown* and *Pithecanthropus Erectus*, helped to establish free jazz as a legitimate form and put him at the forefront of American music. Over the course of his career, Mingus recorded more than one hundred albums, wrote three hundred pieces, and performed in the United States, Canada, Europe, Japan, and South America.

A man of prodigious appetites, Mingus was prone to obesity, often smoked cigars while playing, and had five wives and countless lovers. He also had an unpredictable temper and could become physically violent with his band or even the audience. But unlike many black musicians of his era, he never succumbed to drugs or alcohol. Ultimately, though, he did contract ALS (Lou Gehrig's disease), which left him unable to use his hands to play or write. And after he died at the age of 56 in Mexico (where he had gone for treatment), his last wife spread his ashes in India in the Ganges River.

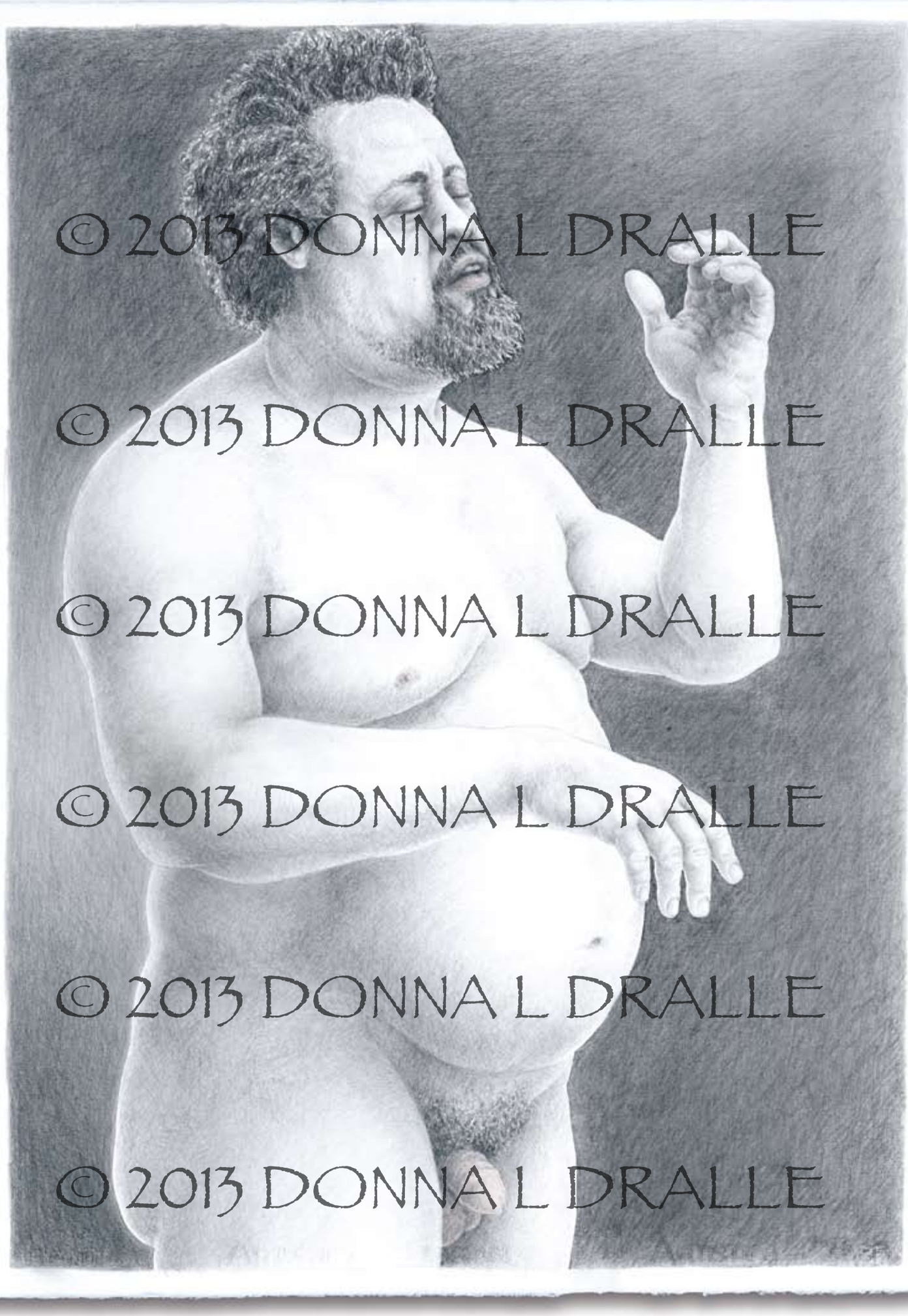
I started listening to Mingus's records early on and have been an outspoken advocate of his ever since. His powerful compositions seem to meander into chaos and then suddenly come together in stunning—and sometimes sublime—resolutions. They remain in the psyche long after hearing them and at their core question the very nature of human existence.

