

The Arts

CRITICAL MATTERS



Penny Arcade: theatre as a quasi-religious cathartic experience

DON'T CRINGE, LAUGH

New York's Penny Arcade has a reputation for stomping all over politically correct thinking and is about to assault our delicate Australian sensibilities.

Jane Cornwell steps up to play

The feminine mystique is an even bigger mystery to women [than to men]. We need a new language in feminism which includes hookers, go-go dancers, transsexuals and men." After the backlash, the whiplash. Stomping over politically correct tenets, legendary New York performance artist Penny Arcade sets out to awaken both sexes to the extent of their brainwashing.

A gyrating team of erotic go-go dancers punctuates a series of confessional monologues, character sketches and passionate polemics. "You're all going to get to know the dancers very, very well," she warns. The audience, if initially inhibited by such overtly sexual displays, inevitably ends up wildly dancing. It is testimony to what Arcade calls "the transformation power of theatre".