

THE ALLEGORY OF WHITENESS - Humana Festival/Actor's Theatre of Louisville (2001)

ALLEGORY OF WHITENESS is, improbably enough, a musical, and the engaging score by Michael Roth is tuneful, eclectic (it has a number of rock elements but begins with a medieval-sounding antiphony between a French horn and a trombone) and most pertinently, accessible even where Mac Wellman's narrative is not.

Bruce Weber/NEW YORK TIMES

A baby-powder keg of a play that dares to make music out of miscegenation, class privilege, and mechanical flea circuses, Wellman's ironic inquiry into "whiteness" includes witty, pretty music by Michael Roth.

Steven Drukman/AMERICAN THEATRE

This highly conceptual piece comes with strikingly original music from Michael Roth.

Chris Jones/VARIETY

ALLEGORY OF WHITENESS, set in "a vast metaphysical Rhode Island, a disturbing, perplexing piece, evokes a tenuous world, an alluring, unsettling wonderland of whiteness. As the Rings spin stories, musicians break in to perform Roth's impressive score, including a pair of gorgeous hymns and a rousing disturbing title song. There's talk of ancestor worship to the stirring militaristic strains of a trumpet, and a recurring cradle tune that challenges the family's notions of innocence.

Jennifer de Poyen/SAN DIEGO UNION-TRIBUNE

ARCADIA – ACT (2013, 1995); ACT, Alliance, SCR, NCR - BAY AREA CRITIC'S CIRCLE AWARD

Roth's insistent yet wistful piano music serves as aural hinges between the two centuries. The final waltz is a dance to the music of time that sends you soaring.

Steven Winn/SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE

AS YOU LIKE IT – Stratford Festival (2010); La Jolla Playhouse (1984) – SD CRITIC'S CIRCLE AWARD

McAnuff has made the show move with a dream-like elegant grace, aided most of all by the superb musical score of Justin Ellington and Michael Roth. Roth's underscoring strikes the right Erik Satie-esque note that is needed.

Richard Ouzounian/TORONTO STAR

The song-settings are delightfully jazzy and Michael Roth's music, as in Romeo and Juliet, underscores the moments at which people fall in love with delicacy.

Robert Cushman/NATIONAL POST

THE BIRDS - SCR, Berkeley Rep, Getty Villa (1998-2007) - BAY AREA CRITIC'S CIRCLE AWARD

Montoya and Culture Clash people the chorus with a white piano played by composer Michael Roth. Eclecticism must be Roth's credo, covering a gamut from Broadway to wild dances when everyone weaves across the stage.

Michael Sedano/LA BLOGA!

Michael Roth's music draws on everything from R&B to the Velvet Underground.

Charles Isherwood/VARIETY

A BODY OF WATER - The Guthrie Theater (2005)/Old Globe Theatre (2006)

Michael Roth's original music – for strings, female voices and virtuoso Peter Sprague on guitar – creates magical effects, underscoring the end with a barely noticeable vibration, an aural manifestation of the water's glimmer.

Anne-Marie Welsh/SAN DIEGO UNION-TRIBUNE

Roth's music transforms moods in an instant from clarity and order to netherworld dissonance, and one of the finest uses of the Carter stage in quite some time.

Jeff Smith/SAN DIEGO READER

BROOKLYN BOY - South Coast Repertory/Biltmore-Manhattan Theatre Club, Broadway (2004-5)

Michael Roth's melancholy, cello-driven music sets a strong mood.

Joel Hirschhorn/VARIETY

DINNER WITH FRIENDS - South Coast Repertory/Variety Arts, Off-Broadway (1998-9)

This scathingly honest Pulitzer Prize-winner places marriage under a merciless microscope, aided by Roth's understated transitional music.

Joel Hirschhorn/VARIETY

In **DINNER WITH FRIENDS**, director Dan Sullivan reveals once again how astute and precise he can be - there is not one false moment, and Michael Roth's music intensifies the bitter sweetness the director seeks to bring out.

