

â??The Forkâ??: A Music-Filled Farcical Feast with Heart

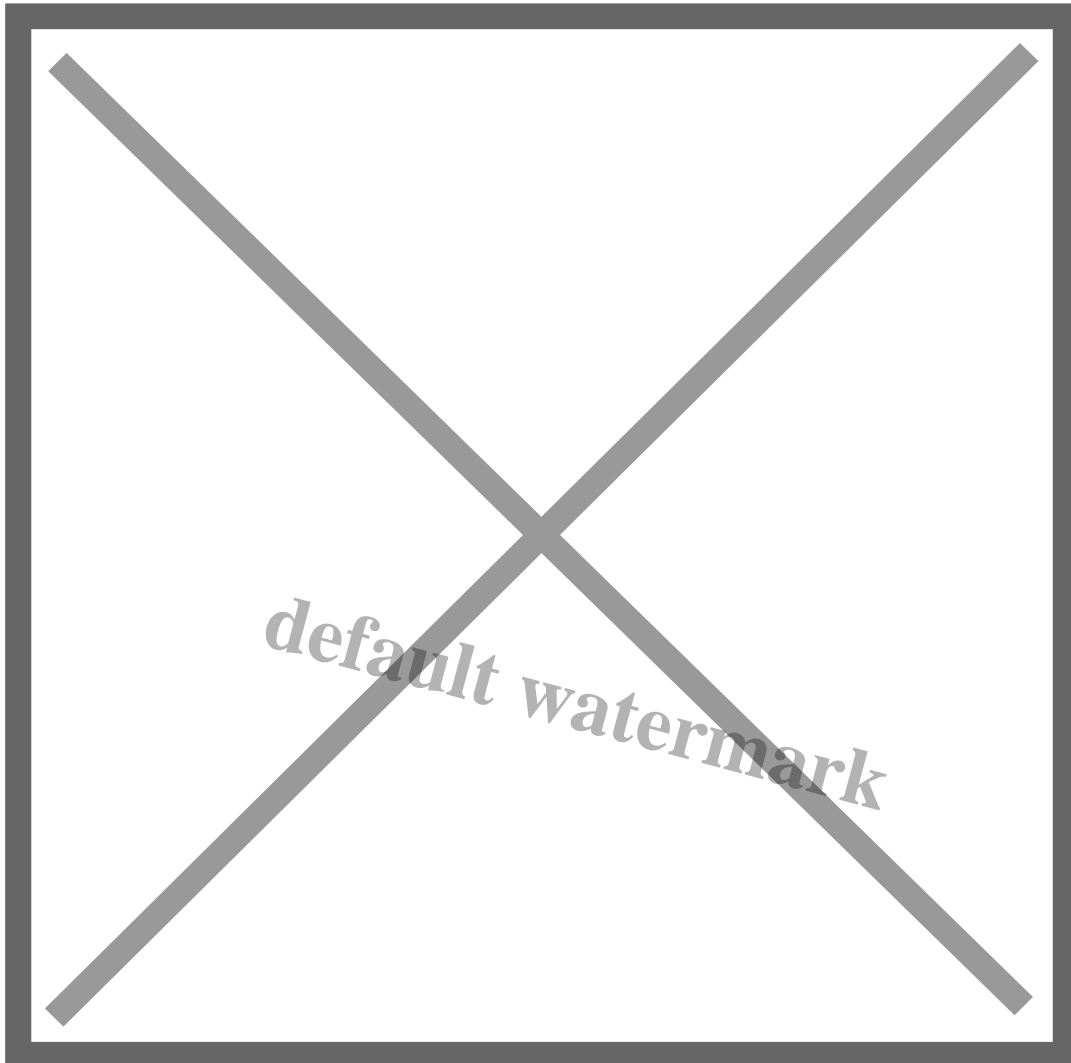
Description

Provo, UT â?? At The Hive Collaborative this summer, the humble utensil becomes a cosmic metaphor. In *The Fork*, a fast-paced and heartfelt musical comedy running through July 11, a single dinnerâ??and one fateful decisionâ??unleashes a series of chaotic, timeline-splitting events.

But *The Fork* is more than just a clever title or showâ??itâ??s a passion project thirty years in the making. Co-written by brothers **Ken Agle** and **Dennis Agle**, and brought to life by a family-led creative team, this world premiere is as much about legacy as it is about laughs. What started as a throwaway joke in a Pasadena diner has been lovingly transformed into a full-scale farce with operatic ambition, homemade charm, and genuine heart.

