

# Cranked Review - The Ottawa Citizen



Friday ✕ June  
8 ✕ 2007

## Cranked up over Cranked

**Catherine Lawson**

The Ottawa Citizen

*Friday, June 08, 2007*

Crystal meth is scary stuff. It's cheap and almost instantly addictive. It ravages the body and damages the mind in record time. No addiction is ever easy to shake, but crystal meth is a particularly ruthless enslaver.

I know this because I just saw *Cranked*, a cautionary tale about the drug's dangers, from Vancouver's Green Thumb Theatre. As written by Michael P. Northey, *Cranked* is designed to scare the crap out of high school kids. Whether it's effective as a drug aversion technique, I cannot tell. *Cranked* is, however, very good theatre.

The production is in Ottawa as part of the Magnetic North Theatre Festival, and tells the story of 17-year-old Stan, a recovering crystal meth addict. He's also a talented rap artist and a sulky kid upset by his parents' divorce. In other words, he's a fully-realized character, which makes his downfall compelling and painful to watch.

In just a little over three-quarters of an hour, we see this once cocky kid descend into paranoid hallucinations. It's vivid imagery, etched even stronger by Kyle Cameron's performance, especially when he twitches helplessly in withdrawal.

*Cranked* comes in an authentic-looking package. The music, by Vancouver artists Kyprios & Stylus, is rap and hip hop. There's a DJ (Joel Etkin) working the turntable, lighting effects by Martin Conboy and a set by Justus Hayes that serves as a backdrop for video close-ups of Cameron's face. Director Patrick McDonald maintains the pace, which is as insistent as the beat of the music.

*Cranked* is never preachy, but the information about crystal meth does not always fit comfortably into its dramatic framework.

These moments are few, however. Most of the time you will be so caught up in the story you'll forget this play's first purpose is to scare kids straight.

*Cranked* continues to June 12 at Great Canadian Theatre Company, 910 Gladstone Ave. Tickets & times, 613-755-1111.