Peter Marks/NEW YORK TIMES

GOING TO ST. IVES - Primary Stages, New York (2005)

Director Maria Mileaf's production is exemplary, featuring a stunning design enhanced by Michael Roth's music.

Martin Denton/NYTHEATRE.COM

IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST - South Coast Repertory (2008)

Composer Michael Roth helps fill those gaps with a score that's both sonically rich and appropriately comic, and his arrangement of Gilbert and Sullivan's "I Have a Song to Sing, O," brings the evening to an agreeable end.

Paul Hodgins/ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

Michael Roth's music adds yet another special touch to this very special production. We know we are in for something special when, at lights up, we see Algernon playing the piano. There's also a sensational Act 3 opening with a ukulele-playing Algernon and Jack joined by butler and footman to serenade Gwendolyn and Cecily in four-part harmony. The sound design incorporates exaggerated effects, such as a deliciously sepulchral doorbell.

Steven Stanley/LASTAGESCENE.COM

INDIAN INK - American Conservatory Theatre (1999)

Michael Roth's reticent, vaguely Indian music works well to evoke this tender remembrance of things past.

David Littlejohn/WALL STREET JOURNAL

Michael Roth's elegant score combines instrumentation and moods of both lands.

Michael Phillips/LOS ANGELES TIMES

INVENTION OF LOVE - American Conservatory Theatre (2000)

Michael Roth's very pretty score is heard drifting in and out of this American premiere production.

Dennis Harvey/VARIETY

ION – Shakespeare Theatre Company (2009)

By the time the women of the chorus provide the evening's musical send-off, a mood-enhancing bowl of pop by composer Michael Roth, you're tickled but also a bit perplexed about how well all the conceits really do fit together.

Peter Marks/WASHINGTON POST

The best part of the show is unquestionably the chorus, singing in gorgeous five-part harmony Michael Roth's beautiful music, accompanied by a fabulous cellist, Caleb Jones.

Lorraine Treanor/DC THEATRE SCENE

JEWS AND BASEBALL – Documentary, PBS (2010)

Production values are very good, with clever music cues (by Michael Roth), and a warm, intelligent text by the first-rate sportswriter Ira Berkow.

John Anderson/VARIETY

THE LESSER MAGOO – Bottom's Dream (1998); 78th Street Lab (1999); Defunkt Theatre (2007)

LESSER MAGOO is as coherent as a show punctuated with song-and-dance numbers with lyrics like "order is my washing machine, oh, wango" can be - Wellman goes Chekhov - the production achieves a kind of elegance, movingly enhanced by a musical background of guitar and toy piano.

Charles McNulty/VILLAGE VOICE

MACBETH – Stratford Festival (2009)

Roth's score, rhythm rich and infused with haunting tribal chants, whisked everyone to the dark continent in a manner that begged for more.

S. James Wegg/ECHO WEEKLY

MAN AND SUPERMAN – South Coast Repertory (1990)

Nowhere is the production's yoking of Shavian sense to post-modern sensibility more brilliantly realized than in Roth's ingenious blend of wistful original compositions, witty snatches of popular and classic, cosmic sound effects and suitably new music. The use of Roy Orbison's eerily vulgar "In Dreams" to rouse Tanner into his Don Juan reverie, brings the first act to a giddy, rousing close.

Tom O'Connor/ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM - Old Globe Theatre (2001) - PATTE AWARD – BEST MUSIC

Michael Roth's superb score for MIDSUMMER, performed by two percussionists, combining motoric non-Western rhythms and extended avant-garde techniques, gives Kyle Donnelly's staging a primitive, sexual hue.

Paul Hodgins/ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

MISALLIANCE – South Coast Repertory (2010)

Michael Roth's original music provides the perfect mood-setting backdrop to Shaw's frothy plot. There's one particularly splendid sound effect that comes near the end of Act One, an airborne arrival that is well worth waiting for.

