



For Immediate Release
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Coming this summer!
Montalvo Arts Center's World Premiere Commission *Divide Light*
Spotlight: The Choral Project

The 48-voice The Choral Project takes center stage for a theatrical presentation that channels the poetic voice of Emily Dickinson

SARATOGA, Calif. - Montalvo Arts Center recently announced the world premiere of [*Divide Light*](#), a new opera by New York-based visual and performance artist [Lesley Dill](#), with Music Direction by Daniel Hughes and featuring the 48-voice The Choral Project, founded by Hughes in 1996 and currently under his artistic direction. With *Divide Light*, Dill redirects the classic form of opera using the works of Emily Dickinson (1830-1886) to celebrate and investigate American Transcendentalism. The Choral Project, joined by the Del Sol String Quartet and three operatic voices, take the audience on a journey of the soul by embodying the sound, the voice and the character of Emily Dickinson, as conceived by Dill and by composer [Richard Marriott](#). The theatrical presentation receives its first performance on Aug. 13 at Montalvo's Garden Theatre.

The Choral Project has developed an outstanding reputation for performing high-level choral literature and bridging the gap between text and music, singer and spectator. The award-winning ensemble has performed throughout the world in concert performances, receiving rave reviews and standing ovations. The San Jose Mercury News hailed the choir as "a Bay Area jewel," stating that "there is nothing subtle about why this is one of the best choirs you will ever hear." The Choral Project has received awards in some of the world's most cherished choral festivals, including first place (Choir's Choice category), second place (Required Pieces category), and third place (Folk Music category) at the 2007 California International Choral Competition; and second place (Mixed Choir) at the 58th annual International Eisteddfod in Wales, where they were described by the international panel of judges as a "tour de force." Committed to a vision of "healing our world through music and words," The Choral Project's philosophy of how words and music can transform mankind is a perfect marriage with the artistic mission of *Divide Light*.

"As an artist I feel incredibly lucky to work with Daniel Hughes on *Divide Light*," said Dill. "His direction of The Choral Project brings a whole new element to the production and his vision for melding opera and multi-voice chorus inspires everyone involved to create a performance unlike anything seen at Montalvo."

Hughes founded The Choral Project in 1996. In addition to serving as the Artistic Director and Conductor of The Choral Project, he also serves as Artistic Director of the Silicon Valley Gay Men's Chorus, an acclaimed organization committed to inspiring our diverse community through musical excellence and collective pride. Hughes has extensive training in piano and voice and holds a Master of Arts degree in Conducting from San José State University. He is an accomplished composer and arranger, and has his own choral series through Santa Barbara Music Publishing.

“When Lesley first explained the concept of *Divide Light* to me, I could not wait to get The Choral Project involved,” said Daniel Hughes, director. “The combination of operatic voices, a chorus, stimulating visual elements and a string quartet make *Divide Light* such a unique projects and The Choral Project is proud to be included.”

Incubated in the heart of Silicon Valley at [Montalvo’s Sally and Don Lucas Artist Programs residency](#), *Divide Light* incorporates all of Dickinson’s 1,775 poems and 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.

Participants:

Lesley Dill, Artistic Director, Libretto, Video Designer, Costume Designer
Richard Marriott, Composer
Della Davidson, Director
Daniel Hughes, Music Director
The Choral Project
Del Sol String Quartet
Jennifer Goltz, Soprano
Monica Barnes, Mezzo
Andrew Eisenmann, Baritone
Montalvo Arts Center, Production

Divide Light receives its world premiere in Montalvo’s outdoor amphitheater, the Garden Theatre, on Aug. 13 at 7:30 p.m. More announcements including specific details of the performance and rehearsals are forthcoming.

The commission and production of *Divide Light* is generously funded by: The Rockefeller Foundation, MAP Fund; William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, David and Lucile Packard Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, and J. Lohr Vineyards & Wines.

TICKET INFORMATION

\$75/55/35/20-Student (Members: \$60/44/28/15-Student)

Tickets are available now. Please call Montalvo’s Box Office at 408-961-5858 or www.montavloarts.org. Tickets are also available at www.ticketmaster.com.

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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