



A theater piece with Broadway and operatic music,  
including an important message about methamphetamine prevention by Doug Nagel and Sandi Rabas

Presented by

RIMROCK  
*OPERA*  
*of Billings, Montana*

*The Story*

Kurt Gregory is among three final contestants competing for two remaining spots in the national finals of *American Opera Idol*, (a singing competition) held in Hollywood, California, one month later. When he is not chosen, he befriends another contestant, Jess Robinson, about the stress he's under. Kurt tells Jess that his brother has been incarcerated for methamphetamine abuse. Not knowing anything about the drug, Jess asks Kurt to explain some details about it. Her support helps Kurt get through this difficult time.

*The Settings*

- Scene 1: On stage at the Regional Finals in Billings, Montana
- Scene 2: Back stage directly following the Regional Finals
- Scene 3: Coaching room at the finals, Hollywood, California
- Scene 4: Backstage stage directly following the National Finals

Duration: **Approximately 27 minutes**

## *The Cast*

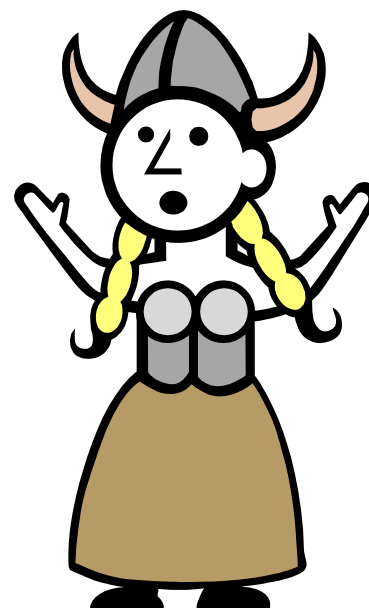
Kalee Korber	Master of Ceremonies	Michelle Shannon
Lucia Stefanno	International Judge	Lisa Day
Jan Ferguson	Opera Company Judge	Louisa Wilkinson
Amanda Peacock	International Singing Judge	Maria Day
Kurt Gregory	Contestant #1	Matthew Wilkinson
Your Name	Contestant #2	From your school
Jess Robinson	Contestant #3	Jocelyn Bjornstad
Rowena Jones	Finals Contestant	Maria Day
Twyla Whittaker	Finals Contestant	Louisa Wilkinson
Sandi Rabas	Orchestra Director	Herself

### **WHAT'S OPERA, DOC?**

Opera is all the arts wrapped up in one cool package—music, dance, drama with stage settings, costumes and an orchestra. Opera sings a story. In a movie, characters say and do things. In an opera, characters sing their passions – joy, sorrow, hope, and despair. Opera is very similar to Broadway except that opera singers are not amplified. They project only through using their own resonance. Musical theater performers use small microphones placed in their clothing or hair to amplify their voices.

In American Opera Idol, however, the Master of Ceremonies uses a microphone for announcing only. Opera singers are “athletes of the voice” – trained to sing notes that will project throughout the theater without any electronic devices.

Another difference between operas and musicals is that the action in musical theatre is usually spoken, with songs describing a character’s feelings about the situation. In opera, nearly everything is sung.



### **ABOUT THE AMERICAN OPERA IDOL CAST**

When American Opera Idol comes to your school, one student or faculty member will be selected to participate in the show. The following explains what type of participant is needed:

This student or Music teacher will play the role of Contestant number 2. This participant needs to be a singer and must know a song, that they will sing during the show. S/he can be chosen by the music teacher, or can be the music teacher. S/he will sing a selection of his or her choice, preferably a song from Broadway, but not necessary. The song must be memorized. There will also be dialog lines to read, but only a few. A script will be Emailed ahead of time to you and your Music teacher. The tour cast will arrive 1.5 hours before the 1st show to rehearse with your selected participant.

### **FACTS ABOUT METH**

Methamphetamine (meth) is a highly addictive synthetic stimulant that affects the pleasure centers of the brain. It is considered even more addictive than heroin. Meth is sometimes referred to as “Speed,” “Chalk,” “Ice,” “Crystal,” “Glass,” “Crank,” “Yaba,” “Fire,” “Tina,” and “Tweak.”

Meth releases high levels of the neurotransmitter dopamine, which stimulates brain cells, enhances mood and body movement and regulates feelings of pleasure. With repeated use, meth can “turn off” the brain’s ability to produce dopamine, leaving users unable to experience any kind of pleasure from anything other than more and more meth.

### TOXIC CHEMICAL INGREDIENTS

Meth is derived from amphetamine, and is commonly made using the base chemicals ephedrine or pseudoephedrine found in over-the-counter medicines. Other common household products can be added to make meth, including: acetone (nail polish remover), iodine, anhydrous ammonia (fertilizer), hydrochloric acid (pool chemicals), lithium (batteries), red phosphorus (matches or road flares), sodium hydroxide (lye), sulfuric acid (drain cleaner), and toluene (brake fluid).

Although there are multiple ways to produce meth, most involve the use of toxic and volatile substances that can pose a threat to the surrounding area. An odor similar to that of cat urine and other offensive fumes often signify that an illegal meth lab is in operation. When manufactured by amateurs, the production of meth can be extremely dangerous and create harmful, toxic gases. One production method involves heating anhydrous ammonia – an extremely reactive ingredient that is prone to explosion. In fact, many illegal meth labs are only discovered after fires or explosions occur due to the improper handling of these toxic chemicals. Clean-up is both hazardous and expensive.