Steven Stanley/LASTAGESCENE.COM

MR MARMALADE - South Coast Repertory (2004)

Michael Roth's infectious, whimsical guitar and toy piano score has occasional dissonant hints of things to come.

Paul Hodgins/ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING - La Jolla Playhouse (1992) - DRAMALOGUE AWARD

Roth's score includes a marital "Sigh No More," stodgy military brass, hilarious, creepy, and a crashing thunderstorm.

Sylvie Drake/LOS ANGELES TIMES

NIGHTHAWKS – CTG/Kirk Douglas Theatre, Los Angeles (2006) - TICKETHOLDER-BEST MUSIC

Between scenes, Roth's dynamic jazz score, worthy of outside-the-theater listening, keeps the adrenaline flowing.

Don Shirley/LA CITYBEAT

NOTHING SACRED – Hartford Stage (1989)/South Coast Repertory (2006)

Michael Roth's oddly epochal music is wonderful.

Kevin Kelly/BOSTON GLOBE

Roth takes a gamble with his score - actors sing challenging, often contrapuntal music in Russian (the words usually stage directions). Roth's concept meshes beautifully with story and mood. Perhaps it's too much to demand thematic integrity from this scattershot script, but I suspect it can be achieved through an approach such as Roth's – wagering big risks with the concept and letting the chips fall where they may.

Paul Hodgins/ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

PEOPLE BE HEARD - Playwrights Horizons (2004)

Roth's music, quirky snippets of thought and ritual, includes the Pledge of Allegiance, niftily arranged and performed in the first scene, setting the tone quite nicely, and a square dance, joyously and quintessentially democratic.

Martin Denton/NYTHEATRE.COM

THE PERSIANS - National Actors Theatre, Off-Broadway (2003), Shakespeare Theatre Co, DC (2006)

The chorus does, effectively, sing, and Michael Roth has composed persuasively archaic-sounding music.

John Simon/NEW YORK MAGAZINE

THE PERSIANS, more than timely or relevant, is heart-wrenching and terrifying. The chorus member's words merge and overlap, intensified by music and sound by Michael Roth - beautiful antiphony remains.

Margo Jefferson/NEW YORK TIMES

In THE PERSIANS, when the chorus, reeling from the news of disaster, softly begins to chant its lamentations to Michael Roth's live percussive underscoring, its presence made me feel prickling at the back of my neck.

Michael Feingold/VILLAGE VOICE

ROMEO AND JULIET - Guthrie Theater (2004): Stratford Festival (2008)

Roth's music is much more of a cinematic underscoring than the customary trumpet flourishes in between scenes we've gotten all too used to - far more subtle than Stratford's usual trumpet fanfares. A new team is in town, headed by McAnuff, and the end result has all the invention one expects from his work.

Richard Ouzounian/VARIETY

Michael Roth gave us original music that thankfully didn't consist largely of pompous fanfares. One of McAnuff's talented American imports, Roth even rivaled the best of the old Stratford guard.

Paul E. Robinson/LA SCENA MUSICALE

SABINA - Primary Stages, New York (2005)

The sensual allure of Sabina's analytic mind has an aesthetic spokesman in Michael Roth's haunting violin music.

Marilyn Stasio/VARIETY

SABINA includes fine live violin accompaniment by Batya MacAdam-Somer (music by Michael Roth).

John Lahr/THE NEW YORKER

THE SCOTTISH PLAY – La Jolla Playhouse (2005) - SAN DIEGO CRITIC'S CIRCLE AWARD

Percussionist Morris Palter, playing composer Roth's doom-laden riffs, usually proved more fun to watch than the play.

Anne Marie Welsh/SAN DIEGO UNION-TRIBUNE

The show provides several pleasures, including original music by Michael Roth that would honor a production of the real Macbeth, remarkably performed by one-man band Morris Palter on a flabbergasting collection of instruments.

George Weinberg-Harter/BACKSTAGE

Best of show happens off-stage: Michael Roth has composed a score for drums and bagpipe, which Morris S. Palter pounds on his kit with such vigor he evokes the havoc of Forres field and Dunsinane.

