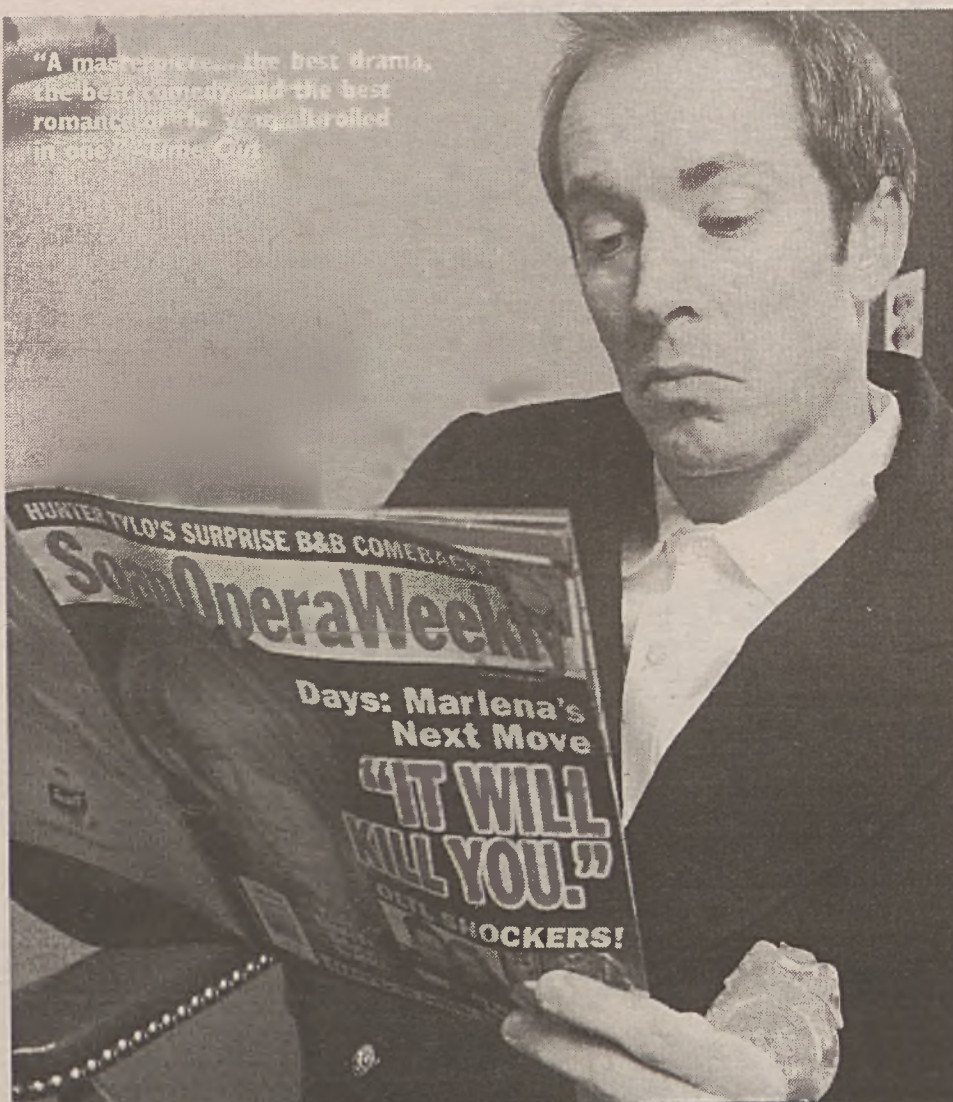


"A masterpiece... the best drama, the best comedy and the best romance of the year rolled in one." *Time Out*



LOBBY HERO

by Kenneth Lonergan
Directed by Lon Bumgarner
Starring William Brown, Brett Gentile,
Chandler McIntyre, and Mark Scarborough

One of the most popular plays in regional theatre today, Lonergan's *Lobby Hero* is set in the lobby of a Manhattan high-rise, where a security guard tries to make the most of the graveyard shift, cajoling, joking, and talking his way through the night. But when his boss's brother is implicated in a brutal murder and he agrees to cover for him, the hapless lobby guard is confronted with a mind-bending moral dilemma: he wants to do the right thing, but he can't figure out what "the right thing" is.

