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THEATER

Penny Arcade's
Bitch! Dyke! Faghag! Whore!

Sex and The Single Dominatrix

Sensory overload is an apt introduction to *Bitch! Dyke! Faghag! Whore!*, Penny Arcade's evening of elevated ecstasy at P.S. 122. Innocent audience members arrive, only to find themselves suddenly transported to ecdysiast paradise, an *Ur* go-go palace complete with ramps, video screens, come-fuck-me lights, and six exotic dancers embracing every variety of physical taste and erotic possibility. You'll want to get there early, to check out the awesome sight on stage and the lip-smacking in the house.

Miraculously, the string of character monologues with which Penny Arcade follows that eye-opening number manages to keep matters erect and moving. What else would you expect from, among others, the receptionist in a call girl agency ("We have five new student nurses for you"), a seven-year-old dominatrix into five-year-old bottoms, and a rebellious fag hag ("I don't want to watch *Funny Girl* again!"). No stone

is left unturned: "Lesbians think that if you're a bisexual woman it's because you're not trying hard enough."

For all the scattershot, amorphous format—the dancers return often, rambling/rubbing their way through the house—the central subject is serious: the censorship crisis currently facing the American arts. The larger subject—and all the world is on this stage—is sex and the swathe it cuts through our daily lives. Penny Arcade lunges after her material like a good reporter in the best kind of heat: her characters are people in the round, warts and all, a fact that keeps even her anger and aggression from descending into judgment or harangue. What we get instead is a cold-eyed assessment of the gay community, as well as its merchandising value for the censored. Best of all is the synthesis, a social critique that is both piercing—Barbie as the role model for the *Playboy* centerfold—and fearless: "Our leaders don't want people to fuck because people who fuck also think." The result is an explosion of sexual positivism. Beginning with Penny Arcade herself, I shudder to imagine more abandoned performers. Or should I say... quiver?

Bitch! Dyke! Faghag! Whore! is at P.S. 122, 150 First Avenue, through August 23.

—Otis Stuart



Donna Ann McAdams