

the village VOICE

By Michael Musto



Well, it's actually honest personal storytelling mixed with songs, humor, pathos, and even a mini game show.

It's METHTACULAR!, **Steven Strafford's** one-man recollection of his days as a tina queen, which he starts with a sardonic opening number as if he were doing an old-style TV special about his addiction.

From there, Strafford tells his story, that of a struggling Chicago actor who got hooked on phone sex lines, finding that the "There's nothing wrong with me" vibe he got from crystal was so intoxicating he only wanted to hook up with guys who "party."

That leads to two doomed relationships with meth heads (one's also a dealer) and all the requisite weight loss, raging horniness, sleepless nights, and fake confidence.

It might all be like a racier movie for Lifetime--the network Strafford calls "TV for gay meth addicts coming down"--but his performing focus is unwavering, he's witty and self-deprecating, and he has a healthy perspective on where he's been and where he's going.

And the game show ("Math/Myth/Meth?") is fun, plus you may never forget the story of how the stage manager for the *Man of La Mancha* production Strafford was supposed to be appearing in at that moment found him naked in a bath house and fired him on the spot.

Stafford's thinking he could service the guy right there and get his job back was truly the impossible dream.

"There's nothing wrong with me," concludes Strafford, wisely--this time *not* on crystal.

Highly recommended.

Photo by **Kevin Thomas Garcia**