When I set to work on this portrait, I wanted to convey Mingus's keen intelligence and restless curiosity. Despite the many photographs and videos that were made of him, he proved very challenging to draw. But eventually, this image did emerge and shows a musical philosopher deep in thought and wrestling with his own brilliant theories.

Recommended Listening: *Ah Um*, *Meditations on Integration*, and *The Black Saint and the Sinner Lady*

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

Naked Composer Series: *Mingus*, 2011, graphite and colored pencil on paper, 30 x 22 inches


© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE


© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE


© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

John Coltrane

American, 1926–1967

Charles Mingus earned his nickname as the "Angry Man of Jazz." His contemporary John Coltrane aimed for the opposite and aspired to be "a saint." For me, Mingus has always represented the earthly and profane, whereas Coltrane seems ethereal and approached the divine. Mingus, the fighter, wanted to eradicate the discrimination, racism, and inequality he saw everywhere. Coltrane, the savior, hoped to heal people's souls and make them "happy" and whole. Both died much too young. And both used their enormous talent for those purposes and had an undeniable effect on American culture.

Known as "Trane," John Coltrane was born in 1926 and grew up in High Point, North Carolina. His father played several instruments and encouraged his young son's interest in music. As a boy, Coltrane became skilled on the E-flat horn and clarinet. While still in high school, he became enthusiastic about jazz and switched to the alto saxophone. At 16, he moved to Philadelphia, where he continued his studies at Granoff Studios and the Ornstein School of Music. In 1945, he enlisted in the military and was stationed in Hawaii, where he performed with the U.S. Navy Band.

When he returned to civilian life after the war, he joined several small ensembles. During the early 1950s, he began playing tenor sax and worked with such masters as Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie. Then, in 1955, Coltrane received a call from trumpeter Miles Davis, who hired him to be in his new group, the "First Great Quintet." He also performed with Thelonious Monk and by 1958 had developed his own distinct style, playing rapid runs of cascading notes that one jazz critic called "sheets of sound." In 1960, he recorded these compositions in his first album, *Giant Steps*, and formed his own quartet.

Like many of his peers, Coltrane also had become addicted to alcohol and heroin. After a near overdose, he decided to quit both and supposedly went cold turkey, asking his first wife to lock him in a room with only bread and water. During his painful withdrawal, he said he heard the voice of God and experienced "a spiritual awakening which was to lead [him] to a richer, fuller, more productive life. [And he] humbly asked to be given the means and privilege to make others happy through music."

To that end, he traveled extensively, sitting in with local musicians and listening to their traditional instruments and songs. He began experimenting with improvisation and different tonal modes and started incorporating Indian ragas into his works. He read voraciously as well, from the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*, *Bhagavad Gita*, and *Autobiography of a Yogi* to the Kabbalah, Bible, and Koran. He also studied astrology and Zen Buddhism and professed to "believe in all religions."

