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Laura Benanti and Celia Keenan-Bolger Host New 42 Virtual Gala 2020

The poster for the New 42 Virtual Gala 2020 features a stylized background with red curtains on the left and right sides. The main title "NEW 42 VIRTUAL GALA 2020" is written in large, bold, blue letters. Below the title, it says "HONORING MARC SPILKER WITH THE MARIAN HEISKELL AWARD". At the bottom left, there is a dark blue box with the text "JOIN US NEW42.ORG/GALA". On the right side, it says "HOSTED BY TONY AWARD WINNERS" above two circular portraits of Laura Benanti and Celia Keenan-Bolger. To the right of the portraits, it says "OPEN TO ALL!" in a yellow box, followed by "MONDAY JUNE 1 5:30 P.M. EST" in large blue letters. At the bottom right, it says "PROCEEDS BENEFIT THE VITAL PERFORMING ARTS AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS OF NEW 42 AND NEW VICTORY".

June 1 Virtual Gala to Honor Marc Spilker with Marian Heiskell Award

New York, NY (May 20, 2020) – Join us for a very happy hour when Tony Award winners **Laura Benanti** and **Celia Keenan-Bolger** host the **New 42 Virtual Gala 2020** on Monday, June 1. Honoring **Marc Spilker** with the Marian Heiskell Award, the virtual event will include appearances by **New York City Council Speaker Corey Johnson** and Broadway stars **John Lithgow**, **Raúl Esparza**, **Elizabeth Stanley**, **Rebecca Taichman** and **Sonya Tayeh**, as well as performances by **Erika Henningsen** (*Mean Girls*), **Adrianna Hicks** (*Six*) and **Emmy Raver-Lampman** and **Solea Pfeiffer** (*Gun & Powder*).

“The New 42 Gala is for all the artists who rehearse and develop work with us, the teachers and students who learn alongside us, the families who choose us for their child’s first theatrical experience and for anyone who wants to come together for a celebration of New York’s great artistic community,” says **Russell Granet**, President & CEO of New 42.

Free and open to all, the **New 42 Virtual Gala 2020** will premiere on New42.org/Gala on June 1, 2020, at 5:30PM EST to raise critical funds for the performing arts engagement and education programs of New 42 and its signature projects, **New 42 Studios** and **New Victory Theater**, which recently launched New Victory Arts Breaks, a series of digital performing arts curriculum for families and teachers to adapt to kids’ learning spaces at home.

Philanthropist **Marc Spilker** will also accept the **Marian Heiskell Award**, inspired by the spirit of New 42's Founding Board Chairman and given to extraordinary individuals whose leadership and foresight help shape the future of NYC.

"Marc is deeply committed to the health and humanity of his fellow New Yorkers and I'm delighted to honor a leader who gives so generously without asking for anything in return," says New 42 Board Chair **Fiona Rudin**.

Also speaking on behalf of the nonprofit are theater artists **Kaneza Schaal and Christopher Myers**, the creators of *Cartography*, developed through New Victory LabWorks and presented by the Theater last January; Amy Castanos, a New Victory Usher in the **New 42 Youth Corps**, a signature program that provides more than 30,000 hours of paid employment and valuable life and job skills for 75 high school and college age students annually; and Kalitchi Figueroa, a teacher from PS 48, just one of 200 schools who receive free arts education in their classrooms through **New Victory Education**.

New 42 Gala 2020 leadership includes Angels **Sarah and Eric Lane** and **Fiona and Eric Rudin** and Hosts **Shahara Ahmad-Llewellyn, Emily and Len Blavatnik, Toby and Leon Cooperman Family Foundation, David B. Heller** and **Peter Kraus**.

Gala Co-chairs are **Orin Kramer, Jonathan Sobel, Sarah Long Solomon and David Solomon, Gerri and Andy Sommers** and **George Weiss**; Vice Chairs are **Betsy and Philip Darivoff, Kim and Greg Lippmann, Laura and Kevin O'Donohue, Kate and Brad Peck, Michael K. Rozen, Amy Jacobs, and Henry Tisch**; and Committee Members include **Herman Berliner and Annette Schrader, David S. Blitzer, Jim Fortescue, Sharon Coplan Hurowitz and Richard Hurowitz, Robert Jain, Legacy 1, David Moody and Eileen Guilfoyle, Jane and Daniel Och, Stefanie Katz Rothman and James Rothman, Meredith and Eliot Rubenzahl, Colin R. Stewart** and **Leigh Bishop Taub and David Taub**.

Sponsors for New 42 Gala 2020 include **Visa, American Express** and **HarperCollins**.

New 42 Gala 2020 is directed by **Jonathan Bernstein** with music directed by **Mary-Mitchell Campbell**.

In the midst of an illustrious career spanning Broadway, film and television, Tony Award-winning actress, singer and author **Laura Benanti** now brings a longstanding dream to life as she gears up to release new solo music with Sony Music Masterworks. She recently released a single, a cover of "Sucker," along with a moving video donating 100% of her earnings to FoodCorps. Additionally, on the heels of her viral social media campaign, #SunshineSongs, Laura debuted the Sunshine Songs Concert series to bring joy through music to senior living communities, aging loved ones isolated in their homes, children's hospitals, and beyond. With leading Broadway roles ranging from the *My Fair Lady* revival and Steve Martin's *Meteor Shower* to *She Loves Me*, Laura garnered a Tony Award in the category of "Best Featured Actress in a Musical" for the 2008 production of *Gypsy*—among five career nominations to date. Meanwhile, her performance in *Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown* garnered her a Drama Desk Award and Outer Critics Circle Award for "Best Featured Actress in a Musical." Simultaneously,

she enchanted audiences on the small screen, appearing on “Younger,” “Supergirl,” “Nashville,” “The Good Wife,” “Nurse Jackie” and more, in addition to films including WORTH and the upcoming *Here Today*. Laura recently released a book co-written with Kate Mangiameli, for moms entitled “M is for MAMA (and also Merlot): A Modern Mom’s ABCs” available now on Amazon.

Celia Keenan-Bolger received the 2019 Tony Award, Drama Desk Award, and Outer Critics Circle Award for her portrayal of Scout in *To Kill a Mockingbird*. She is known for performances on Broadway as Laura in *The Glass Menagerie*, Molly in *Peter and the Starcatcher* and Olive in *25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*. She received Tony Award Nominations for all three roles. She previously starred in Lincoln Center Theater’s production of *Oldest Boy* and in *Merrily We Roll Along* at City Center Encores. She has also played guest star roles in notable TV series such as “Bull,” “Nurse Jackie,” “The Good Wife” and “Louie.” Celia was born in Detroit, Michigan, and is a graduate of the University of Michigan. Her son William saw his first live theater production at the New Victory Theater when he was 2.5 years old.

New 42’s mission is to make extraordinary performing arts a vital part of everyone’s life from the earliest years onward. Driven by a deep commitment to performing arts access, New 42 connects people to world-class performances, essential education and employment programs, and creative communities that push culture forward. Through New Victory and New 42 Studios, the cultural nonprofit serves artists, educators and New Yorkers of all ages with invaluable arts engagement and resources in and beyond the performing arts. Together with its supporters, New 42 opens new perspectives, incubates new works and creates new opportunities to move us all.

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