

KITTY BRAZELTON

BIOGRAPHY

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New York City music-maker Kitty Brazelton is a non-traditional composer, *and* a traditionalist. Music is her passion since eighteen when, inspired by free jazz improvisation, she gigged with the campus acid rock band by night, while studying the alternative harmonies of medieval plainchant and ascetic 20th-c. modernism by day. Brazelton continues to sing, play electric bass and lead bands while teaching her students to hear, play and construct music of their own. A few traditions she lives by are:

- a composer is someone who provides music to serve her/his community,
- composers perform, live, on the front line, so they know what music to make,
- Americans make music in groups—ring shout, brass bands and choral praise—rock bands, salsa conjuntos, polka combos, chamber ensembles, orchestras, etc.

Among Brazelton's past bands are Hildegurls, four 21st-century NYC women composers who deconstructed the music of 12th c. abbess-composer Hildegard von Bingen with 21st c. technology at Lincoln Center Festival, and Dadadah, a nine-piece electro-acoustic rockestra whose CD *Love Not Love Lust Not Lust* was called "brilliant" ([New York Times](#)) and "impressive" ([Rolling Stone](#)). Brazelton's experimental collaboration with co-composer/technologist Dafna Naphtali in *What Is It Like To Be A Bat?* continues to break ground, their maiden release on Tzadik/Oracles forecasting the shock juxtapositional montage in today's dj-led genres—"the mixes are extreme and feral, and that is part of its bizarre appeal..." ([Boston Herald](#)).

[Los Angeles Times](#) calls her "brainy, boisterous and quintessentially downtown" while hometown [Time Out New York](#) comments: "Brazelton is a totalist composer, part of a generation that believes that there's more than one way to compose... she's stylistically inclusive because she simply wants to make interesting and original sounds."

A Doctor of Musical Arts in Composition (Columbia University), Brazelton is passionate composing opera, choral, symphonic and chamber music for groups she doesn't perform with, bringing fresh views, with fluency and intention. Her innovative chamber music for the Manhattan Brass Quintet and California EAR Unit prompted [Gramophone UK](#) to respond: "Few composers are as uninhibited in saying exactly what they want to say...a trip you're not likely to forget."

Brazelton's recent projects are headed in an even broader direction, incorporating text and message with larger performing forces and more public settings. *O Joy!* commissioned by Twin Cities choir VocalEssence for their 40th birthday celebration—"very meaningful" ([Minneapolis Star-Tribune](#)) received its New York premiere with New Amsterdam Singers and publication by Boosey & Hawkes in 2011. Long term project *Animal Tales* for coloratura, mezzo-soprano, tenor, baritone and bass soloists with children's choir, percussion and turntablist, commissioned by the Family Opera Initiative, libretto by George Plimpton performed at the Central Park Zoo. Meanwhile, *ecclesiastes: a modern oratorio*, (Innova Recordings CD) podcast on John Schaefer's WNYC "New Sounds" and was deemed eligible for Grammy nomination—receiving these Internet reactions:

"The inventiveness of her approach to the subject and the vocal and instrumental virtuosity of the intensely committed performers make Brazelton's oratorio a work that should appeal to listeners interested in...unconventional approaches to religious music."

-Stephen Eddins, [allmusic.com](#)

"Most striking and most musical of the 12 selections on the disc is "Motet," a multi-layered setting of the Byrds' 1965 single (by way of Pete Seeger's original 1959 composition) from the band's album of the same name. Brazelton gives the text a very modern choral treatment buoyed by hammered dulcimer and cello. Everything is included from Bach to Pärt. The piece is at once tender and militant, brimming with life, creativity, and wonder."

-C. Michael Bailey, blog ([About 100 words...](#))

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