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■ **The Penny Arcade Sex and Censorship Show**, Village Gate, 160 Bleecker St.; (212) 983-9292.

If you don't mind taking a walk on the wild side, this performance piece by Penny Arcade (real name, Susana Ventura) may titillate you even as it makes you think. You know you're paddling out of the mainstream the moment you walk into the upstairs space at the Village Gate and see go-go dancers — male and female, straight and gay — grinding away, often close to your face.

It's all a setting for Arcade, who was a teen player in Andy Warhol's *Women in Revolt* and who now has entered a plumpish middle age. Her words, though, are more provocative than ever. Arcade plays an array of characters, including a prostitute annoyed by competition from Third World women and the sexy phone voice at an escort service ("No student discounts," she tells a kid from Columbia University). She speaks of her own history as a bisexual and self-described "fag hag," then mixes in commentary on such issues as gays in the military and the new lesbian chic. At one point she strips, literally wraps herself in the American flag, then makes a speech involving so much that we *almost* forget the nudity.

Arcade's evening goes on too long — even sex can get boring — but she has plenty worth saying, and she's funny. With some judicious editing, the show could be captivating.

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The Arts

**CHRISTINE
DOLEN**

THEATER