Donâ??t be fooled by the flying meatballs and timeline loops: *The Fork* doesnâ??t just serve punchlinesâ??it surprises you with moments of deep emotional resonance. Itâ??s both a theatrical romp and a quiet triumph, the kind of new work that makes you laugh until you cryâ?! and then cry because you laughed so hard.

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SUMMARY OF THE PLAY

Modern-day Little Italy, New York: From Pasta to Puccini! *The Fork* whisks audiences into a whirlwind of culinary comedy and musical mayhem as brothers Carlo and Matteo fight to save their failing Italian restaurant—and their lifelong dream of writing an opera. Everything rides on impressing *The Fork*, a feared food critic whose review could make or break them.

But this isn't just any restaurant. The restaurant sits atop land where the great composer Giacomo Puccini himself once stood. Anyone who enters is said to be struck by *the fire of Puccini*, suddenly bursting into song.

One meatball mishap later, timelines split, identities collide, and melodies erupt as the brothers and their quirky guests spiral into chaos. This musical farce serves up a deliciously chaotic evening of music, memory, and meatballs.



From the Program

A FAMILY AFFAIR (30 YEARS IN THE MAKING)

One of the most charming details about *The Fork* lies offstage: this show has been simmering for over three decades. Co-writers Dennis and Ken Agle originally dreamed up the concept in the early 2000s over Diet Cokes in Pasadena. It started as a goofy screenplay idea about a food critic and a golden fork sat in creative hibernation for years until it resurfaced—first as a 10-minute play, then as a staged reading, and finally, now, as a full-fledged musical.

Their journey is chronicled in Eugene Dennis’s delightful blog post, [“The Fork’s Journey, Chapter 5”](#) which details the show’s long road to the stage: from vaults of forgotten ideas and banana-refrigerated theatres, to Kickstarter setbacks, health crises, and a renewed commitment to storytelling in 2020. It’s a rare and beautiful thing to see a passion project with this kind of persistence—and even rarer for it to be this much fun.

Production Highlights

The Fork thrives on tightly choreographed chaos, thanks to the sharp direction of **Ken Agle**, who not only co-wrote the show with brother **Dennis Agle**, but also crafts its farcical rhythm with precision and

heart. The stage is constantly alive: servers dodge swinging doors, forks clatter to the floor, and actors navigate split timelines with blink-and-youâ??ll-miss-it agility. The Hiveâ??s intimate space is transformed into a lively, crumbling Italian restaurantâ??complete with flickering signage, precarious platters, and enough pasta props to feed a small countryâ??thanks to the detailed and resourceful scenic work led by **Davis Agle**, who also serves as Tech Director and Props Master.

Visually, the production is both lovingly handmade and endlessly inventive. **Sophie Agle**â??s dual role as Costume Designer and Stage Manager keeps the cast flowing in and out of chaos with visual flair and tight backstage coordination. The hair and makeup design by **Katie Millet Agle** supports the character types and comedic beats with just the right amount of exaggerationâ??especially in Jacques Lâ??Amourâ??s over-the-top elegance and Eva Spamoniâ??s theatrical glam.

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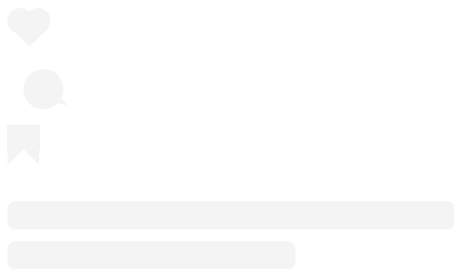


From the moment you step into the theatre, youâ??re not just watching a showâ??youâ??re dining in an Italian restaurant. With complimentary meatball cake pops, authentic Italian candies, and a pre-show playlist filled with Italian classics, the production sets the mood before a single line is spoken. The immersive environment extends to the scenic design and staging, which transform the blackbox space into a bustling, crumbling trattoria with uncanny charm. Itâ??s a level of intimacy and interactivity that would be difficult to replicate in a large proscenium houseâ??but here, in The Hive Collaborativeâ??s intimate venue, itâ??s pitch-perfect.



