

**MELANCHOLY PLAY – Echo Theatre Company, Los Angeles (2005);
additional productions: University of California, Santa Barbara; Stage West, Fort
Worth; University of Colorado, Boulder; Cornell University; University of
South Florida; Seattle University; Kennesaw State University, Georgia;
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill; Columbia University; Truman
State University, Missouri; University of Nebraska, Lincoln; Henry Clay
High School, Kentucky; WAM Theatre, Pittsfield, Mass.; Clark University,
Mass; Couch Theatre, Singapore;**

The skilled ensemble and Michael Roth's poignant original score could not possibly be braver, better, or more entertaining.

Travis Michael Holder/BACKSTAGE

Special kudos go to the evocative original score of Michael Roth and the exquisite musicianship of onstage cellist Joseph Mendoes.

Julio Martinez/VARIETY

In Sarah Ruhl's play, an onstage cellist saws away passionately, providing both underscoring and accompaniment for composer Michael Roth's mock-chorales and songs which memorably list items that can trigger the dark moods of the title.

Rob Kendt/LOS ANGELES TIMES

This is one stylish production, directed by Chris Fields and accompanied on cello by Joseph Mendoes, playing the original music by Michael Roth. "Play something happy," one of them asks him. "That's not easy on a cello," he shoots back.

Steven Leigh Morris/LA WEEKLY

When the characters inexplicably break into song (Michael Roth composed the music that complements Ruhl's lines) it seems less contrived than inevitable. One song explores the emotional complications of Cheetos. Don't ask. "Melancholy Play" is so exuberant, even the cellist (Joseph Mendoes, whose accompaniment is indispensable) gets a chance to dance.

Katherine Karlin/LOS ANGELES DAILY NEWS

The original chamber music by Michael Roth, performed onstage, is as crisp, smart, and deeply funny as the heady dialogue it supports.

SND/FLAVORPILL-LA.COM

All of these tricky ingredients were whipped together in high-style fashion, with Michael Roth's sprightly music and several goofy songs.

Willard Manus/LIVELY-ARTS.COM

The music by Michael Roth is perfect and downright weird in the vocal sections. He is right in keeping with Ruhl's words and actions

J. Peter Bergman/BERKSHIRE BRIGHT FOCUS

The tale unfolds to the lovely strains of a cello, original music by Michael Roth, beautifully played by Erika Helen Smith as Julian.

Lesley Ann Beck/BERKSHIRE LIVING

The music by Michael Roth is nothing short of incredible at setting the mood of the piece. Played on an appropriately melancholy cello by Lauren Kelly, the music is always perfect for the scene and makes for two memorable songs when the characters decide to sing along.

Ethan Goldstein/CLARK UNIVERSITY SCARLET