

# stage

**NEW**

*The Baby Killers/Dream Theatre Company*  
*Doubt/LaSalle Bank Theatre*  
*High School Musical/Allstate Arena*  
*Hot 'n' Throbbing/Pine Box Theater*  
*Josh Blue/Nic Theatre*  
*Turandot/Lyric Opera*  
*Visions of Light/Atallee Judy*  
*Young Playwrights Festival/  
Pegasus Players*

**RECOMMENDED**

*Selected stage listings and reviews appear below. To submit listings e-mail [calendar@newcity.com](mailto:calendar@newcity.com). We do not guarantee that all submitted listings will appear in print. For expanded listings, visit [www.newcitychicago.com](http://www.newcitychicago.com).*

NEW AND NOTEWORTHY SHOWS

PLAYS

**The Baby Killers**

For some, melodrama is a pejorative. For the imaginative minds behind Dream Theatre Company it's a passion, not to mention a performance style—rarely seen on the American stage yet rarely executed as well as it has been done here—that drives “The Baby Killers,” playwright and Dream Theatre artistic director Jeremy Menekseoglu’s strange yet engrossing new play at the Side Project in Rogers Park. Although the story, set within a dystopian “days of future past” society in which the underprivileged masses toil and die for the privileged few, sounds like horror, the work is more admirable as homage. With its thematic nods to Fritz Lang’s “Metropolis” and the industrial revolution, its central melodramatic narrative involving displaced orphans, 1930s American cinema (the character Famous Fay is a film star as well as one of the “chosen”) and a brilliant soundtrack comprised mostly of late 1930s standards like “Run Rabbit Run” and “It’s a Hap-Hap-Happy Day” (and heard in ironic counterpoint to the beautifully rendered stage pictures and proceedings), “The Baby Killers” is remarkable for its ability to simultaneously evoke and pay tribute to these many cultural influences. Cumulatively the playing style, visuals, soundscape and intentionally manipulative music more than compensate for a thin script that lacks both a main protagonist (is it the story of Annabelle and Reuel’s tragedy or Fay’s redemption?) and thematic point of view (the strongest is something about the value of a human life). Ultimately, this inchoate blend of science fiction, melodrama, expressionism and the macabre lingers in the imagination like a strange dream, whereas with a title like “The Baby Killers,” I was hoping for the theatrical impact of a nightmare. Still, given Chicago’s plethora of offerings on any given night, you’re unlikely to see anything like this anywhere else. (Fabrizio O. Almeida) The Side Project, 1439 W. Jarvis, (773)552-8616. Thu-Sat 8pm/Sun 7pm. \$10-\$15. Through Feb 4.