

BEAT

comedy reviews

**BITCH!DYKE!
FAGHAG!WHORE**

Belvoir St Theatre

It's doubtless that every review you read of Penny Arcade's show will mention her vibrant personality, her boundless energy, her childlike enthusiasm for not only her chosen 'occupation' but for life itself, and not only her own life but everybody's, and that includes people she hasn't met yet... you get my drift.

She's the type of person that loves to share her experiences with others, to paint in such vivid colours her upbringing, various crossroads of her life, her closest friends and formative experiences.

And for the most part, the audience is lapping it up. Naturally, the fairly candid nature of her performance begs for widely varied reactions: When I saw the show last year, I took a relatively non-theatre friendly type along who then spent the whole show passionately voicing his approval, he was so impressed; this time round, a friend actually left half-way through the show, claiming that it was little more than a glorified political argument for homosexuality. But this is what Arcade wants - she actually encourages vocal participation, and at one point turns the lights off and walks among the audience, talking with people at random.

Extreme reactions aren't only our territory though - apparently in Vienna a woman wouldn't stop commenting on how bored she was, until two queens dressed in nurses drag from the audience got up and physically removed her, claiming, 'It's an emergency!' It's moments like these that separate an Arcade show from any other. Although the show is carefully scripted, there are instances that could result in anarchy, were we not so conditioned into sitting down and shutting up.

This is a show that takes on many performance styles - theatre, stand-up, lecture, forum (kind of like Oprah, but smart and with street cred), cabaret... even a dance party thrown in for good measure. But as she said herself, a journo can't quite put into words what the atmosphere of the event was like to someone who hasn't seen it themselves, so stop the apathy and go!

PENNY KOUTRAS