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## Media

- ▶ [Online Front Page](#)
- ▶ [Windy City Times](#)
- ▶ [Queer Cast](#)
- ▶ [Nightspots](#)
- ▶ [Identity](#)
- ▶ [BLACKlines](#)
- ▶ [En La Vida](#)
- ▶ [Browse Archives](#)
- ▶ [Subscriptions](#)
- ▶ [DistributionOutlets](#)

## Resources

- ▶ [Calendar Events](#)
- ▶ [Ongoing Events](#)
- ▶ [Bar Guide](#)
- ▶ [Theater Openings](#)
- ▶ [Theater Showings](#)
- ▶ [Music](#)
- ▶ [Art/Photo](#)
- ▶ [Dance](#)
- ▶ [CommunityGroups](#)
- ▶ [In Memoriam](#)

## Advertisers

- ▶ [OUT! Guide](#)
- ▶ [Classifieds](#)
- ▶ [Real Estate](#)
- ▶ [Travel](#)
- ▶ [Dining Out](#)
- ▶ [Personals](#)
- ▶ [Neighborhoods](#)
- ▶ [Advertising Rates](#)
- ▶ [Deadlines](#)
- ▶ [Place a Classified](#)
- ▶ [Contact Us](#)

## WCMG Events

- ▶ [Press Releases](#)
- ▶ [Event Photos](#)
- ▶ [Join Our Email List](#)

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## Windy City Times

**Bitch With a Capital 'B'**  
 by Amy Wooten  
 2007-03-07

Images for this article: (click on the thumbnail to see fullsize)



Bitch.

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Bitch is back, and this time she doing it all on her own.

Bitch, previously of the queer folk-punk duo Bitch and Animal, is a busy creative mind these days. She just finished up a tour with her new band, The Exciting Conclusion, after releasing her debut solo album, Make This/Break This ( Kill Rock Stars. ) The multi-talented folk star also had a lot of balls up in the air: finishing a screenplay with her longtime partner and L-Word star Daniela Sea; cooking up ideas and songs for new records; and possibly producing another musician's album. The list is seemingly endless.

Windy City Times spoke to the Renaissance woman and down-to-earth musician from her New York apartment about touring, big plans, her relationship and changes.

Windy City Times: You just finished touring with the Indigo Girls. What was that like?

Bitch: I love those women! It was really inspiring and it was completely a dream come true. I mean, I came out to Galileo [ Laughs ] in Chicago, agonizing in my Rogers Park apartment. So, it was obviously a dream come true. ...It was just everything I expected and more.

WCT: Speaking of Chicago, you're coming back to the Old Town School of Folk Music in March. Didn't you study there for a while?

B: Yes! I took classes with Andrew Bird there.

WCT: Was it fiddling lessons?

B: Yep.

WCT: It'll be fun to revisit.



B: I know! Full circle. He and I ended up being label mates because he is on Ani's [ Ani Difrancio's ] label [ Righteous Babe Records ]. He really changed me with those classes I took with him. It really set me on a whole new road.

WCT: How many instruments can you play?

B: Gosh, let's count! You know, I just wrote a new song that incorporates the keyboard, so I'll be playing a keyboard song on tour. I do play some piano—I played that in my childhood, too. I play violin, viola, the ukulele and bass. I also play this percussion instrument called the kashakas, and I play those on the record, too. That's what, six?

WCT: I know you definitely have some roots in Chicago, because you studied theater at DePaul. Do you ever miss Chicago, or when you come back, is there any specific place that you have to visit?

B: Yes. Places that I wish I had time to visit, yes. I wish I had time to go to Old Town School of Folk Music. I love that store, and just hanging out there. So, it's so cool that I'll be playing there soon. Jim's Grill on Irving Park—I don't know if that's still there. ... I always like a trip down memory lane, going through Rogers Park because I lived there for many years.

WCT: What brought you to New York, and what keeps you there?

B: Good question. You know, ... I think, it might come from having immigrant parents. I'm not sure. My parents were from England and kind of left everything behind and came to the U.S. in hopes of a better-life kind of thing.

I think I've always had this "move on" attitude. For some reason, when I graduated from college, it never even felt like an option for me to stay in Chicago. Part of me is just coming to terms with ... this psychology that I've always been this kind of, "Okay, that's over, now you move on," kind of person. So, Animal and I had started our collaboration, and we really had that young thing.

WCT: Let's talk a little bit about your girlfriend. Where did the two of you meet?

B: We met in San Francisco. I was in the Bay Area playing a queer arts festival. Sini Anderson [ founder of Sister Spit ] was curator of a series of concerts. [ Daniela ] had known Sini years ago, and I swear that Sini—well, Sini admitted to me that she was trying to pick up Daniela. [ Laughs ] She invited her to all the shows, and I was going to all of them, too, because I was part of the event. ... We kept seeing each other and kept having all these strange and awkward interactions, and finally I just laid down the law and said, "Listen, get in this car with me!" [ Laughs ] It all happened pretty quickly from there. We fell in love really quickly and it was so magical. I cancelled my flight home. ... We borrowed a friend's car and a tent and a little stove and drove along the coast together. ... It was awesome.

WCT: Creating art and music and supporting each other's endeavors is such a big part of the relationship. When did that artistic collaboration begin between the two of you?

B: I think [ it was ] right away. One of the first things we did together was play music together. She's an awesome guitarist, and I remember sitting out on her friend's porch the third day we were together, and I brought out my viola and she brought out her guitar, and we just played for a good hour. Then, after we had solidified, and said we're completely in love and don't think we can live without each other, and we started traveling together, she came on tour with me and Animal and lived in my RV with me. That was also ... part of our real collaboration, too, because we were learning how to live in this way. We began collaborating in a lifestyle right away.

WCT: How is it different being a solo artist? Did you feel that you had to reinvent

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yourself, and what are the positives to being solo?

B: Yes. I feel like I definitely had to reinvent myself, and still reinvent myself I think with every album I make. It's a goal of mine anyway, artistically, to always be trying to push myself. I'm loving it. ... It's great for me. It's a real practice of solitude and indulging myself ... to hear all of that music in my head and not have to run it by somebody else. It's really different. It's all kind of on me, which can be very stressful, but it's also very liberating and empowering.

WCT: Why the name Bitch or Capital B? Obviously the word is very powerful to you, so what does "Bitch" mean to you?

B: To me, "bitch" means a woman who isn't afraid to speak her mind and open her mouth. I hear that about women directors all the time. Whereas, when it's a man being demanding or seemingly picky or particular about what they want, they generally tend to get called a genius. That irks me.

I'm not choosing my name based out of total negative inspiration, though. [ Laughs ] It's also something that, as a woman, I struggle with that all the time about not wanting to come across as that harsh feminist or whatever. We've been given such a bad name. So, a lot of times it's a reminder for myself. That's why I like Capital B, too. It's something that's a little more palatable ... but it can still wield power.

Catch Bitch and The Exciting Conclusion when they come to the Old Town School of Folk Music, 4544 N. Lincoln, on March 23. Her new album, Make This/Break This ( Kill Rock Stars ) is out now. See [www.bitchmusic.com](http://www.bitchmusic.com) for details.

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