

Bitch makes witchy poet pop. She does it with violins and synthesizers, and the songs she writes are spectral, heartbreaking, political, and beautiful. The longstanding queer music icon has been performing for over 20 years. She grew up with a tap dancing studio in the basement of her childhood home, and began playing the violin, her first love, as a young child. Bitch first achieved notoriety as one half of the queer folk duo Bitch and Animal. The band went on to tour with Ani DiFranco, whom they caught the ears of while playing a gig at a pizza shop in Provincetown on Cape Cod. In the mid 2000s, Bitch went solo, and shared stages with the Indigo Girls, acted in the film *Shortbus*, co-wrote a song with Margaret Cho, produced two albums of her elder folk hero Ferron, and licensed her music to *The L Word*. Eight years ago, she began to weave together *Bitchcraft*, her latest record.

*Bitchcraft* was born in a move from New York City, where Bitch had lived for 15 years, to a log cabin in the woods. There was all the time in the world to make art, and it was there, in the cabin, that Bitch began to write some of the songs that would appear on *Bitchcraft*. "It gave me space to think about the biggest version of myself that I could be," she says of those early days in the cabin. The songs she wrote were a departure from anything she'd ever written before, and she began to craft huge pop tracks with the help of her trusty violin. Then, she moved to LA and *Bitchcraft* began to shapeshift again.

In the years that followed, Bitch assembled a coven to complete it. She called on Anne Preven (Beyonce, Madonna, Demi Lovato) and God-des who helped her crystalize her vision in terms of writing and production. She called on Roma Baran (Laurie Anderson) to produce the violins on "Polar Bear." She called on Melissa York (Team Dresch, The Butchies) and Faith Soloway (Transparent) to co-write a couple of the songs.

The resulting record is one that is full of glorious pop tracks that go in unexpected directions. Just take opener "You're the Man," as one such offering. Here, a strident synthesizer crashes into a drum machine, and Bitch sings about owning your own power. The song started as a poem, one that Bitch first wrote as part of a New Year's ritual with Ferron where she wrote about things she wanted to let go of and ripped them from her notebook and threw them into the fire. Meanwhile, on "Hello Meadow," electric violins coalesce with birdlike synths, and Bitch recounts industrial capitalist hell, and the attempts to find beauty outside of it. It's a song about mother nature as well as the onslaught of capitalism and its obsession with destroying the natural world. And on "Easy Target," written during the Bret Kavanaugh trials, she explores what it means to find your sense of self worth when people try to bring you down.

*Bitchcraft* is like Joni Mitchell set to a click track, it's queer Cyndi Lauper. It's neon pink, in your face, ready to hex you with its brilliance. It's an unbelievably fun record that is extremely capable of breaking your heart a little bit. It also makes you think: about the state of the world, about evil politicians, about what it means to exist as a woman, and how to find joy along the way.