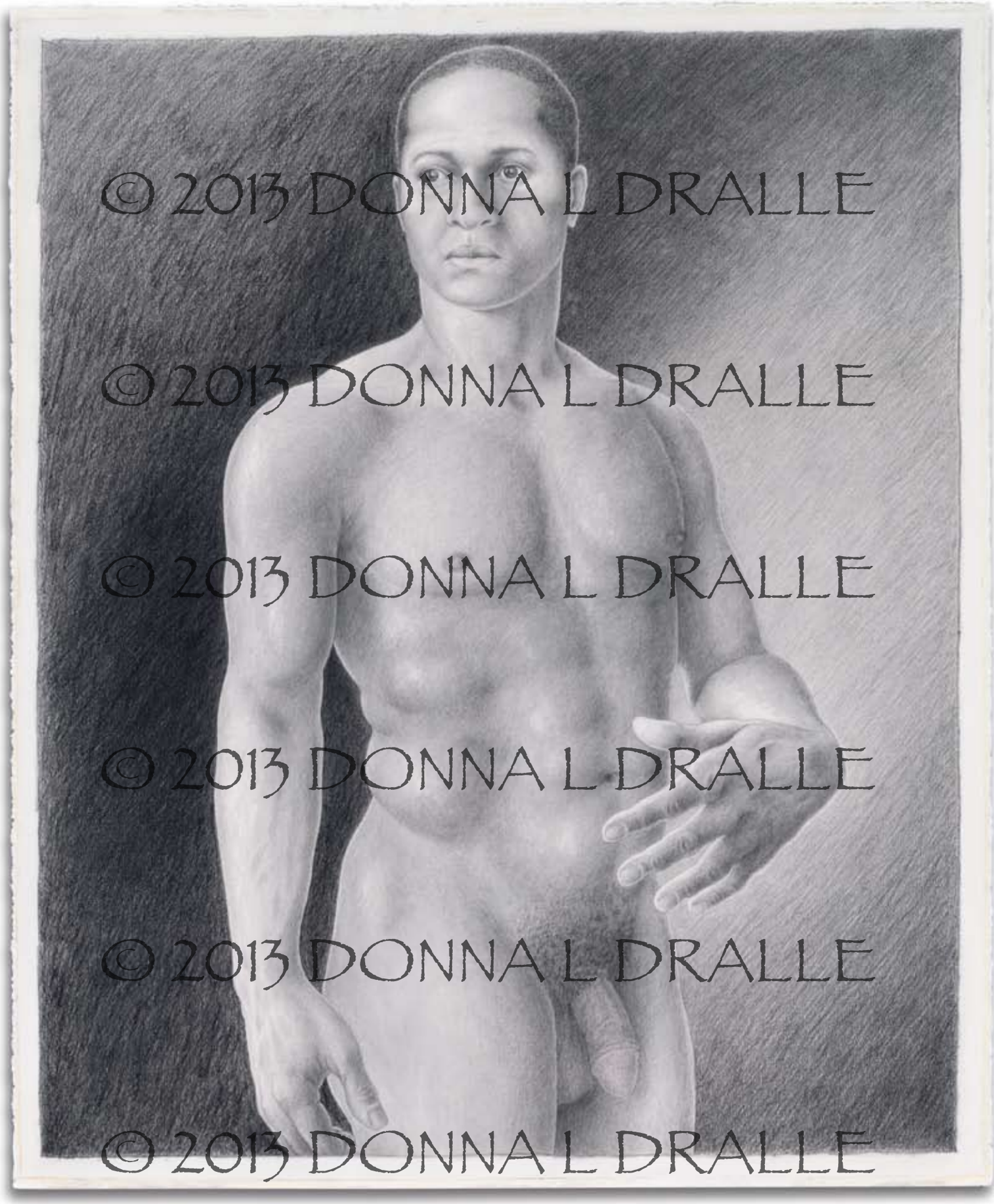
Increasingly, his music reflected his spiritual values and love of God. Later in his career, he released albums with titles like *Ascension*, *Om*, and *Meditations*, and a video from those years shows Coltrane in a trance during a performance. As he improvises, his body and countenance seem to mutate into a liquid state, as if he were being transformed and then transported to another dimension. The affectation spreads to the other musicians, and they, too, begin to transfigure themselves. Watching, you almost expect them to levitate.