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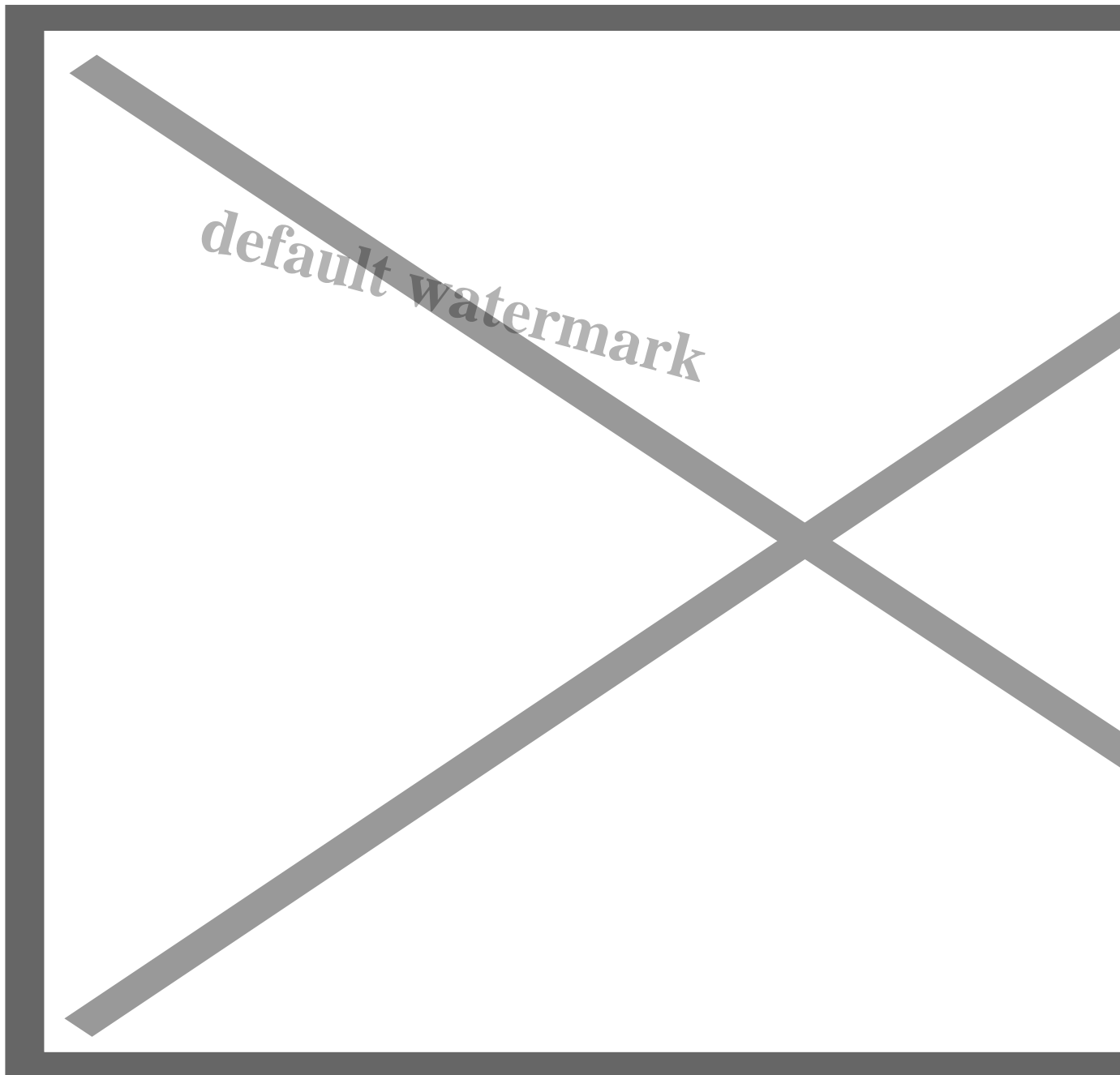


A post shared by The Hive Collaborative (@thehivecollaborative)

Musically, **Aaron Edson**â??s original score is a buffet of playful styles. From patter-filled comic numbers about risotto disasters to full-throated ballads about artistic regret, the music balances parody

with sincerity. A quasi-operatic quartet sung entirely while setting the dinner table borders on genius, while an unexpected aria about burnt sauce delivers real emotional weight. Under the guidance of **Esther Slaeker**, who doubles as Music Director and performer, the vocal performances are tightly tuned and emotionally grounded.

