

# Directors Lab Hopes to Spur Discussion and Production

BY CARRIE L. KAUFMAN

Elizabeth Margolius and Karin Shook met in New York. Both live in Chicago. And both had gone east last summer to participate in Lincoln Center's director's lab. The experience, said Margolius, "opened up a world of possibilities." It also left her and Shook wondering why Chicago directors couldn't have such an experience. So, in true Chicago theatre style, they decided to make one.

Margolius, a freelance actor and director, and Shook, the artistic director of Tripaway Theatre, have created Chicago's first-ever Director's Lab. The lab is a three day event full of discussions, staged readings, showcases and a good, old-fashioned clambake with directors and designers.

The goal for the Chicago lab is three-fold. First, said Margolius, they want to create a space for directors to talk. "We hope that all of us together in the room will create some dialogue," she said. That dialogue includes discussions with Lincoln Center dramaturg Anne Cattaneo and Goodman artistic director Robert Falls, speakers like Sheldon Patinkin and new League CEO Deanna Shoss, and workshops with people like Moving Dock's Dawn Arnold and director Kimberly Senior.

Second, said Margolius, the lab wants to showcase new work and help directors and writers hook up. Allen Chambers of Theatre Building Chicago will be on hand with a showcase and discussion of new musical work and how directors might approach it. Chambers will also be part of a panel discussion on new work, which will also include Chicago Dramatists artistic director Russ Tutterow, Victory Gardens associate artistic director Sandy Shinner, Alex Levy from Pegasus Players and Bailiwick artistic director David Zak. There will also be a reading of a new play, Neill E. Shanahan's *Mandatum*.

The third goal is to bring together directors and designers. To that end, they're throwing a party. The Saturday night clambake will allow stage managers and designers to present themselves and their work to directors new and old.

The event won't just be peopled with young directors looking for a break, said Margolius. "We've had responses from theatre professors to artistic directors and all the way up," she said.

At the end of the process, Margolius and Shook will put together a directors resource guide in the style of Act One Reports. And the last agenda item for the event, itself, is to talk about future directors labs.

The Directors Lab will take place Nov. 4, 5 and 6 at Stan Mansion, 2408 N. Kedzie (just north of Fullerton). Registration fee is \$25 and participants must register in advance. Call 773/490-3700 or e-mail [directorslabchicago@yahoo.com](mailto:directorslabchicago@yahoo.com) for more information.

Go online to [www.performink.com](http://www.performink.com) for a complete schedule of the Chicago Directors Lab.