

Media Release

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Mamma Knows Best!

Florentine Opera Presents a Comedic Spin on Opera Behind the Scenes

MILWAUKEE, WI – [Tuesday, February 18, 2025] – [The Florentine Opera](http://TheFlorentineOpera.org) invites you to an uproarious evening of comedy, chaos, and diva-level drama with **Donizetti's *Viva la Mamma!* – March 21 and 23, 2025, at the Pitman Theater, Alverno College.**

In this rollicking send-up of opera itself, backstage shenanigans take center stage as a hapless troupe tries (and fails spectacularly) to mount a new production. Enter Mamma Agata, the outrageous stage mom who stops at nothing to secure her daughter's spotlight—even if it means stealing it herself!

Bonus Performance:

Kick off the evening with a special prologue! An operatic intermezzo, *Il maestro di cappella* by Domenico Cimarosa, will set the stage with its delightful charm. This 20-minute gem offers a perfect prelude to the main event.

A New Venue for Florentine Opera:

The Florentine Opera is thrilled to bring this production to the Pitman Theater at Alverno College (3431 S 39th St, Milwaukee, WI 53215). Pitman Theater is acoustically pleasing for opera and includes a large parking lot, which sets the stage for a smooth evening.

Directed by Milwaukee Favorite [Jill Anna Ponasik](#)

Known for her innovative and captivating productions, Ponasik brings her signature touch to *Viva la Mamma!*.

A Word from Maggey Oplinger, General Director & CEO:

"When we first heard this great piece, Francesco and I couldn't stop laughing with delight. So much of Donizetti's comedy is frothy; this is sharp, hilarious, and the opera tropes that served as fodder when this was written hold amazingly true. I could only picture Patrick Carfizzi in this role, as he brought down the house in *Barber of Seville* in 2023. Not only did he jump at the role of Mamma Agata, he proposed an Easter Egg - a mini opera with a similar sense of humor, a sendup of the conductor! So I'm delighted to bring this to Milwaukee. If you love Italian opera and comedy, this is for you."

Starring Patrick Carfizzi:

Acclaimed American bass-baritone [Patrick Carfizzi](#) leads the cast as Mamma Agata. Carfizzi's illustrious career includes roles at the Metropolitan Opera, Houston Grand Opera, and LA Opera. In the 2023-2024 season alone, he appeared as Bartolo in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* at LA Opera and as Fra Melitone in a new production of *La Forza del Destino* at the Met, conducted by Yannick Nézet-Séguin. Carfizzi's comedic brilliance and commanding presence promise to shine in this role. **New York Times** wrote about Carfizzi calling him "the 'Heart and Soul' of the Met Opera." [Read full article here.](#)

Featuring Local Talent:

This performance also highlights the exceptional artistry of [Alissa Jordheim](#), a Baumgartner Studio Artist alum, and [Dr. Aaron Agulay](#), baritone and Head of Voice and Opera Studies at the Peck School of the Arts, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Dr. Agulay's extensive experience includes performances across prestigious venues worldwide, from Opernhaus Zürich to Carnegie Hall.

Performance Details:

- **Friday, March 21, 2025, at 7:30 PM**
- **Sunday, March 23, 2025, at 2:30 PM**
- Run Time: 90 minutes (no intermission)
- Rated PG
- Performed in Italian with English supertitles

Behind-the-Curtain Insight:

Want to delve deeper into the chaos and comedy of *Viva la Mamma!?* Join us for **Versed**, a free discussion on March 3, 2025, at 5:30 PM at the Lueders Opera Center in Riverwest. Discover the inspiration behind the production, meet the creative minds bringing it to life, and get an insider's look at the opera's staging.

Tickets On Sale Now:

Tickets are available through the Florentine Opera Box Office at www.florentineopera.org or by calling 414.291.5700. Don't miss this wildly entertaining peek behind the curtain!

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ABOUT THE FLORENTINE OPERA COMPANY

We've been bringing a little bit of the world to Milwaukee since 1933. We're on a journey of discovery, exploring the glory of the human voice. We're a powerhouse for all different voices and stories, which have endured through the centuries and resonate with our humanity and passion. We're a live, supersized experience, created in-the-moment through theater, staging, lighting, lavish costumes, and beautiful song, bringing you the most immersive and all-encompassing artistic experience possible. Join us for a live performance that will sweep you off your feet.