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LULU FABULOUS

By Callie Kimball

Directed by Bridget O'Leary

Produced by Phoenix Theatre DC

At 1409 Playbill Café to May 28

Lulu is not, strictly speaking, fabulous in Phoenix Theatre DC's *Lulu Fabulous*, but she's certainly perky and plucky. Also single and smart and determined to find her way in the world, even if finding her way means abandoning the dating scene in Washington for the less promising wilds of Maine in winter. It's easy to understand why Lulu (Mary C. Davis) wouldn't feel tied to D.C., given the losers she generally falls for and the hot-yoga sessions that stand in for her social life. And if Maine offers little besides distant family connections and an incentive to reconnect with her troubled mother, well, she's not doing much else that seems to matter.

D.C.-based Callie Kimball has a bright way with a line and a vivid imagination for characters, and in a perfect world that would make her a playwright. But while you have to admire her ability to generate laughs from insult-spitting Siamese fighting fish (Alex Perez and Patrick Bussink, flapping silk fins for all they're worth) and the World Trade Center crash ("Don't you think the folks at 7-Eleven are happy it didn't happen in July?"), she is not, in *Lulu Fabulous*, doing anything that could really be called playwriting. Rather, she has assembled an amusing series of sketches and allowed Bridget O'Leary to stage them in a manner suggesting that her title character is a homegrown stage incarnation of Bridget Jones, minus the diary. The mostly female opening-night crowd signaled its approval with much laughter and the occasional heartfelt sigh.

Bob Mondello