Not every number lands. Some of the early Act I songs between Carlo and Matteo carry narrative weight but lack the lyrical spark and melodic impact found elsewhere. Still, Act II feels sharper and more self-assured, using musical reprises and operatic motifs to comedic and emotional effect.



Adam Hartshorn as Matteo, **Jacob Baird as Carlo**, **Nathan Agle as Jacque Lâ??Amour**, and **Ioane Camacho as The Fork**. Photos provided by The Hive Collaborative.

Meet the Cast: Matteo, Carlo, Eva, Janey, Jacque, The Fork, Mama, Officer Martin

The cast shines under this creative leadership. Chemistry between leads is essential in a show that hinges on sibling rivalry, and this ensemble delivers. Whether executing physical gags or singing tender harmonies, the performers find the sweet spot between absurdity and sincerity—a tone cultivated not just onstage, but through a creative team clearly working in harmony behind the scenes.

In *The Fork*, the women deliver the show's vocal knockouts. **Esther Slaeker** (Eva Spamoni) blazes through *The Woman Behind the Man* with rage, wit, and near-operatic intensity. **Sydney Olson** (Janey Laskowitz) pulls off lyrical acrobatics in *One Call, That's All*, a rapid-fire anthem of overachieving millennial energy.

Meanwhile, the men bring the laughs—**Jacob Baird** (Carlo), **Adam Hartshorn** (Matteo) and **Nathan Agle** nail the physical comedy bringing dysfunction with effortless timing.

But it's *Papa's Pesto*, sung by **Ioane Camacho** that brings the emotional heart of the show into focus. A quiet, nostalgic ballad amid the chaos, it recalls childhood, family, and the way food becomes memory. In a musical filled with slapstick, satire, and surrealism, this tender moment of remembrance ties everything together. It's not just about a dish—it's about legacy, love, and what we carry with us when dreams get delayed but never disappear.



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Ioane Camacho as The Fork. Photos provided by The Hive Collaborative.

Papa's Pesto sung by Ioane Camacho brings the emotional heart of the show into focus. It's not just about a dish—it's about legacy, love, and what we carry with us.
â??Rhetorical Reviewâ??

Jacob Baird as Carlo

Baird plays the older brother with exasperated precision—a rule-following perfectionist whose idea of control unravels the moment dinner is served. His comedic timing is sharp, but it's his quieter moments—especially his interactions with his brother.

Adam Hartshorn as Matteo

The yin to Carlo's yang, Hartshorn's Matteo is all impulse, charm, and chaotic good. With a physical comedy style reminiscent of classic vaudeville, Hartshorn delivers laughs—his expressive face adding to the fun with every entrance, but brings depth as we learn about his artistic dreams to write music with his brother and keep the family business alive.

Adam Hartshorn as Matteo, Sydney Olson as Janey Laskowitz
Adam Hartshorn as Matteo (left), Sydney Olson as Janey Laskowitz (right). Photos provided by The Hive Collaborative.

Meet the Cast: Matteo, Carlo, Eva, Janey, Jacque, The Fork, Mama, Officer Martin

Esther Slaeker as Eva Spamoni

Slaeker brings swagger and spice to Eva, the assistant to *â??The Fork.â??* Her powerhouse vocals and withering side-eyes steal every scene she's in—particularly during the second-act song, *â??The Woman Behind the Manâ??*.

Ioane Camacho as The Fork

As the titular mystery critic, Camacho is both ominous and oddly elegant. With a performance that's part judge, Camacho delivers deadpan lines with surgical precision and brings a magnetic stillness to scenes that teeter on the absurd.

Sydney Olson as Janey Laskowitz

Olson shines as Janey, the aspiring counselor and plant lady. With bubbly charisma and a surprisingly nuanced arc, Olson turns what could have been a caricature into a charming, scene-stealing presence, and blows the audience away with *â??One Call, That's All.â??*



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Nathan Agle as Jacque Lâ??Amour

Agle hams it up gloriously in the role of Jacque Lâ??Amour, playing the melodramatic maÃtre dâ?? of a popular restaurant next door, La BohÃme. Itâ??s hard not to suspect the role was written with him in mindâ??and given his family ties to the playwrights, that might not be far off. His entrance alone earns him laughs but itâ??s his operatic outbursts and flair for the absurd that keep the audience giggling long after heâ??s left the stage.

Juliet Wendels as Mama

As the heart of the family, Wendels brings warmth, wisdom, and just the right dash of comic menace.

