

**The Vagina Monologues** is an episodic play written by Eve Ensler which ran at the Off Broadway Westside Theatre after a limited run at HERE Arts Center in 1996.

Ensler originally starred in the production; when she left the play it was recast with three celebrity monologists. The production has been staged internationally, and a television version featuring Ensler was produced by cable TV channel HBO. In 1998, Ensler and others, including Willa Shalit, a producer of the Westside Theatre production, launched V-Day, a global non-profit movement that has raised over \$75 million for women's anti-violence groups through benefits of The Vagina Monologues.

The Vagina Monologues is made up of a varying number of monologues read by a varying number of women (initially, Eve Ensler performed every monologue herself, with subsequent performances featuring three actresses, and more recent versions featuring a different actress for every role). Every monologue somehow relates to the vagina, be it through sex, love, rape, menstruation, female genital mutilation, masturbation, birth, orgasm, the variety of names for the vagina, or simply as a physical aspect of the body. A recurring theme throughout the piece is the vagina as a tool of female empowerment, and the ultimate embodiment of individuality.