Listening to late Coltrane, I hear a soul in search of that higher plane and a purity of existence. In fact, I have a live recording of Coltrane's last concert, before he died of liver cancer in 1967. Almost frightening in its intensity, the music seems to wail and keen, mourning its own demise. When I decided to draw Coltrane, I wanted to portray that older transcendent being. But in the many photographs and videos that exist, Coltrane's appearance varies radically from one to the next. And I was unable to grasp him visually until I pictured him as a much younger man.

Recommended Listening: *A Love Supreme*, *Interstellar Space*, and *Meditations*

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

Naked Composer Series: *Coltrane*, 2003, graphite and colored pencil on paper, 37 x 30 inches


© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE


© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

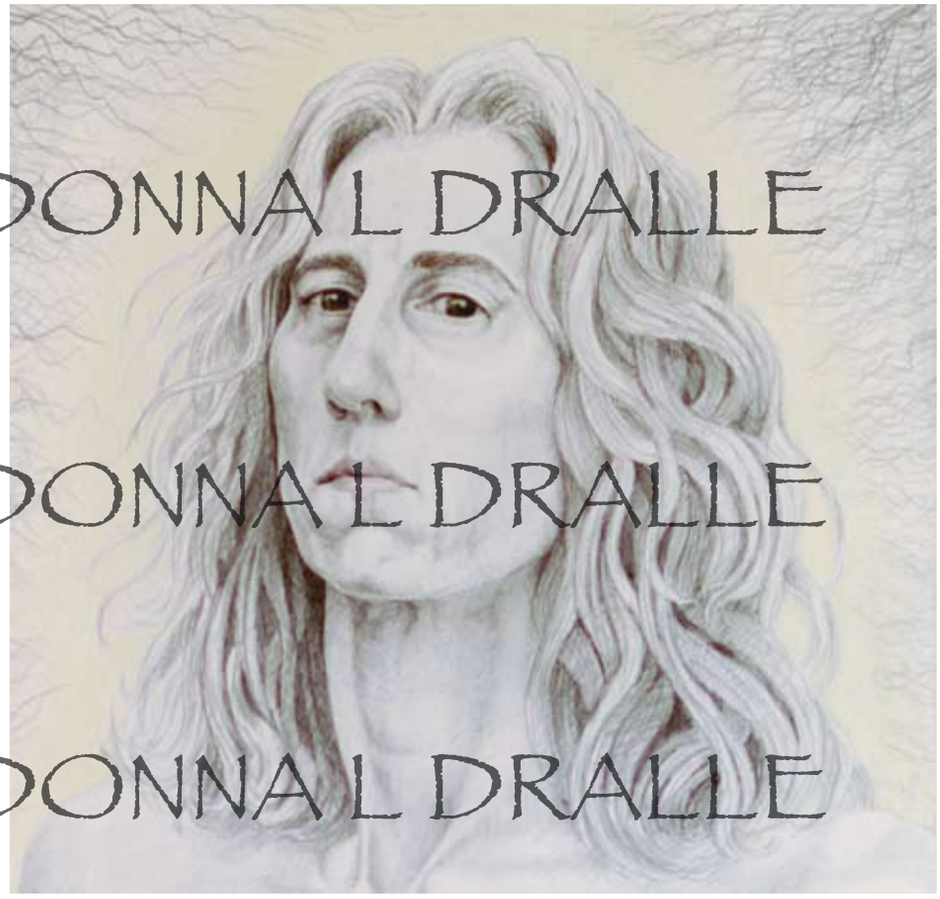
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE


© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

The Artist



Born in 1956, Donna L. Dralle grew up in Galesburg, Illinois, and began her artistic and musical studies there. As an undergraduate, she went to Austria in 1977 to apprentice with the printer Yoshi Takehashi at Salzburg College. At the same time, she attended master classes given by Herbert von Karajan, the renowned conductor of the Berlin Philharmonic. The next year, she completed her bachelor's degree in studio arts at Northern Illinois University in DeKalb.

After graduation, Dralle returned to Galesburg, where she gave sculpture workshops at Knox College and became a founding member of the Main Street Studio Artists Cooperative. She also designed murals for the Faith Baptist Church and the George Churchill middle school and showed her pieces at several regional galleries.

