



THE SCOTSMAN

THE SCOTSMAN 1 SEPTEMBER, 1993

Edinburgh Festival

FRINGE / REVIEWS

WAWWES

● BITCH! DYKE! FAGHAG! WHORE!

PENNY ARCADE *Assembly Rooms*

THERE are comedians on the Fringe who talk about sexuality, and there is Penny Arcade. There are lesbian stand-ups, whimsical cross-dressers, angry gays, apologetic straights. Then there is Penny Arcade, who is like all of them at once and much, much more.

By the end of the show, she has been naked for a quarter of an hour, giving an untamed monologue about sexual politics, and for at least 14 of those minutes not a soul in the Supper Room would even notice.

At the start, after six go-go dancers have bumped and ground their way through the audience, Penny Arcade comes on as a Manhattan brothel receptionist and drawing Southern prostitute, but it is only when she charts her own path as a bisexual faghag (female friend to gay men) through the past 25 years of sexual liberation, AIDS and censorship (a particular target) that her act really catches fire.

With a series of wry observations on the subtleties of life beyond the fringes of heterosexual America, she smashes her way through the dull barriers of political correctness and some of the more arcane strictures of radical feminism. OK, so some of the passion could be shot down by cold logic and some of the more detailed transatlantic references don't travel so well, but this is an act whose high-octane honesty lingers in the mind long after the punchlines from other reviews have been forgotten.

David Robinson