

BEST OF FALL

MUSIC



UNEXPECTED PLEASURES

Opera-star-in-waiting Ambur Braid keeps audiences on their toes in the COC's Die Fledermaus

AMBUR BRAID'S WARM SHEEN OF A VOICE, not to mention her sheer gorgeousness, have landed the young soprano a big, juicy part in the COC's production of *Die Fledermaus*. Fuelled by champagne and waltzes, Johann Strauss's comedy of mistaken identities follows the nocturnal adventures of a philandering party boy and his equally mischievous wife. Braid sings the part of the wife's scheming chambermaid, Adele. The character is most often played as a giddy social climber, but the 29-year-old Braid has other ideas. "I'm not the typical voice for Adele," she says, "and I'm not going to be the bubbly version." Braid has always followed her own

unpredictable path, even changing the spelling of her first name in Grade 4 after deciding she wanted to be a singer. ("I just didn't like the way the E looked," she says.) As a child, she preferred *Wozzeck*, Alban Berg's gnarly, atonal masterpiece, to Puccini's guaranteed audience pleaser *Madame Butterfly*, which put her to sleep. Braid has unleashed her enormous talent in unlikely places, doing one-off performances with Broken Social Scene and Austra at COC galas, opening for Tony Bennett and providing musical accompaniment for a lingerie fashion show. Opera fans can be sticklers for tradition; Braid will soon cure them of that.

OPERA
DIE FLEDERMAUS
OCT. 4 TO NOV. 3

FOUR SEASONS CENTRE

PHOTOGRAPH BY HELENE CYR