In the early 1980s, she moved to Minnesota, where she taught a class at Southwest Minnesota State University and started focusing on painting and drawing. But in 1987, tragedy struck: a fire destroyed her Minneapolis home and studio and all of her art, exhibition files, and record collection. Then, in 1991, she suffered another catastrophe: a life-altering back injury.

"Those years absolutely devastated me," she recalls, "especially the loss of my record albums. Physically, I couldn't make art for a long time and emotionally didn't have the strength to be at all creative. Ultimately, though, I did recover from the trauma of the fire and learned to live with the results of the injury. And in the end, it was music that healed my soul."

Eventually, she began drawing again in the mid-1990s. By the late '90s, the first *Naked Composer* emerged, with a portrait of Ludwig van Beethoven. Later came an image of Béla Bartók, which recently was chosen for inclusion in the publication *Art Takes Times Square*. She also started exhibiting her drawings in 2010, and today her pieces can be found in both public and private collections in the United States and Europe.

Dralle continues to live and work in Minneapolis and is an avid road bicyclist and a devoted Saint Louis Cardinals fan. "And like many people," she says, "I firmly believe that Baseball *is* Art."

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

Acknowledgments

I wish to express my gratitude to all of my dear friends who have offered their encouragement and support throughout this endeavor. They are too numerous to name but have given helpful suggestions along the way, and I sincerely thank every one of them. I especially wish to acknowledge my friend Treden Wagoner, who had the idea to create a book of the *Naked Composers* in the first place. And I would have been completely lost without the aid of my editor, Sandra L. Lipshultz, who patiently shepherded me through the entire process of making this publication. Her expertise and experience are truly immeasurable.

I also would like to thank all of the teachers in both the United States and Europe I had the good fortune to study with. They piqued my curiosity, encouraged my passions, and instilled a respect for learning and creativity. In addition, I will be forever grateful to my parents for their love and support as long as they both lived. My father, especially, ingrained a deep love of music in me and introduced me to classical music and jazz, as well as many other forms. I miss my parents terribly, as well as my mentors who are no longer alive. They all are very dear to me, and I will never forget them or their generosity.

And finally, I thank all of the composers who are represented here and those yet to become *Naked Composers*. I simply cannot imagine life without their extraordinary accomplishments. They represent the very best of humanity and inspire all mere mortals to dream big, listen to their hearts, and honor the great mysteries.

—Donna L. Dralle

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 by Donna L. Dralle
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55409
www.donnadralle.com
All rights reserved

Printed in

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

Essay by Donna L. Dralle
Object entries by Donna L. Dralle and Sandra L. Lipshultz
Edited by Sandra L. Lipshultz
Designed by Donna L. Dralle

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

Published by

ISBN:
Library of Congress Control Number:

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

All *Naked Composer* drawings and *Self-Portrait* © 2013 by Donna L. Dralle
End papers: Detail of a 1978 sketch of Beethoven's handwritten score for the *Fifth Symphony*
Frontispiece: Detail of Bartók drawing, 2011
Dedication (verso): Detail of Hildegard drawing, 2012
Contents (verso): Detail of Mingus drawing, 2011
Page 8: Detail of Beethoven drawing, 2012
Page 11: Detail of Coltrane drawing, 2003

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

Page 68: Detail of *Self-Portrait*, 2008, graphite and colored pencil on paper, 30 x 22 inches
Page 69: Various stages of the Hildegard drawing, 2012

The following reproductions came from *Wikipedia* and have entered the public domain because their copyrights (defined as life of the author plus 70 years) have expired:
Page 12: Frontispiece to Hildegard von Bingen's *Scivia*, mid-12th century
Page 32: Johann Theodor Lyser's caricatures of Ludwig van Beethoven, early 19th century

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

Page 40: Hans Schliessmann's caricatures of Gustav Mahler conducting the Vienna State Opera, from the magazine *Fliegende Blätter*, 1901

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE

© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE


© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE
© 2013 DONNA L DRALLE