March 3-27
Actor's Theatre of Charlotte
650 E. Stonewall St.

Showtimes are Wed/Thurs at 7:30 pm, Fri/Sat at 8:00 pm, and Sun, March 21 at 2:30 pm. Tuesday, March 9 at 7:30 is "Pay What You Can Night." Opening night on Wed. March 3 followed by a free wine and cheese reception. For ticket information, please call 704.342.2251, or visit our website at actorstheatrecharlotte.org.

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Q-health

Crystal Meth: When it just isn't fun anymore



Crystal use among gay and bisexual men has increased in recent years, making it an epidemic among that group. Crystal has not only entered the community, it is permeating the culture. References to crystal appear in advertising, media, chat lines, and community events.

The Rise of Crystal

The effects of crystal can last up to 12 hours. It is more powerful and much less expensive than cocaine. Some people use it to work long hours, to finish tasks or concentrate on one activity at a time. Many people note that crystal makes them feel more awake, alert, confident and energetic.

The biggest reason for its popularity is sex. Crystal increases the libido, intensifies the senses, and increases energy. It produces very intense orgasms and allows gay men to do sexual things they ordinarily wouldn't do. It is also the great equalizer: many men have told me that guys on crystal don't care what you look like or how old you are. They just want to have sex, which makes finding sex easy, regardless of your looks.

Physical Effects of Crystal

In the brain, crystal use causes an upsurge in the production of brain chemicals that determine or influence the appetite, sex, sleep, memory and emotions. People often use it (usually by smoking or snorting, but it can be slammed or "booty" bumped) for a couple of days at a time. The resulting crash causes people to feel depressed, irritable and exhausted.

Many people find it extremely difficult to stay off crystal once they decide to stop. It takes time for the brain to build back the for-

mer amounts of brain chemicals and the "addict brain" just wants those chemicals, no matter what.

Back in the day, warnings were given about pot, ecstasy and other party drugs. Most people used them anyway and over time outgrew them. The scare tactics caused people to be skeptical. Crystal, however, is one party drug that is simply not worth trying. The great fun it produces is the same reason why it is so addictive. No one starts out using thinking that they would ever bleed from masturbating while trying to have an orgasm, desperately scour their carpet for crystal crumbs or scrub a single bathroom tile for hours. But they do.

Crystal and HIV

When gay men are high, it is easier to throw safe sex out the window. Thus, the risk of HIV, along with Hep B and C, syphilis and other STDs are greater when using crystal. Even occasional use of crystal can lead to a lapse in taking HIV medications, as well as weight loss and vitamin depletion.

Crystal users stay awake for two or three days at a time. Sleep, however, is essential to maintaining the immune system. Crystal use itself causes a drop in T cells and NK cells, creating a major toll on immunocompromised individuals.

The Emotional Toll

Doing crystal puts you on a merry-go-round of emotion. Underlying problems never get resolved. Difficult experiences and situations become worse from its consequences. Fighting with your boyfriend, getting behind in paying bills, and being fired from work are just a few examples of the consequences. It's not unheard of for an individual or party-minded couple to lose their homes and apartments due to crystal.

Treating Crystal Dependence

Thinking that you can kick crystal by yourself is a common mistake. Building a support system is the only way that you can prevent yourself from using crystal. Formal support includes support groups, coaching, outpatient treatment, inpatient treatment and group homes. Formal support also includes Crystal Meth Anonymous (CMA) and Narcotics Anonymous. Many gay men also enter therapy. Informal support includes relying on non-using friends and people with a solid recovery.

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