

Herald Sun

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A Penny for your thoughts

**Bitch! Dyke!
Faghag! Whore!**
Universal Theatre, Fitzroy

Verdict: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

By **DAMIEN
WOOLNOUGH**

IN *Bitch! Dyke! Faghag! Whore!* Penny Arcade bares her body and soul to the audience with mind-blowing results.

From the moment you enter the theatre, brushing past gyrating exotic dancers to get to your seats, you realise that this is going to be no ordinary theatre experience.

Through a series of cleverly devised monologues Arcade addresses everything from Aids to censorship, asking the audience to think about, as well as laugh, at the irony and hypocrisy in the world.

The risk of Arcade's confronting messages being seen as preaching is overcome by the brutal honesty with which she brings in experiences from her own life.

When Arcade speaks about the loss of over 200 friends to Aids, and her feelings of hatred, frustration and helplessness, you begin to wonder about the show's involvement with the Comedy Festival.

Bitch! Dyke! Faghag! Whore! operates on such a variety of levels that by categorising it as a comedy



you are ignoring its dramatic and tragic aspects.

Arcade does, however, get the audience laughing. She is in total control of the show, making sure that her positive message is received; the celebration of life's differences.

To stop the show from sinking into melancholy after an emotional moment, Arcade got most of the audience dancing on stage to Gloria Gaynor's *I Will Survive*.

Many people might feel that they have heard enough people give their views on feminism, Aids and homophobia, but Arcade's fresh and innovative theatrical approach stops *Bitch! Dyke! Faghag! Whore!* from becoming a rehash of radical views.

At one point in the show the lights are turned off as Arcade moves through the audience inviting people to speak their minds.

Most people remained silent on the night I attended, with some leaving rather than take issue with Arcade in an open forum.