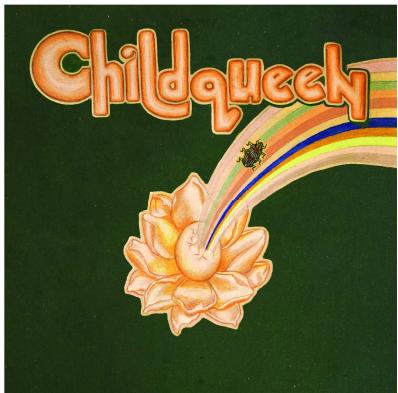




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KADHJA BONET (USA)

Childqueen

Label: Fat Possum

Release Date: 08.06.2018

Web: [kbonet.com/](http://kbonet.com/)

EPK: [irascible.ch/de/releases/kadhja-bonet/childqueen/](http://irascible.ch/de/releases/kadhja-bonet/childqueen/)

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Kadhja Bonet's second album, *Childqueen*— to be released June 8th on Fat Possum— is something of a Hero's Quest. It pried her open a bit, recorded over two years between performances to larger audiences brimming with a communal spirit, and in studios scattered throughout the globe— Paris, Berlin, Amsterdam, London, Copenhagen, and even in hotel rooms in Barcelona and Brussels.

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In the opening *Procession*, above a muted drummer's march, an unseen oracle announces to you, the listener: “*every morning is a chance to renew, a chance to renew.*” This is your first clue, setting you on a path not to treasure, nor a grail, nor even a long lost love, but highest of all, what Kadhja has christened the “*childqueen*,” that innermost self that you were truthfully and instinctively before the weight of the world came crushing in. As with her 2016 debut *The Visitor*, the songs on *Childqueen* are never casual, never ditties. Instead, they invite us into a world not wholly our own, a half-mythical atmosphere where past and future meet in a parallel, yet faraway, present. Acting as a sort of diffuse chanteuse, Kadhja's achingly lovely voice achieves what can only be described as “ambient song.” Particularly in songs like “*Delphine*” and “*Nostalgia*,” we hear the jazzier intricacies of the vocal melodies brushed soft at the edges, at times so soft they vaporize into pure mood, or merge with other instruments or with backing vocals that seem emanate from celestials bodies. And the instruments— played mostly by the polymathic Bonet herself— mix the cinematically and classically orchestral with the noticeably more synthetic. On tracks like “*Thoughts Around Tea*” or “*Another Time Lover*,” flutes, violins, guitars, drums, and bells share or trade the stage with acousmatic warbles, whooshes, and lines, each gently couching the contours of the others. By combining softer enchantments with an ever-listenable experimentalism, Kadhja has created a soundscape the listener sinks into, unplaceable in genre and decade from beginning to end.

Despite its soft tones, despite its listenability, *Childqueen* challenges us as much as Kadhja's self-description: “*I don't like calling myself an artist. I don't like calling myself a singer— or even a musician.*” This isn't just

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paradox. Kadhja came to music early through a maniacally rigorous classical training in her childhood, mastering the violin and viola, in addition to picking up the flute, guitar, and formal composition. But she abandoned classical music for wilder groves, and credits what she now creates as springing from a place of intuition and candid self-reflection rather than theory or her academic past. The Kadhja that leads us through *Childqueen* is unyielding, truth-seeking, and even mildly misanthropic, dismayed by humanity's talent for self-deception. She urges us to do better. These urges may come in rebuffs to our daily thoughtlessness, from the possible love sacrificed to business sense in "Thoughts Around Tea" to the caustic calls from the title track: "*what's the matter, don't you got a man, to tell you what you're worth to him? Where you been at Childqueen?*" At other points, her tone turns imploring, as in "Delphine," or encouraging as in "Second Wind" which serves to remind "*sometimes I forget, moss grows from my lips. I am fertile. I am rich. I am moist and mineral.*"

The lyrics and melodic lines nudge us along a path of self-discovery— or act as breadcrumbs along her own path. Everything that you hear on *Childqueen* was written, played, produced, and even mixed by Kadhja, who has always produced all her own music, insisting on a total vision that is nearly as difficult to co-create as a dream. She does confess: "*this record crushed my ego, and I'm surprised I'm still alive.*" Nevertheless, music remains for Kadhja Bonet a primarily solitary activity, one in which she can tender a connection with that innermost self, the *childqueen*. The rest of the world, if it pleases, is welcome to listen in, and join her quest.

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