Jeff Smith/SAN DIEGO READER

SIGHT UNSEEN – South Coast Rep/Manhattan Theatre Club/Orpheum Theatre, Off Broadway (1992-3)

That these scenes work is a tribute to Michael Bloom's production and Michael Roth's shimmering music.

Frank Rich/NEW YORK TIMES

A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE – SCR/San Diego Rep/ACT (1994-7) - BAY AREA CRITIC'S CIRCLE

A meandering cello line in Roth's scores seems to draw Stella out and slowly down the steps. Everything a deliriously unfocused blur, the percussive chatter of Roth's persuasive sound and music lap over from one scene to the next.

Steven Winn/SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE

Both live and taped, Roth's music combines the dissonance of Alex North's film score with heightened expressionistic touches (what Williams called "jungle sounds"). Quite a stew, Roth lays it on pretty thick at the climax, but it's tasty.

Michael Phillips/SAN DIEGO UNION-TRIBUNE

TALKING HEADS – Tiffany Theatre, Los Angeles; Minetta Lane Theatre, Off-Broadway (2002-3)

Michael Roth's tongue-in-cheek music contributes handsomely to Michael Engler's confident TALKING HEADS.

John Simon/NEW YORK MAGAZINE

THE TEMPEST – Stratford Festival (2010)

Roth's settings of Ariel's songs are hauntingly beautiful.

Warren Clements/GLOBE AND MAIL

Everything in, and around Julyana Soelistya's performance is magical, including her singing of Roth's lovely songs.

Robert Cushman/NATIONAL POST

Music fills the air, and magic charms the senses in "The Tempest," and in McAnuff's frisky and engaging production the music (by Michael Roth) is prominent. But the real magic and the most beautiful music resides in the voice of the great actor Christopher Plummer, undertaking at the age of 80 the valedictory role of Prospero.

Christopher Isherwood/NEW YORK TIMES

Plummer's intellectual rigor rubbed off on McAnuff, whose tricks of light, with Roth's music, build to a thematic point.

Richard Ouzounian/VARIETY

Adding to the beauty and mystery of the evening is the wonderful score by Michael Roth-the music is dissonant and unsettling, but can also beguile and transfix. Particularly beautiful is the song of the goddesses as they give their consent to the marriage of Miranda and Ferdinand.

Gavin Logan/TALKIN BROADWAY.COM

The musical performances that Julyana Soelistyo and Dion Johnstone present as Ariel and Caliban please audiences on both sides of the screen. Composer Michael Roth allows Soelistyo's soaring voice to fly while she literally levitates above the stage, adding to *The Tempest* a modern musical twist which captivates with stunning power. Like Ariel, Caliban sings, and Johnstone delivers, singing one particular number which is part sea chantey and part slave song. Both the Stratford audience in the film and the Edmonton audience in the theatre approved of the musical performances in *The Tempest*, suggesting an appreciation for the modern changes which make this version uniquely musical.

Sean Dillman/TORONTO THEATRE IN REVIEW

THEME FOR A FUTURISTIC MOVIE - Irene Feigenheimer Dance Company (1983)

Dancers, carefree, their actions are slower than the music by George Winston and Roth, which just bubbled along.

Jack Anderson/NEW YORK TIMES

THIRD – Geffen Playhouse (2007)

UNLIKELY LISTENING BETWEEN THE SCENES - Michael Roth writes some fascinating music for the theater and his between-scene music in the Geffen Playhouse's production of Wendy Wasserstein's "Third" grows progressively intriguing as the evening wears on. Play takes place during the course of a school year, beginning with breezy autumnal themes that teeter toward new-age stream of conscious composing. Guitar and acoustic bass are the key instruments with strings adding textures, as the drama develops and winter sets in, Roth's music ushers in moods that not only echo the previous scene but hint at the action about to come. It is music that deserves a future.

