

# Monologues' message rings true

## REVIEW

### THE VAGINA MONOLOGUES THEATRE INQ

THEATRE INQ's new production is funny, poignant, insightful and confronting; masterfully directed, staged and performed; a must-see for men and women alike.

*The Vagina Monologues* is the brainchild of playwright Eve Ensler, who conducted interviews with over 200 women, turning these into monologues on all subjects "down there" – the beauty of embracing sexuality, the wonder of birth, the trauma of assault, and the glory of embracing who you truly are.

Director Terri Brabon pieced together Theatre INQ's version by selecting monologues and segues from Ensler's works, so the individual stories merge together as a larger, cohesive whole.

The success of the production hinges on the performance of the nine lead women, and each was outstanding. The characters portrayed in each monologue were commanding, realistically drawn, and fully fleshed out in voice and physicality, which is a testimony to both the skill of the actors and the



**OUTSTANDING:** The nine-strong lead female cast members of Theatre INQ's production of *The Vagina Monologues*.

director. Part of the delight of the show is wondering what story is coming next, so I won't give individual stories away.

For a show of this nature, it would have been easy to diffuse the tension by overly leaning into comedy, inviting the audience to laugh at the performer, but not once did this

occur. Instead, the comedic moments rang true; there were devastating beats of silence; there were moments where you could almost feel the women in the audience sighing together in a feeling of shared experience and understanding.

The cast were ably supported by five of the male company of Theatre

INQ, who formed The Pink Tacos, a drum-keys-guitar-bass-assorted brass plus vox ensemble in pink ties and pussyhats.

The band eased transitions between individual stories, amped up the audience, and – in their quiet and attentive focus on the leads – very much supported and empowered the

women treading the boards, which was a nice touch.

As usual, the staging was seamless – the transitions were so slick that by the time you realised your attention had been diverted – if you did realise at all – the cast had neatly reset the stage into a different formation.

This also helped break the feeling of each woman being only one character or one experience, but instead suggested they were part of a greater, all-encompassing womanhood.

Sound and lighting enhanced the performance without distracting from the subject.

If going to see a show called *The Vagina Monologues* makes you feel vaguely uncomfortable because of the word "vagina", then see it for exactly that reason.

Why is it that this word, and all it relates to, is so taboo?

It is time both men and women crashed through the invisible wall and discussed vaginas openly, freeing women all over the world from the myths, the fear, the shame and the silence.

*The Vagina Monologues* runs until Sunday, December 2. Limited tickets are available through Theatre INQ's website.

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