

# Comic to tragic character range is in their blood

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## ON STAGE

The world premiere of Lisa Citore's "Bloodlines" at Center Stage Theater was an event unlike any other in town Friday night. From the opening festivities beforehand, with wine, hors d'oeuvres and live music, to the rich, evocative tapestry of words and movements woven into the show, to the lively pop of the champagne cork afterward (with strawberries and chocolate truffles, natch), it was a fantastic party no one seemed to want to leave.

For the stage, Ms. Citore created 13 monologues, each in a different character and each based on a true story. In this way, "Bloodlines" is similar to "The Vagina Monologues," Eve Ensler's highly acclaimed, popular one-woman show. However, the stories in "Bloodlines" focus on women's monthly "moon time" and the emotional, physical and social baggage that comes with it. To do this, Ms. Citore used four actresses to tell

the stories, one of which was told from one man's perspective.

Megwyn White may well be the most versatile of the actresses, embodying the characters of an overbearing Girl Scout leader, a rebellious corporate drone, a survivor of sexual abuse, and a man relating his experiences with menstruating women — all with great courage and passion.

Cornelia Corbett also was a strong presence onstage, portraying a lesbian telling the story of her sexual awakening at a slumber party, a no-nonsense executive, and, in perhaps the most confrontational piece of the evening, as a young woman with high expectations for the man in her life and lofty ideals for society in general. Be forewarned: this is not just women talking about their periods; this is women talking dirty.

Samantha Bonavia shone with a quieter intensity, bringing perfect

comedic timing to her turn as a wife and mother whose PMS inspires a revolutionary act. She also portrayed a menopausal Indian woman explaining the tradition of the red dot painted with menstrual blood on her forehead, Sufi beliefs and the timeless mystical spirit of the Blood Woman.

Olivia Gutkin, the youngest of the actresses at 21 years old, demonstrated her gift for combining comedy with sexual topics, as she portrayed a girl hoping to get lucky in one of the funniest vignettes of the evening.

Between monologues, dancers provided a visual counterpoint to each emotion-rich barrage of words, giving the audience a chance to rest and regroup before the next. This was brilliant, as the spoken pieces may have been too much to digest if presented back-to-back.

The dancers — Holly Frejja, Heather Shea and Joanne Terry — exhibited grace, depth and versatility of styles, costumes and props. Especially fitting was the opening piece, where, dressed in white, the three

dancers tossed a big red ball back and forth, crying "I don't want it!"

Onstage were spinning poi balls that glowed red in the dark and huge red Isis wings. Ms. Terry sported a gorgeous dragon mask created by Melissa Demeter-Ramsay, while doing a bit of belly dance. Special guest dancer Pedro Galeana performed a flirtatious duet with Ms. Shea, and later a playful, capoeira-style duet with Ms. Terry.

The stage design and lighting were simple, but effective, and musicians offstage played a variety of instruments, including the didgeridoo, djembe drums and rattles.

This evening of dance and theater is hard to beat. As an exploration of a topic often shrouded in darkness, "Bloodlines" is both comic and deeply emotional, and always honest. Kudos to Ms. Citore and all involved for bringing it into the light.

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