Phil Gallo/THE SET LIST-VARIETY

THE THREE SISTERS – La Jolla Playhouse (1991)

Michael Roth's music and sound are up to his usual excellence.

Sylvie Drake/LOS ANGELES TIMES

Roth, the ever resourceful composer, finds musical counterpoints culminating in a bold theatrical coup - a wandering musician steps center stage as the set flies away, a swelling violin solo at once mournful and inexpressively hopeful.

Tom O'Connor/ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

tigertigertiger – Theatre for the First Amendment (1997)

The catchiest song in Michael Roth's dreamy, rock-inflected score is a bouncy tribute to the Chrysler Building.

Nelson Pressley/WASHINGTON TIMES

Tigertigertiger is practically an oratorio, with a complex harmonic vocal score by Roth, the eclectic composer of many theater scores (particularly for La Jolla Playhouse) and the orchestrator/arranger for several Randy Newman projects.

Christopher Arnott/NEW HAVEN THEATER JOURNAL

TWELFTH NIGHT – La Jolla Playhouse (1990); Stratford Festival (2011) - SD CRITIC'S CIRCLE

The comedic scenes are not only hilarious, they're also filled with Michael Roth's toe-tapping melodies; you can hear audience members singing little snatches of old Bill's lyrics, at once titillated and made to feel like we're in safe hands.

Chris Jones/CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Mr. McAnuff himself and Michael Roth wrote the beguiling music, which evokes various strains in 1960s and '70s rock, most notably the Beatles of the "Sgt. Pepper" era. Mr. Roth leads the eight-piece band that slides onstage and off at regular intervals, with Ben Carlson's dryly funny Feste handling most of the lead-singer chores capably.

Christopher Isherwood/NEW YORK TIMES

To Shakespeare's original, McAnuff adds a soundscape (with Michael Roth) that sets lyrics by the Bard and Marlowe to music that careens through pop music of the past 50 years, evoking everyone from The Beatles to The Boss. Ben Carlson's Feste carries the musical burden of the show, playing and singing on almost every number. His "Come Away, Death" brings the chill shadow of mortality like an October breeze, and "Wind and the Rain" sums up everything that's gone before to perfection.

Richard Ouzounian/TORONTO STAR

Des McAnuff's production, with a score by himself and Michael Roth, is virtually a musical itself and turns out to be the best Shakespeare on the Festival stage since Hamlet, and one of the most satisfying accounts of the play I've seen. Shakespeare's romantic comedies are music soaked and driven anyway, like much of the greatest theatre since the Greeks. Ben Carlson sings a heartstopping Come Away, Death; and the final song, that's almost an epiphany.

Robert Cushman, NATIONAL POST

There is more music in this version than in any I've encountered, a good thing considering that the score by McAnuff and Michael Roth is uncommonly tuneful, dipping heavily into the pop catalogue of the 1960s-1980s. There's also the wondrous Ben Carlson whose "Come Away Death" is a truly touching vocal interlude and Avrich has framed it deftly.

Richard Ouzounian/TORONTO STAR

A WALK IN THE WOODS - Yale Repertory Theatre, La Jolla Playhouse, Broadway (1987-8)

Roth has written music for the changing of seasons, to subtly underscore certain passages of dialogue, and he has created unusual sound to underscore the text, including realistic sounds, surreal rumblings, and barely audible hums.

Laurie Winer/NEW YORK TIMES

Michael Roth's musical underscoring at the crucial sentimental moments are honest in the context.

Gordon Rogoff/VILLAGE VOICE

THE WHALE – South Coast Repertory (2013)

Michael Roth's thoughtful and subtle music and sound design are wonderfully effective.

Paul Hodgins/ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

Michael Roth's music has poignant keyboard passages, while his soundscape fittingly includes crashing waves.

Eric Marchese/BACKSTAGE

Michael Roth's ethereal score and sound, like some eerie wind out of 19th Century Nantucket, is great work, like the physical whales we can't hide, and the psychic wails we can.

