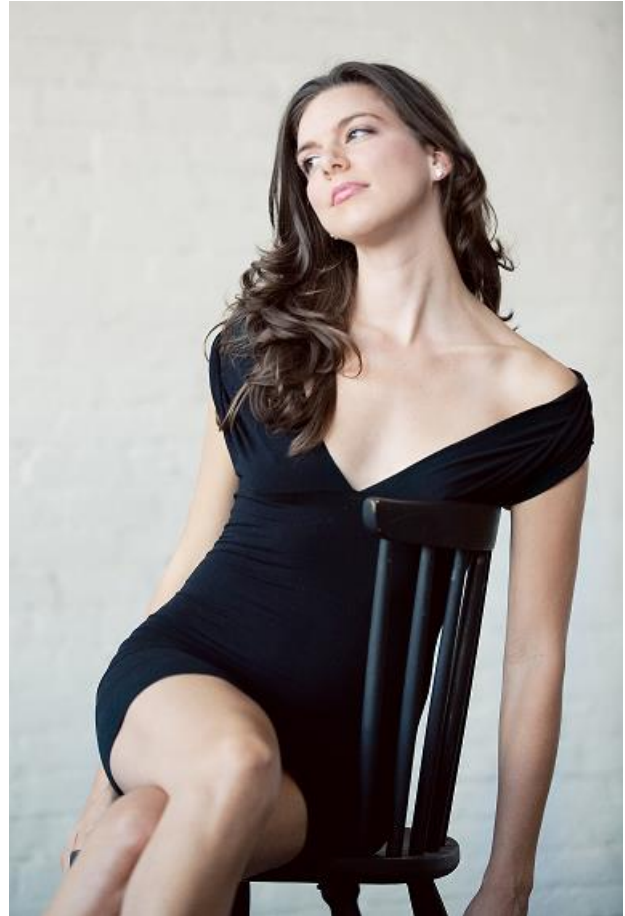


Ambur Braid
soprano

2017 – 2018 Season



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Ambur Braid **soprano**

Ambur Braid has been praised as a “powerful soprano” by the *New York Times* and “a class unto herself” (*Frankfurter Allgemeine*), delivering her portrayals with an “unhinged intensity.”

In the 2017-2018 season, Ambur will sing her first performances of Puccini’s iconic *Tosca* in a return to the Calgary Opera and will debut with the National Arts Centre Orchestra in Ottawa singing Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9. She recently appeared as The Queen in a new production of Křenek’s *Das geheime Königreich* at Oper Frankfurt, a thrilling performance the *Frankfurter Allgemeine* called “a mixture of Zerbinetta, Kundry, and Lady Macbeth.” In the 2018-2019 season, Ambur will join the ensemble at Oper Frankfurt singing leading roles of her repertoire in exciting new productions. Recently, Ambur returned to the Canadian Opera Company as the Queen of the Night in *Die Zauberflöte* conducted by Bernard Labadie and a highly-acclaimed portrayal of Dalinda in Richard Jones’s production of *Ariodante* conducted by Johannes Debus. She made her UK debut as a formidable Queen of the Night in Simon McBurney’s production of *The Magic Flute* at the English National Opera, a role she also sang for Calgary Opera and her German debut at Oper Frankfurt. She debuted at Teatro de São Carlos in Lisbon as Anne Truelove in a new production of *The Rake’s Progress* conducted by Joana Carneiro and made her New York debut at National Sawdust in Christopher Alden’s production of Handel’s rarity *Aci, Galatea e Polifemo* with countertenor Anthony Roth Costanzo.

Ambur is an alumna of the Canadian Opera Company Studio where she has performed Vitellia in *La clemenza di Tito*, the title role in *Semele*, and Adele in Christopher Alden’s dark production of *Die Fledermaus*. She has also covered the role of Elisabetta in Donizetti’s *Roberto Devereux* and Clémence in Kaija Saariaho’s *L’amour de loin* as a member of the Studio. Other appearances with the COC include Amore in *Orfeo ed Euridice*, The Greek Woman in *Iphigénie en Tauride*, and the Danish Lady in *Death in Venice*. She received degrees from the Glenn Gould School of the Royal Conservatory of Music and San Francisco Conservatory.

