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Happenings

Bitchin' freedom
Now solo, former Detroit delves deeper into musical self

By Chris Azzopardi

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Bitch doesn't want to look at her ass.

So, when "Shortbus" director John Cameron Mitchell asked the former metro-Detroit musician to shed clothes for his racy film focused on 21st-century New York, she politely passed.

"I'm glad I didn't have to look at myself in that way. Had I known how sensitive the whole thing was gonna be, I might have agreed to it," she says from New York, where she's preparing soup for herself and her girlfriend, Daniela Sea.

Tonight the politically charged musician and her female counterpart will perform a rare show as Bitch & The Exciting Conclusion, the collaborative name for her and Sea, to a packed house. Sold-out shows don't always happen so Bitch is elated.

"It makes you feel like people wanna be there," she cheers.

Now on her own (she broke away from Animal, her former musical partner and lover), Bitch has more than her fair share of oceans to cross - like relying more on herself. But there's also a newfound independence, one she couldn't pursue while in the strained relationship that dissolved personally and professionally.

"I was wanting to go into a more kind of personal place with my songs," Bitch admits, pedaling back-and-forth through a clear-cut statement. "Yeah, I definitely feel freer in a way."

Now, the flipside. Being a one-woman show has its drawbacks, especially when she has to book her own shows and work out recording schedules. It took her nearly three years to lay down tracks for her solo disc, "Make This, Break This," because she wanted to insure the album didn't take on a live vibe and she paced herself when her mind went into music overload. How'd she recover? She took a three-month tour.

"I was giving (the record) a lot of space to breathe and kind of tell me where it was going," she says.

Bitch calls the album's title track, a candid portrait of a fizzling relationship, the hardest to record. It's a tribute to what they had, and what they lost. "There was a lot of heartbreak," she admits.

Looking back, Bitch vaguely remembers the duo's first-ever gig in Ypsilanti at some now-closed cafe. After the show the two thought, "We should do this." And so they did for nearly 10 years.

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Zoom

Photo courtesy of Murray Hill.. - Bitch's split with longtime musical partner Animal gave her a newfound freedom.

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Recently, Bitch played at Pink Nightclub in Detroit with Melissa Ferrick, who spent all night driving her home post-show. After the gig, Bitch's mother, who lives in Royal Oak, met her in a Dearborn hotel room and the two yaked into the wee hours.

When Bitch graduated from college in Chicago, she traveled to Australia for six months before returning home to her mom in Royal Oak. She lived in the basement and pulled herself out of deep credit card debt by working for a violin shop and an Indian restaurant. "It was a really good time for me; it was a solitary time. I didn't have any of my old friends there. I was kind of a loner."

Now, Bitch is a reborn woman with another alias. Think J.Lo or P.Diddy. The musician's newest name: Capital b. The refined singer-songwriter and experienced thespian has more magic up her sleeve, like a screenplay she's working on with Sea, who plays Max on "The L Word." But she's hesitant to show us the trick and vaguely responds with a laugh by saying, "It's headed for greatness."

This is what we do know: Bitch began penning it before her minor role on "Shortbus" and it's not political in an obvious way. And, well, that's all.

Bitch finally spills: "It is kind of a calling to just tell this story that we want to tell and kind of encapsulate a certain feeling we have about the world. And we want to see it visually."

Bitch & The Exciting Conclusion

8 p.m. March 13

The Ark, Ann Arbor

www.bitchmusic.com

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