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Sisters Getting in Touch With Their Funny Bones

By ANITA GATES

"The Vagina Monologues" started 30 minutes late. At 7 on Saturday night, when the curtain should have been going up at the Hammerstein Ballroom, the sidewalk outside was still packed with audience members trying to get in. The crowd was, despite the best efforts of the police officers on duty, spilling onto and into the middle of West 34th Street.

There seemed to be no movement forward. People expressed frustration and traded tips on the best ways eventually to get inside. "Mom," one young woman called out, "you have to stand in the street and go in through the middle." Eric Bogosian stood off to the side of the crowd, hands in the pockets of his black leather jacket, and shrugged, saying he figured he'd get in eventually. The show was, someone had told

me, the hottest ticket in town.

Could be. There was some serious star power inside, including Glenn Close, Whoopi Goldberg, Susan Sarandon, Lily Tomlin, Winona Ryder and Callista Flockhart, who plays everybody's favorite heart-on-her-sleeve television lawyer, Ally McBeal. What I couldn't figure out was how Eve Ensler, a low-profile playwright and poet, had talked all this Hollywood feminist glamour into being in her show. Yes, it was a benefit for groups that are trying to end violence against women, but the world is full of good causes, and there's a benefit every night.

The whole thing seemed unlikely. First of all, the idea was so 70's. Women celebrating their bodies, overcoming shame induced by parents who weren't comfortable with the real names of body parts, getting in touch with their primal power and exulting in their sexuality, whatever form that might

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