



CONTACT:

[new42@rubenstein.com](mailto:new42@rubenstein.com)

## **NEW 42 ADDS LILLI COOPER, MANDY GONZALEZ, NIKKI M. JAMES, AND BETSY WOLFE TO ARTIST COUNCIL**



*L-R: Lilli Cooper, Mandy Gonzalez, Nikki M. James and Betsy Wolfe*

**March 3, 2026** - Today, **New 42**, the performing arts nonprofit behind New 42 Studios and New Victory Theater, announced the addition of **Lilli Cooper, Mandy Gonzalez, Nikki M. James** and **Betsy Wolfe** to the New 42 Artist Council.

New 42's Artist Council is made up of a dynamic group of professional artists who are devoted to the performing arts, and who know that love of the theater can start at any age. They are committed to championing the New Victory Theater and New 42's commitment to making extraordinary performing arts part of everyone's life from the earliest years onward. These generous artists serve as ambassadors to broaden the public's awareness of the importance of the arts and of arts education and the special role that the New Victory can play in enriching the hearts and minds of New York's kids.

"We're beyond thrilled to have these four incredible artists join the New 42 Artist Council," commented **Russell Granet, New 42 President & CEO**. "Lilli, Mandy, Nikki, and Betsey are all parents of kids whose first theater experiences included the New Victory Theater. Their advocacy for the importance of the arts in the lives of young people - both individually and now collectively on behalf of New 42 - makes a difference in our field and our City."

The New 42 Artist Council includes Co-Chairs John Lithgow and Sarah Jessica Parker as well as council members Sara Bareilles, Laura Benanti, Danny Burstein, Warren Carlyle, Rachel Dratch, Neil Patrick Harris, Jessica Hecht, Bill Irwin, Celia Keenan-Bolger, Julianna Margulies, Arian Moayed, Cynthia Nixon, Billy Porter, Meryl Streep, Susan Stroman, Julie Taymor, Alex Timbers, Sergio Trujillo, and Ben Vereen.

More about the new members of New 42's Artist Council:

**Lilli Cooper** made her Broadway debut at age 16 in the original production of *Spring Awakening*. She went on to play Elphaba in *Wicked* on Broadway as well as in the touring company and Australia. She received a Tony Award nomination for her performance in *Tootsie* on Broadway. Other Broadway credits include *Spongebob Squarepants*, *POTUS*, and *The Cottage*. At NYCC Encores! she starred in *Oliver*, *Mack and Mabel*, and *Titanic*. Select film and tv credits include: "Sheepdog," Spielberg's "The Post," "NCIS: New Orleans," "The Good Fight," "Dynasty," and she plays Doc in Apple TV's "Fraggle Rock: Back to The Rock." She is the voice of Velveteen in the Amazon animated series "Hazbin Hotel" and next year will be seen alongside Julianne Moore and Paul Giamatti in Jesse Eisenberg's newest film. Lilli is currently starring Off Broadway in *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*. Lilli is a proud LaGuardia HS and Vassar College alum. Most gratefully, she is Mom to Bodie and Desi.

**Mandy Gonzalez** possesses one of the most powerful and versatile contemporary voices of our time. On Broadway, she most recently starred as Norma Desmond in the Tony Award-winning revival of Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Sunset Blvd*. She originated the role of Nina Rosario in Lin-Manuel Miranda's *In The Heights* (Drama Desk Award), played Angelica Schuyler in the megahit *Hamilton*, and thrilled audiences as Elphaba in *Wicked*. This fall, Mandy headlines Carnegie Hall with The New York Pops in her new solo show "Everything I Know: Mandy Gonzalez sings Lin-Manuel Miranda." Beyond Broadway, Mandy has appeared on television in "Madam Secretary," "Bull," "Quantico," and "Only Murders in the Building," and in films including "Across the Universe" and "Man on a Ledge." She has performed with leading symphony orchestras nationwide and released her debut album FEARLESS with Warner Music. She is also the author of the Young Adult series FEARLESS (Simon & Schuster).

**Nikki M. James** can be seen as Kirsten McDuffie in the hit Disney+ show "Daredevil: Born Again." She was nominated for a Tony Award for her performance as Ida B Wells in *Suffs*. She originated the role of Nabalungi in *The Book of Mormon*, for which she won the Tony for Best Featured Actress in a Musical. Favorite theater credits include Tony Kushner's *A Bright Room Called Day* (Public), Broadway productions of *Les Misérables*, *All Shook Up* and *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, *Bubbly Black Girl Sheds Her Chameleon Skin* (Encores!), *Romeo & Juliet*, *Caesar & Cleopatra* alongside Christopher Plummer (Stratford Theater), *The Wiz* (La Jolla Playhouse), *Julius Caesar*, *Twelfth Night* (Shakespeare in the Park), *Bernarda Alba* (Lincoln Center), and *Preludes* (LCT3). Recent notable work in television includes "Severance" (AppleTV+) and starring roles in "Proven Innocent" for FOX and CBS's quirky series "Braindead." As a director, Nikki has helmed episodes of "The Bite" and "The Good Fight." She served as an assistant director to Michael Arden for the Broadway revival of *Once On This Island* and *A Christmas Carol* live capture starring Jefferson Mays. She resides in New York City with her family and holds a BFA in Drama from NYU. She is a sustaining member of her local public radio station. @nikkimjames

**Betsy Wolfe** can be seen in the hit Tony-nominated musical *Death Becomes Her* starring as Madeline Ashton. Most recently she earned wide critical acclaim starring as Joy, the title role in the new musical *JOY*. She previously wrapped her acclaimed tenure with *Juliet* as Anne Hathaway where her performance was nominated for the 2023 Tony Award for Best Featured Actress in a Musical. Wolfe is well known for her starring turns as Jenna Hunterson in the Tony-nominated *Waitress*, Cordelia in the Broadway revival of *Falsettos*, and Cathy in the celebrated off-Broadway revival of *The Last Five Years*. Her screen credits include the holiday film *Estella Scrooge: A Christmas Carol With A Twist*, the indie comedy *First One In*, and a guest-starring role on the CBS series *Instinct*. Other Broadway credits include: *Bullets Over Broadway* (Ellen), *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* (Rosa Bud), *110 in the Shade*, and *Everyday Rapture*. Wolfe made her Metropolitan Opera debut in *Die Fledermaus* and has appeared as a guest artist with more than 60 symphony, pops, and philharmonic orchestras worldwide, including the New York Philharmonic, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, The New York Pops, and the BBC Orchestra. A graduate of the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music with a BFA in musical theatre, Wolfe is also the founder of BroadwayEvolved, a groundbreaking training program for the next generation of performers, now in its eighth year. [www.betsywolfe.com](http://www.betsywolfe.com)  
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## **About New 42**

New 42 was founded to breathe new life into 42nd Street and its historic theaters, transforming the block into a vibrant and youthful theater district. Today and every day, we continue to spark awe and wonder, opening new worlds to young audiences through New Victory Theater, incubating new works at New 42 Studios, and paving new pathways to creative careers through our artist and mentorship programs. Under the leadership of President & CEO Russell Granet and Board Chairman Henry Tisch, New 42's mission is to make extraordinary performing arts a vital part of everyone's life from the earliest years onward. Driven for 35 years by the belief that the performing arts have the power to connect and change us all, we continue to expand what's possible for artists, audiences, and the future of the performing arts. New 42 is the recipient of a 2025 Tony Honor for Excellence in the Theatre.