She makes her entrance in hair curlers and a robe, radiating mischief with every step. Whether meddling in her sons' affairs or sneaking a bottle of wine, her presence grounds the show with humor and a deep sense of home.

Hunter Aro as Officer Martin

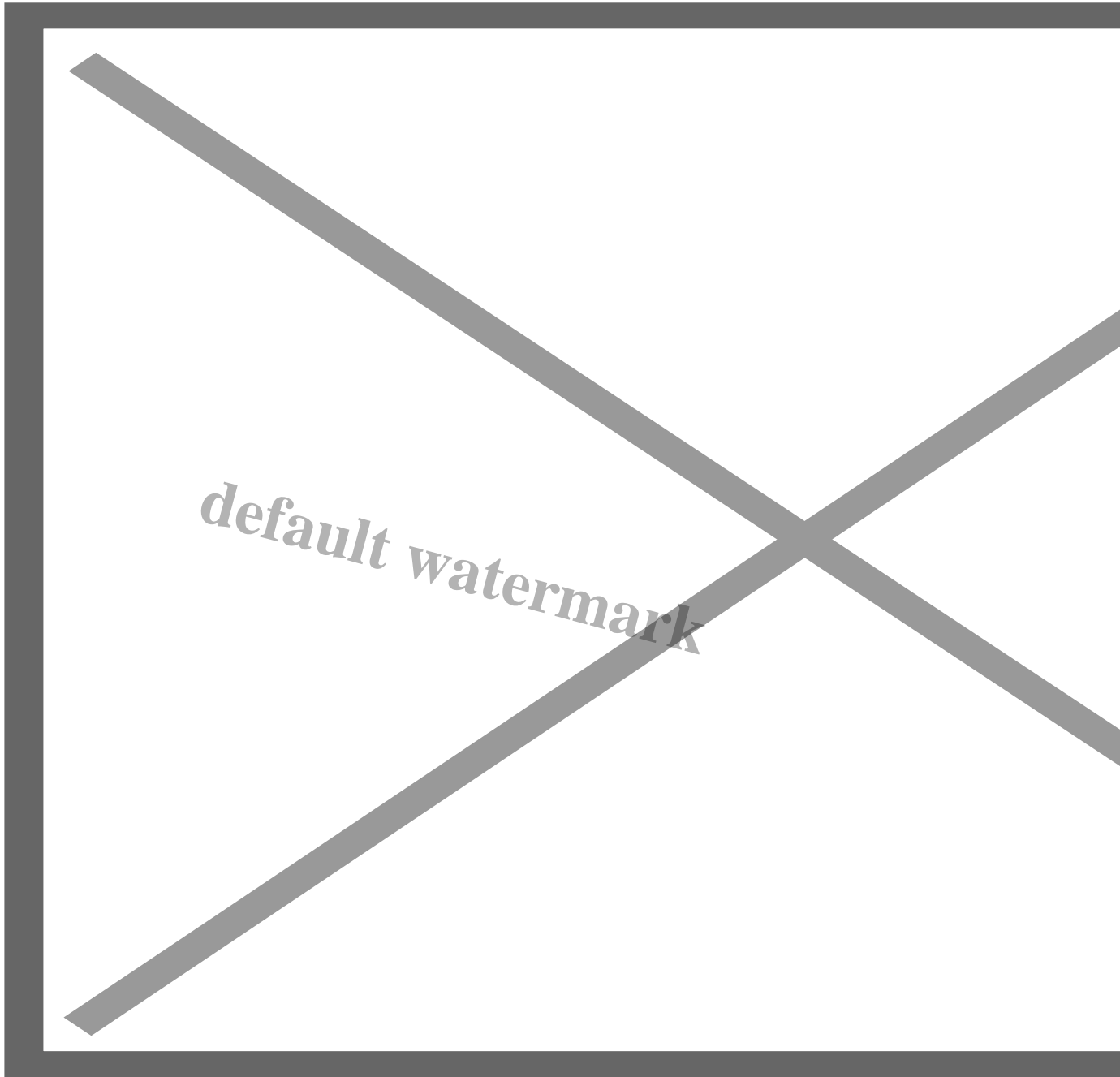
Aro delivers a standout comic performance as both narrator and the sensible police officer caught in the chaos. With an impeccable New Yorker accent and sharp comedic timing, he bridges the action with wry commentary and clever asides. His playful interactions with the audience—especially at the beginning and during intermission—add a layer of immersive fun, making him one of the production's most delightfully self-aware characters.

