

REVIEWS

BAD REPUTATION

CCA, GLASGOW

TO the casual observer, go-go dancers and feminism are not instantly compatible, but it is to three of these cavorting entertainers that the audience took their seats in anticipation of the performer who brought *Bitch! Dyke! Faghag! Whore!* to the Edinburgh Festival Fringe.

Penny Arcade is a woman who appears to have turned the guns in on feminism. "I've been screwed over by men all my life but it's always women who betrayed me," she maintains in this show (part of the innovative *Bad Girls* season at the CCA) made up of anecdote, song and video.

She furiously wriggles out of the constraints of political correctness. She is sick of women going on about patriarchy; going on about rape when it hasn't happened to them, or claiming to have been raped when they regretted sleeping with a man.

There are two types of "bad", she points out: the kind that sold Michael Jackson's albums, and the kind that sunk his career. Her monologue is shot through with this perceptive, deeply-rooted and irreverent humour that kicks against the art establishment as much as against the cult of victimisation among women.

As a personality, Arcade is irresistible. She sounds as if she has gone through so much, and emerged with such integrity, that one is tempted to bow in humility to this symbol of the enduring dignity of the female sex. So powerful, so reasonable that you long to agree with everything she utters.

Towards the end of the show, the dancers were sent into the crowd to shake their stuff. This, Arcade assured us, comes from a long tradition of erotic performance art and is one of the most beautiful things a woman can do. OK, so everything *else* I could agree with.

Peter Jinks