

SF Bay Guardian, March 17-23, 2004

The Bright River *Transparent Theater*, 1901 Ashby, Berk; (510) 644-2204, www.epicarts.org or www.timbarsky.com. \$12-20. Thur/18-Sat/20, Thur/25-Sat/27, Thur/April 1-Sat/April 3, 8pm.

Writer-musician-performer **Tim Barsky** and company take you to the other side with a committed piece of underground theater that refashions the Jewish storytelling tradition in a fusion of hip-hop beats, jazz-inspired improvisation, and slam-style lyricism presented by **Epic Arts**. In Barsky's noir-inflected story line, registering the class perspective of the multiethnic and transnational generation that was sent off to Iraq, an afterworld gumshoe named Quick finds himself assigned to track down and retrieve a young suicide who has cut ahead in the queue to eternity. First stop is her boyfriend, a former US soldier now waylaid at a bus stop called Purgatory. Musicians Jessica Ivry, Shree Shyam and the phenomenal human beat box Andrew Chaikin join Barsky in creating a cool and hypnotic bed of sound over which Barsky's inspired phrasing flows brightly like the river separating this life from the next. If the latter looks a hell of a lot like a fevered-dream version of the former, it's because the odyssey is more like a journey through the looking glass. (**Avila**)