



For Immediate Release
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Contact: Becki Fowler, 408.961.5814
bfowler@montalvoarts.org

**Montalvo Arts Center Presents the World Premiere of *Divide Light*,
a New Opera by Lesley Dill, Wednesday, Aug. 13**

Based on the Poems of Emily Dickinson, *Divide Light* features a choral ensemble, string quartet, as well as operatic voices and a stunning multi-media set, promising to be a must-see summer theatrical presentation

SARATOGA, Calif. - Montalvo Arts Center presents the innovative new opera *Divide Light*, a world premiere-commission by New York-based visual and performance artist [Lesley Dill](#), with music by composer [Richard Marriott](#), and additional music by [Tom Morgan](#), Aug. 13 at Montalvo's Garden Theater. Commissioned and produced by Montalvo Arts Center, Dill redirects the classic form of opera using Emily Dickinson (1830-1886) to celebrate and investigate American Transcendentalism, a school of thought particularly prevalent in mid-19th century New England. By incorporating Dickinson's 1,775 poems, *Divide Light* goes beyond rational reason into the world of obsessive informational insanity, which refers not only to Dickinson aficionados, but also to the overflow of information we now have at our fingertips made possible by the Internet and amazing new technologies. *Divide Light* parallels this global process by musically and visually translating the language of a 19th century philosophical movement into a representation of current forms of linguistic availability.

Dill has made *Divide Light* into a spare and closely developed theatrical presentation, layered with a haunting visual element which features large projections on a back screen and multiple scrim. The images are a combination of Dill's stark, edgy and evocative black-and-white photographs and projected text from Dickinson's poetry. Poems stream, scroll, flash, swirl, twirl, pop out, edge in, seep out, fade in, fall down, and rise up on the screen and scrim. The performers sing Dickinson's words and wear them scrawled across their costumes. Poems appear in unusual places throughout the opera, interacting with the audience in unexpected ways.

"*Divide Light* is a very special theatrical presentation – it is rare for an opera to include a string quartet and choir, as well as standard operatic voices, plus visual elements," says Dill. "One of our goals for *Divide Light* is to redefine what opera is and with the inclusion of so many different voices and musicians, we are certainly achieving that goal. Montalvo Arts Center's quest for innovative artists and thinkers makes it the perfect venue for *Divide Light* and we are pleased to collaborate with this organization."

Montalvo's Executive Director Robert Sain says, "This compelling project signals our commitment to supporting new work and our mission to investigate contemporary concerns through art."

Incubated in the heart of Silicon Valley at [Montalvo's Sally and Don Lucas Artist Programs residency](#) as an interdisciplinary collaboration between Dill, a visual artist, and Colorado-based composer and conductor Tom Morgan, *Divide Light* has expanded to include additional creative collaborators. Director Della Davidson is on board, and the project is under the musical direction of [Daniel Hughes](#), who also serves as director of The Choral Project, San Jose.

Divide Light features a number of San Francisco Bay Area-based organizations, including [The Choral Project](#), whose vision is "to heal our world through music and words," and San Francisco-based [Del Sol String Quartet](#), recognized for its ability to showcase living composers in relevant, responsive and deeply passionate performances.

TICKET INFORMATION

Divide Light premieres at Montalvo's Garden Theater on Aug. 13. Tickets are available now. Please call Montalvo's Box Office at 408-961-5858 or www.montalvoarts.org. Tickets are also available at www.ticketmaster.com.

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About Montalvo Arts Center

Montalvo Arts Center is a member-supported, nonprofit organization dedicated to capturing the innovative and diverse spirit of Silicon Valley and engaging people in contemporary concerns through the arts. Located in Silicon Valley's Saratoga hills, Montalvo Arts Center rests on 175 stunning acres, including the Sally and Don Lucas Artist Programs, an international artist residency; a historic Mediterranean villa, two theaters, a gallery and 2.5 miles of hiking trails. The historic villa and grounds were left to the people of California in 1930 by Senator James Phelan for the encouragement of art, music, literature and architecture. For more information about Montalvo Arts Center, call 408-961-5800 or visit www.montalvoarts.org/.

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