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# Montalvo Arts Center to Present Interactive ROMEO & JULIET AT VILLA MONTALVO This Fall

By: Jessica Fallon Gordon Jun. 10, 2016



Montalvo Arts Center presents a one-of-a-kind, interactive theater experience this fall when it hosts We Players, presenting **Romeo & Juliet** at Villa Montalvo. In this site-integrated production audiences will be on their feet, following the action to various locations throughout Montalvo's grounds—including its illustrious Mediterranean-style Villa—as they viscerally experience the timeless drama of feuding families and star-crossed lovers. Recognized by SF Weekly for creating "spectacular, immersive experiences for audience members unlike anything you'll see on Broadway," We Players' stunning production will provide patrons an entirely new, thoroughly immersive theatrical experience in one of the South Bay's most beautiful settings. **Romeo & Juliet** at Villa Montalvo will be performed seven times only: Thursdays, Oct. 6 & 13 (5pm); Friday, Oct. 5 (5pm), and Sundays, Oct. 9 & 16 (noon & 5pm) at Montalvo Arts Center, 15400 Montalvo Road, Saratoga, CA. For tickets (\$60-\$80 general; \$40 students) or more information the public may visit [montalvoarts.org/weplayers](http://montalvoarts.org/weplayers) or call (408) 961-5858.

During performances, audiences will take a step back into history as they follow the action from sword fighting on the Great Lawn, to revelries at the Capulet's masquerade ball in the historic Villa, to romance on Juliet's balcony, to tragedy in the melancholy vault where the lovers meet their storied ends.

To create this production, We Players spent four weeks during the spring of 2016 in residence at Montalvo's Lucas Artists Residency Program. During that time, the **Romeo & Juliet** company, including cast, director, costumer, fight choreographer, mask-maker and others, were given the opportunity to explore ways to incorporate the natural setting and elements, while immersing the entire company in the production, and establishing a deep relationship between the breathtaking 104 year-old Montalvo environment and the production. "We are excited to present We Players at Montalvo this fall," said Executive Director Angela McConnell. "A key tenant of our mission is to provide access to the creative process. Their beautiful reimaging of **Romeo and Juliet** is going to be an inspiring opportunity for our community to experience a classic piece of theatre in a brand new way."

We Players is a Bay Area arts nonprofit founded in 2000 at Stanford University by Ava Roy, and co-managed by Ava Roy and Lauren Dietrich Chavez since 2009. The company creates site-integrated performances that transform public spaces into realms of participatory theatre, in an effort to engage with history and the environment, build community, and activate personal relationships with place. Its stated goal is to create work that inspires, awakens the senses, and connects people with each other and the landscape. Past productions include **HEROMONSTER** (at Fort Mason Chapel), **Online** at Sutro, **MacBeth** at Fort



Point, Twelfth Night on Hyde Street Pier, The Odyssey on Angel Island State Park, Hamlet on Alcatraz, and more. We Players was featured in American Theatre Magazine's cover story on immersive theatre and featured in San Francisco Magazine with a "Best of the Bay" pick for its unique site-specific performance work, that went on to praise, "We Players didn't just break the fourth wall, it toppled the whole playhouse." We Players has received several "Best of Bay" awards from the SF Weekly, which noted in its 2015 award, "We Players actors have the ability to draw power out of their surroundings, channeling it into spectacular, immersive experiences for audience members unlike anything you'll see on Broadway." More information about We Players is available at [www.weplayers.org](http://www.weplayers.org).

Montalvo Arts Center is a member-supported nonprofit institution, whose mission is to create and present art of all types, nurture artists, and use its historic buildings and grounds in innovative ways that engage people in the creative process. Located in Silicon Valley's Saratoga Hills, Montalvo occupies a Mediterranean-style Villa, built in 1912 by Senator James Duval Phelan and surrounded by 175 stunning acres. Senator Phelan bequeathed the Villa and grounds to the people of California for the encouragement of art, music, literature, and architecture, a mandate Montalvo has carried forward ever since its founding. The grounds include the campus of the Sally and Don Lucas Artists Residency Program (LAP). For more information about Montalvo Arts Center and its programs, the public can call [\(408\) 961-5814](tel:4089615814) or visit [montalvoarts.org](http://montalvoarts.org).

Montalvo is also home to the oldest artists' residency west of the Mississippi and the third-oldest residency program in the US. Since it opened its doors in 1939, more than 1,000 artists from a diverse range of disciplines have spent time at Montalvo developing and honing their practices and producing culturally significant works of art. Construction of a new architecturally distinguished multidisciplinary artist residency, the Sally and Don Lucas Artists Program (LAP), was completed in 2004. The campus opened to artists in 2005. As a space for creative incubation, the LAP is designed to offer artists an environment conducive to individual and collaborative creative practice. Stimulating an energetic exchange of ideas between culturally diverse Fellows across varied artistic fields and scholarly disciplines, the program has garnered international recognition for its support of the development of new and challenging contemporary artwork.

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