Cris Gross/THEATRETIMES.ORG

Michael Roth's music/soundscape is first rate.

Jordan Young/PLAYING ON AIR-NPR

WIT – South Coast Repertory World Premiere (1995)

In WIT's examination of life and death through the eyes of an academic, Michael Roth's music is subtle and effective.

Christopher Meeks/VARIETY

THE WOMEN – San Diego Rep/Hartford Stage (1992-4); ACT (2007) – DRAMALOGUE/MUSIC DIRECTION

Michael Roth's musical direction includes a languorous rendition of "Singin' in the Rain," a bluesy "Glad to Be Unhappy." "Down in the Depths on the 90th Floor" in his snappy four-part harmony, and "I Don't Want to Play in Your Yard," a frolicsome ditty for the full ensemble.

David Richards/NEW YORK TIMES

A WORD OR TWO – Stratford Festival (2012)

Against a gravity-defying stack of books, accompanied by wonderfully subtle music by Michael Roth, Christopher Plummer, this 82-year-old national treasure starts as Louis Carroll's "Aged, Aged Man" and proceeds to take us on a whirlwind tour of his fascinating existence and the authors who have accompanied it.

Richard Ouzounian/TORONTO STAR

YOU CAN'T TAKE IT WITH YOU - South Coast Repertory (1991) - DRAMALOGUE AWARD

The biggest cheer was for Roth's audio clip of FDR's fireside address excoriating bankers (not even part of the script!).

Jeremy M. Barker/SEATTLEST.COM

YOUR NAME HERE – Independent film (2008)

Roth's score, much like what Wendy Carlos would have come up with for Kubrick, is definitely the film's highlight.

Chad Clinton Freeman/POLLYSTAFFLE.COM

WORK WITH RANDY NEWMAN:

THE EDUCATION OF RANDY NEWMAN - South Coast Repertory/Act Theatre (2000-02)

As conceived by Mr. Newman, Jerry Patch, and Michael Roth, the show works better than you might think, the music most informative and touching when played by Mr. Roth on solo piano.

Bruce Weber/NEW YORK TIMES

Musical director Roth, who also did the orchestrations and vocal charts and worked on "Randy Newman's Faust" at the La Jolla Playhouse, knows his stuff and leads the seven-piece onstage band with grace and force.

Michael Phillips/LOS ANGELES TIMES

THE EDUCATION OF RANDY NEWMAN, an ambitious, intelligently staged, powerfully sung revue-that's-almost-more, satisfies with the caustic inspiration and over-arching buoyancy of Newman's work. The structural idea of the show was conceived by Newman and musical director Michael Roth, the concept and title borrowed from "The Education of Henry Adams." The performers are superb, the execution of the individual songs excellent, and the band, led by Roth on the piano, is exceptionally tight.

Steven Oxman/VARIETY

Roth's vocal arrangements and orchestration are superb - some of the best work I've heard from this veteran theater musician. Tightly voiced, pungent harmonies, sophisticated but not self-important counterpoint and spare yet colorful instrumental arrangements distinguish this score. As a keyboardist and orchestrator, Roth shows a deep understanding of the roots and psychological subcurrents informing Newman's muse, and sensitively articulates them without getting in the way of the music.

Paul Hodgins/ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

HARPS AND ANGELS – Mark Taper Forum (2010)

The music is exuberantly played, let it be known, by an orchestra led by Michael Roth.

Charles McNulty/LOS ANGELES TIMES

The ensemble hits more moments of authenticity thanks in large part to the terrific eight-piece orchestra (conducted by pianist Michael Roth; orchestrations by Roth and David O), parked elevated behind the stage.

Steven Leigh Morris/LA WEEKLY

FAUST - RANDY NEWMAN'S FAUST - La Jolla Playhouse/Goodman Theatre (1996)

The score for "Randy Newman's Faust, a shimmering, multi-faceted gem, has been wonderfully orchestrated by Michael Roth.

Ben Brantley/NEW YORK TIMES