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Dating in the Next Millennium: Same as It Ever Was

By Christina Talcott

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Anyone who doesn't see dating in the District as theater of the absurd hasn't been out there lately. The singles scene in our transient city is a ludicrous mix of ambition, sex, politics and moving vans, so it's natural that the game of love finds its way onstage. Playwright Callie Kimball sets her new comedy, "*May 39th*," in Washington, circa 3006. She combines futuristic fantasy with a *plus ça change* philosophy, her play adding up to a hopeful vision tinged with dark humor.

Kimball's characters, Louisa and Sam, meet online at a virtual-reality bar, then make a low-tech leap: "They decide to meet in person, which is kind of risky for them," she says. "They have a one-night stand, and the next morning they have to get to know each other."

Kimball – who writes a blog called Luckyspinner.com – says she had long wanted to write something futuristic. In "*May 39th*" her imagined future is a technologically enhanced version of the present. "The technologies we have, even though they tend to isolate people, they also really make people connect," she explains. With a millennium's worth of techno-glut, could it really be so different?

The future, according to Kimball, is a place filled with clones, where a country called Japandia is on the warpath in Asia and a fast-food chain (Mac Universe) continues to exert economic dominance. But when it comes to the human heart, the landscape looks strikingly familiar.

Kimball says forging connections is a major reason she's participating in the Fringe Festival – to meet other artists who will collaborate on new projects and explore new worlds. As for her play's message, Kimball declares, "There's always, always hope. No matter how bleak things seem, there's always hope."

MAY 39TH Friday at 5, Saturday at 9, Thursday at 6, July 28 at 9 and July 29 at 8. At the Touchstone Gallery. \$15.



Louisa (Stephanie Burden) and Sam (Dustin Loomis) navigate the ever-hellish world of dating in the futuristic "*May 39th*," by Callie Kimball, in back. (Mark Finkenstaedt Ftwp-Mark Finkenstaedt)