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# 40th Anniversary

The New York 40

## Elizabeth Marvel

Ballsy theater actor, motherfucker By David Cote

## People we love

### The New York 40



They've ruled the city and tell us why the city rules.

[See who made the cut](#)

## Quiz

### Here's to...?

We asked each of the New York 40 to choose who they'd have a drink with.

[Guess who they picked](#)

### More notable New Yorkers

### Love 'em or hate 'em?



More New Yorkers we love.

[And hate, too](#)

### Hey, Neighbors!



Time Outs worldwide picked their own 40 peeps.

[The global who's who](#)



#### Who are your favorite New Yorkers?

**Elizabeth Marvel:** I've had the good fortune to be in the company of some great artists over the years. JoAnne Akalaitis is a big one. Lou Reed. David Byrne. [Kate Valk](#). I'm working with Austin Pendleton right now and I'd definitely put him on that list. Artists are my favorite New Yorkers, because they're my tribe.

#### I bet you had lean years in the beginning as an artist.

**Elizabeth Marvel:** I've been a lucky motherfucker. I don't know if it was a little window that I sneaked into the city through, but I came here for college—I went to Juilliard straight out of high school—and as an artist, I've been forged on the anvil of Manhattan. I never did a play before I came to New York, so everything is from this environment. And I have been given the opportunity to lead the life of an artist. I've never had another job, other than actor. It's not like it was handed to me, because I'm not a trust-fund kid and I don't have any relatives who are remotely in the business, but I did have the good fortune of getting in with artists and becoming part of a community.

#### What is the biggest thing to happen in New York in the past few years?

**Elizabeth Marvel:** Of course, it's impossible to even start that conversation without mentioning 9/11. But I think New York is a microcosm of the world—not the United States, the world. What's happened in the last 15 years of the city has been happening in the world: social injustice, socioeconomic extremities, the housing situation, education—you could go on and on. That's if you look at the difficult developments. But it's such a fascinating place, and if you're an artist you want to stay, even if the big, fat money genie calls from Los Angeles. Manhattan always cannibalizes itself, so you're always having these experiences where you turn a corner onto 23rd and Eleventh Avenue and go, "Hey, I used to have a loft here. Now it's Stella McCartney, or whatever." You can never settle in. That's a good state to be in.

#### Do you have a favorite place in New York?

**Elizabeth Marvel:** Something that really soothed me when I was at Juilliard—which was kind of a psychologically barbaric environment—was the Henry Moore sculpture in the square at Lincoln Center. That's always been a special place for me. And [Bethesda Fountain](#) [in Central Park]. My son always wants to see the pretty angel.

#### What's your personal favorite moment in New York?

**Elizabeth Marvel:** I have so many of them. What first comes to mind? I was outside of this

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diner on Columbus Ave, my fourth year at Juilliard, when I was doing *Angels in America*, and Tony Kushner came outside. My class was there and he was having lunch with us. I went out to have a cigarette, and he chased me out. And he gave me a really astonishing compliment. I remember thinking at that moment, I could do anything.

**Wow. Was Kushner specific?**

**Elizabeth Marvel:** He was, but I won't be. It was a private thing.

**What's the future of New York?**

**Elizabeth Marvel:** I look at a lot of artists coming in, and because of finances, there is this phenomenon of the trust-fund artist. Because they're the only ones who can afford to be artists. But then there are the ones who come here anyway, because we can cobble it together month to month. If I could wish anything from an acting point of view, I'd wish a rep company on New York City. I think it's possible. I'd even summon the challenge to [Mayor Bloomberg](#): Create a company of actors and give them a living wage. Not minimum wage. I'd lay down that gauntlet. I know that people say all the best actors have gone to L.A. for work, but that's bullshit. L.A. is the Medicis for today. They subsidize my art. But look at who gathered together for *The Coast of Utopia*. That wasn't just a three-month commitment. Give an actor an opportunity to grow as an artist, and anyone worth their salt will jump on it.

**If you could have a drink with anyone on the Top 40 list, who would it be?**

**Elizabeth Marvel:** I'd love to have a cup a coffee with [Stephen Colbert](#) and have him teach me about satire.

**What does *Time Out* mean to you?**

**Elizabeth Marvel:** I use it all the time. I constantly find things to do with my son. I'm not one of those people who lives here and never goes to anything. I go to museums all the time. Or to the 92nd Street Y or to readings. I love taking advantage of all the wonderful things happening in the city. That's why I live here and why my husband [actor Bill Camp] and I decided to raise our son here. There are so many great things to do for free, which is important if you're an artist. I use *Time Out* all the time as a resource.

**Complete the sentence: New York is...**

**Elizabeth Marvel:** I don't know what to say! I'm trying to be clever, but I'm just a mom. Hmmm. New York is a great place to be a mom, because you don't have to be embarrassed about going to the supermarket at nine in the morning looking like a schlub. Nobody cares.

**You've done so many amazing roles. Is there any one you'd want to return to for a do-over?**

**Elizabeth Marvel:** Oh my God, all the time. It's one of the gazillion reasons I'm so jealous of the Brits, they have such a different relationship to theater. It's not uncommon to have several productions of a play, and it's not uncommon for an actor to have several chances at the same role in their lifetime. I had the good fortune of playing Lady M, Blanche, Hedda and some other people early in my life, when I was in my twenties or early thirties. They're roles that most people take on at a later point. I am looking forward to revisiting them all. But there are some roles—like *Rosalind*, which I did with director Garland Wright—where I feel I did everything I would ever want to do with it. I feel completed and done. But I hope two or three more shots at Lady M, and maybe I'll get the tip of that iceberg.

[Next: Richard Serra >](#)

**The New York 40:**

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