

# Cranked Review - The Vancouver Province

D8 | E-LIST | THE PROVINCE

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## Jessie-nominated play looks at addiction to crystal meth

**GREEN THUMB THEATRE:** Audiences respond to non-preachy depiction of the consequences of drug addiction



Kyle Cameron plays crystal-meth addict Stan for Green Thumb in *Cranked*.

### On stage

#### **Cranked**

**Where:** Croatian Cultural Centre, 3250 Commercial Dr.  
**When:** Tomorrow, 7 & 9 p.m.  
**Tickets:** \$10 suggested donation

BY LYNN MITGES  
 STAFF REPORTER

When Kyle Cameron started playing the role of a crystal-meth addict in *Cranked*, he wasn't ready for the consequences.

Raging applause. Tears of understanding. Hoots of approval. Standing ovations. And people who are grateful for a non-preachy depiction of the consequences of addiction beyond the criminal act.

*Cranked* is staged again tomorrow at the Croatian Cultural Centre and is one of the productions invited to the Magnetic North Festival in Ottawa, where it runs June 6-10, and then gets set to tour North America in the fall and into 2008.

After 130 performances, Cameron is still in awe of the

Green Thumb production that has allowed him to give himself to a role that is exhausting, but rewarding.

*Cranked* toured throughout the province last winter, sometimes to communities with as few as 10 in the audience. Cameron says the reaction was always positive, mostly overwhelming.

When he first learned about the role, Camerson says he felt a huge responsibility, an urge to try to fix the meth problem and to save people.

"I realized I can't do that. I can't have that as my focus," he says. "But what I can do as an actor is bring myself 100 per cent to the story every time. I can get their attention, tell the story and get them to think about what is going on. Then we're doing our job."

Playwright Michael P. Northey says the devastation of crystal meth is what is so striking — that, and how many people are affected by it.

Northey was commissioned by Green Thumb to create the work and his own experiences figured largely into the piece. He bare-

ly made it through high school at Queen Elizabeth school in Surrey, surrounded by drugs and kids behaving badly.

"I've stolen cars. I've lived in that criminal element — and I had to draw on that," he says. But he didn't do meth.

"You do it once and that's pretty much it," Northey says. "My goal was to show there are other consequences. It steals your soul — you cease to be able to make decisions. That's what scares me — that instant addiction."

Using dialogue and rap shakes up the presentation, with music by Kyrios and lyrics by Stylust, which gives a vernacular, street feel to the story.

Northey hopes the play sparks action — not against the junkies, but against those manufacturing meth. "If they just paid more attention to meth labs," he says.

"This is by far the most rewarding thing I've ever written," says Northey.

The play is up for a Jessie Award and Green Thumb has garnered 10 nominations overall. The Jessies will be announced June 18.

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