### USE & SYMPTOMS

Meth can be swallowed, snorted, smoked, injected, or inserted anally. Depending on the method of intake, the high from meth can last from 6 to 24 hours. Injection, one of the more popular methods of administration is associated with other serious risks such as skin rashes, often referred to as, “speed bumps,” and infections at the injection site. Sharing needles when injecting meth can spread deadly diseases such as hepatitis and HIV; additionally, these diseases are further spread through unprotected sex – a common activity among meth addicts. While it is true that meth sometimes increases sexual desire and stamina, it ultimately decreases the user’s desirability and performance.

Users have also reported an increased level of energy, a decrease in appetite, and may be more likely to engage in reckless or unwanted sex while under the influence. Other common side effects include a lack of hygiene and personal care, anxiety, agitation, blurred vision, hallucinations, diarrhea, sleeplessness, and even stroke or heart attack. Without the drug, many users slip into a deep depression, making the cycle of addiction hard to break.

### METH TRIVIA

Meth’s parent drug, amphetamine, was widely distributed to army personnel during World War II. Amphetamine-laced chocolate was routinely given to German soldiers. From 1942 to 1945, Adolf Hitler reportedly received daily methamphetamine injections to treat depression and fatigue. Some attribute his Parkinson’s-like symptoms to his use of this drug.

# TIPS FOR TEENS

“The truth about Methamphetamine” Slang – Speed, Meth, Crystal, Crank, Tweak, Go-fast, Ice, Glass, Uppers, Black Beauties

## Get the facts...

**Methamphetamine affects your brain.** In the short term, meth causes mind and mood changes such as anxiety, euphoria, and depression. Long-term effects can include chronic fatigue, paranoid or delusional thinking, and permanent psychological damage.

**Methamphetamine affects your body.** Over “amping” on any type of speed is pretty risky. Creating a false sense of energy, these drugs push your body faster and further than it’s meant to go. It increases the heart rate, blood pressure, and risk of stroke.

**Methamphetamine affects your self-control.** Meth is a powerfully addictive drug that can cause aggression and violent or psychotic behavior.

**Methamphetamine can kill you.** An overdose of meth can result in heart failure. Long-term physical effects such as liver, kidney, and lung damage may also kill you.

## Before You Risk It...

**Know the law.** Methamphetamine is illegal in all states and highly dangerous.

**Get the facts.** The ignitable, corrosive, and toxic nature of the chemicals used to produce meth can cause fires, produce toxic vapors, and damage the environment.

**Stay informed.** In 2001, methamphetamine use sent more people to the emergency room than use of any other club drug. Over half of these cases involved meth in combination with another drug, such as alcohol, heroin, or cocaine.

**Know the risks.** There are a lot of risks associated with using methamphetamine, including:

- Meth can cause a severe ‘crash’ after the effects wear off.
- Meth use can cause irreversible damage to blood vessels in the brain
- Meth users who inject the drug and share needles are at risk for acquiring HIV/AIDS, etc.
- Look around you. Not everyone is using methamphetamine. In 2003, only 3.2 percent of 12th graders reported having used methamphetamine.

## Know the Signs...

How you can tell if a friend is using meth? It may not be easy to tell. But there are signs you can look for. Symptoms of methamphetamine use may include:

- Inability to sleep
- Increased sensitivity to noise
- Nervous physical activity, like scratching
- Irritability, dizziness, or confusion
- Extreme anorexia
- Tremors or even convulsions

- Increased heart rate, blood pressure, and risk of stroke
- Presence of inhaling paraphernalia, such as razor blades, mirrors, and straws
- Presence of injecting paraphernalia, such as syringes, heated spoons or surgical tubing

### **What can you do to help a friend who is using meth?**

Be a real friend. You might save a life. Encourage your friend to stop or seek professional help. For information and referrals, call the National Clearing house for Alcohol and Drug Information at 800-729-6686 or go to [www.ncadi.samhsa.gov](http://www.ncadi.samhsa.gov)

## SELF-TEST

After reading the above information, see what you remember.  
(Some questions have more than one correct answer. Circle all that apply)

**1) Meth is short for:**

- a) Methicodone
- b) Methadone
- c) Methamphetamine
- d) Methicactus

**2) Meth is an illegal substance that:**

- a) Changes the brain chemistry
- b) Causes anxiety
- c) Causes depression
- d) Causes euphoria
- e) All of the above

**3) Which of the following ingredients is not used to make meth?**

- a) Aspirin
- b) Paint thinner
- c) Drain cleaner
- d) Battery acid

**4) As tolerance to meth develops, a user will:**

- a) Consume larger doses of meth more often
- b) Change their methods of use
- c) Develop psychosis (hallucinations and feelings of fear and paranoia)
- d) Become aggressive
- e) All of the above

**5) How can you tell if a friend is using meth?**

- a) They frequently get the munchies after using meth
- b) They act nervous and jittery
- c) They smile a lot
- d) They sleep a lot
- e) All of the above
- f) A & D

**6) Meth changes what chemical in your brain?**

- a) Norepinephrine
- b) Oxytocin
- c) Serotonin
- d) Dopamine
- e) C & D

**7) Is it possible to get hooked on using meth the first time you use it?**

- a) True
- b) False

**8) Short-term physical effects of using meth include:**

- a) Flushing cheeks
- b) The ability to stay awake for days at a time
- c) Increase in strength for up to 5-8 hours
- d) All of the above

**9) Long-term physical effects of using meth include:**

- a) Chronic fatigue
- b) Irreversible damage to blood vessels in the brain
- c) Irreversible skin color changes
- d) All of the above

**Self-test answers:**

- 1) c
- 2) e
- 3) a
- 4) e
- 5) b
- 6) e
- 7) a
- 8) d
- 9) d

**Rimrock Opera thanks the following sponsors of the *American Opera Idol* project:**

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