The cast of *The Fork* brings big energy, vocal versatility, and an unshakable commitment to the show's blend of operatic flair and physical comedy. Each performer leans fully into their character, making even the most absurd situations feel oddly grounded—and delightfully over-the-top.

Comedy is king in *The Fork*, but what elevates it is its deep affection for its characters.

—Rhetorical Review—

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Adam Hartshorn as Matteo and **Jacob Baird as Carlo**. Photos provided by The Hive Collaborative.

Comedy is King

Make no mistake: *The Fork* is a comedy first. Fast-paced, farcical, and full of linguistic (and literal) pratfalls, it delivers consistent laughs without relying on cheap gags. Instead, it builds comedy from character quirks, improbable coincidences, and the absurd seriousness with which it treats its own ridiculous premise.

There's also a surprising emotional core. Beneath the flying forks and fractured timelines is a sincere meditation on sibling rivalry, ambition, and the risks we take to be understood.

The farce elements are textbook, but executed with fresh energy. Slamming doors, broken bottles, and escalating misunderstandings unfold with pitch-perfect rhythm.
â??Rhetorical Reviewâ??

Though it dabbles in philosophical questions about fate and free will, *The Fork* never loses sight of its primary mission: to be funny. And it isâ??consistently, inventively, and often uproariously so. The farce elements are textbook, but executed with fresh energy. Slamming doors, mixed-up identities, mistaken identities, and escalating misunderstandings unfold with pitch-perfect rhythm.

Yet, what elevates *The Fork* beyond typical dinner theatre satire is its affection for its characters. The show gently mocks their flaws while also affirming their dreams. Whether itâ??s a monologue about opera as an escape from grief or a ridiculous bit involving a possessed bread basket, every moment is anchored in character-driven humor rather than cheap laughs.

The Fork may not know exactly what genre it belongs toâ??but it knows exactly how to entertain.
â??Rhetorical Reviewâ??

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Critique: Is This an Opera?

Which begs the question—what exactly *is The Fork*? Is it an opera? A musical? A farce with songs? I think the confusion comes from the fact that it is labeled as “Puccini.”

While the show borrows operatic elements—recitatives, heightened emotion, thematic motifs—*The Fork* is firmly rooted in musical theatre and farce. The score leans more comedic Broadway than classical, and that’s to its advantage. It plays with grandeur but isn’t beholden to it, using operatic style as flavor rather than form.

This genre-blending mostly works, though the tonal shifts aren’t always seamless. Some early Act I scenes and songs—particularly between Carlo and Matteo—drag slightly or feel underbaked. A few trimmed monologues or tighter reprises would help Act I move with the same momentum that powers the sharper, more confident Act II.

Still, these are minor bumps in an otherwise deliciously odd and daring theatrical recipe. *The Fork* may not know exactly what genre it belongs to—but it knows exactly how to entertain.

Final Thoughts:

The Fork is a rare and refreshing creation—an original story, locally made, and lovingly performed. It’s the kind of show that reminds you why we go to the theatre: to laugh, to feel, to feast on the absurd, and to remember that even in fractured timelines, we can find our way back to each other. In a political climate that often feels exhausting, *The Fork* doesn’t just serve punchlines—it feeds the heart.

<https://www.instagram.com/thehivecollaborative/p/DLLCZBuxGkl>

SHOW INFO

The Fork

• The Hive Collaborative (not to be confused with The Hive Theatre), Provo, Utah

Address: The Hive Collaborative, 290 W 600 S, Provo, UT 84601, USA

• June 18 – July 11, 2025

Book by Dennis and Ken Agle

Music by Aaron Edson

• Tickets: <https://www.thehivecollaborative.com/shows/thefork> • \$25 general admission

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/thehivecollaborative/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/hivetix>

Contact: contact@thehivecollaborative.com

Creative Team • The Fork

Ken Agle • Director & Writer

Dennis Agle • Writer

Aaron Edson • Music Composer

Esther Slaeker â?? Music Director
Coppelia Agle â?? Producer
Sophie Agle â?? Costume Designer & Stage Manager
Katie Millet Agle â?? Hair & Makeup
Davis Agle â?? Tech Director & Props Master
Caleb Ceran â?? Artist

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