

# A Penny for her thoughts

MELBOURNE  
COMEDY FESTIVAL

**A**S PENNY Arcade says in her show *Bitch! Dyke! Faghag! Whore!*, people expect much more vulgarity than she delivers.

It is part of her artistic feat to be able to include erotic dancers, nudity and a host of provocative themes without ever becoming vulgar.

Instead, her show is a quest to break down social judgments — the curse of political correctness.

*Bitch! Dyke! Faghag! Whore!* consists of a series of monologues by Arcade as she takes on a variety of roles — massage parlor receptionist, prostitute, lesbian feminist and a young runaway growing up with drag queens.



**Erotic:** Despite the nudity, Penny Arcade never becomes vulgar.

They are interspersed with exotic movements by eight dancers, either on stage together or separately in the auditorium. They greet the audience as it enters the theatre which sets the uninhibited atmosphere which is the essence of Penny Arcade.

Her candor becomes infectious as she tackles more

and more themes in her monologues. She says she was an opinionated child and she doesn't seem to have lost the gift.

Opinions flow from her about homosexuality, AIDS, homophobia, family, social mores, the US born-again Christians and political correctness.

Some have definitely been heard before, such as her pre-Susan Faludi thoughts on feminism, but many bear fresh twists which encourage people to look at things in different ways.

They are not heavy-handed, predictable, laborious or alienating to the audience. She often includes the audience to create intimate theatre without drawing on them for comic effect.

There is minimal nastiness in her commentary, because her point is not to condemn, but to allow difference.

*Bitch! Dyke! Faghag! Whore!* is a great show because it is provocative and argumentative without ever being stereotypical or losing its powerful theatrical force.

— CATHERINE LAMBERT