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## Singer's stage name not her personality

Chuck Myers • McClatchy-Tribune News

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(MCT)—The names music artists use can sometimes seem quirky and hint at a creative bent toward the unconventional.

With a moniker like “Bitch,” though, you had better be ready to deliver the goods with a generous load of panache.

The multi-faceted singer, whose true name remains a mystery to all but her close friends and family, does just that on her recent solo debut, “Make This/Break This.”

Armed with a violin, a ukulele and rhythmic charge, the charismatic artist serves up an earthy sound on the album that melds a potpourri of music styles, including rock, funk and folk.

Personal experiences and politically inspired fare supply the lyrical thrust for much of the material on the album. A sense of immediacy and time compression also come into play.

The opener, “Unstick,” relates a long-distance road trip Bitch is on with her girlfriend, and an acute sense of despondency over its impending conclusion. A driving urgency propels the up-tempo “Almost to the Water,” while the album’s title track paces buoyantly along a tick-tock chime.

**Bitch • “Make this/  
break this” • Kill Rock  
Stars**

“Make This/Break This” also exhibits pointed takes on politics, feminism and sexuality. Two numbers in particular, “Rise” and “Witches,” provide incisive perspectives on present and past events: the former is about the day the United States went to war in Iraq in 2003, and the latter offers a broader historical context.

After releasing three albums between 1999 and 2003 with her former partner Animal, she elected to give the solo route a shot.

“It was a feeling of liberation,” she said. “I was ready to go in a new direction. I was ready to feel as if I could play any song I wanted at night, and not have to talk it over with somebody else. I was ready to go a little more intimate in my work.”

With such a distinctive handle, you would almost expect that an abrasive, impertinent nature would follow. Not so. In fact, the fun-loving artist has a disarming sense of humor, and does not shy away from expressing her views and creative passions.

“Make This/Break This” offered Bitch an opportunity to tap her classical background, and expand into new musical territory.

“Some of my friends are trying to encourage me write like a straight-ahead pop song,” she said. “I don’t think of structure in a pop-song way.”

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