PRESS ACCLAIM

Aci, Galatea, e Polifemo at National Sawdust

"A powerful soprano... Ms. Braid, when in despair, allowed her gleaming sound to turn acidic and steely. In this staging, a climactic aria for Aci becomes a veritable mad scene, which Ms. Braid delivered with unhinged intensity."

- Anthony Tommasini, *New York Times*, July 14, 2017

The Queen in Křenek's *Das geheime Königreich* at Oper Frankfurt

"Ambur Braid as a champagne-colored coloratura in a pleated blouse is in a class unto herself when she sings the Queen, a mixture of Zerbinetta, Kundry, and Lady Macbeth."

- Jan Brachmann, *Frankfurter Allgemeine*, May 4, 2017

Dalinda in *Ariodante* at the Canadian Opera Company

"Archibald is supported by exceptionally fine singing from both Canadian soprano Ambur Braid, making her role debut as Dalinda, and Armenian mezzo-soprano Varduhi Abrahamyan as Polinesso. From the start Braid portrays Dalinda, so infatuated with the unkind Polinesso, as socially awkward and perhaps mentally disturbed. Braid's soprano has a darker hue than Archibald's but she is equally at ease in coloratura passagework. One of her finest moments is the aria "Se tanto piace al cor" in which she expresses a battered woman's hope that Polinesso's cruelty may eventually lead to tenderness. The other is Dalinda's great aria of anger and repentance "Neghittosi or voi che fate?" where Braid's superb vocal control only heightens the aria's emotions."

- Christopher Hoile, *Opera News*

"Of particular note were Ambur Braid and Alice Coote, whose voices sailed wilfully through their arias. Coote's coloratura injected a complex depth to her character that would have broken this opera very quickly in lesser hands."

- Michael Vincent, *Toronto Star*, October 2016

"Ambur Braid, who steals the show as Dalinda.. it was Braid and not Archibald or Abrahamyan who was the most interesting character onstage, a flawed individual right on the boundary between pathos and humour, many of her lines drawing nervous giggles from the audience."

- Leslie Barcza, *Barczablog*, October 2016

Queen of the Night in *The Magic Flute* at English National Opera

"Ambur Braid makes an exceptional UK debut bringing the right combination of fear and allure to the Queen of the Night, and achieving a fine balance between clarity and nuance in her sound in 'Der Hölle Rache'."

- Sam Smith, *MusicOMH*, February 6, 2016

Ambur Braid

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“As the denizen of darkness, Canadian soprano Ambur Braid was a formidable Queen of the Night, her upper register impressively firm and all notes hit in the merciless ‘Der Hölle Rache’.”

- John E. de Wald, *Opera Britannia*, February 6, 2016

Anne Truelove in *The Rake's Progress* at Teatro de São Carlos in Lisbon

“Anne Truelove, the only "positive" character of *The Rake's Progress*, a woman with true love (even in name) was treated with special care in this production. Helped by the good performance of Canadian Ambur Braid, who managed at the same time to give body and voice to the only truly operatic character from beginning to end, but with a greater complexity than usual and using a more dramatic soprano at times.”

- Pedro Boléo, *Público*, June 1, 2015

Konstanze in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* with Opéra Atelier

“We finally meet the show’s leading lady and Ambur Braid is everything you want a Konstanze to be and more. She has beauty and stature and poise, but the best part is that she (and Pynkoski) are constantly willing to mock these traits, having her don spectacles or fall onto the floor in unattractive positions. She also is the possessor of a sly wit that this master manipulator of a woman needs...”

Oh yes, her voice is also something to write home to mother about, if you wanted mother to know you were seeing a girl so deliciously urbane. As she demonstrated in last season’s *The Magic Flute*, she can deliver the trifecta of crystalline high notes, blissfully graceful vocal cadenzas and deep emotional intensity that Mozart liked all his leading sopranos to possess.”

- Richard Ouzounian, *Toronto Star*, October 27, 2013

“Ambur Braid, the aristocratic Konstanze to the earthier Blonde, sang her part with great skill (and Mozart gave Konstanze some very tricky things to sing)...”

- Robert Harris, *The Globe & Mail*, October 27, 2013

“Ambur Braid’s Konstanze met the challenges of her role in an unexpected way. There’s the big aria “*Martern aller Arten*” for example, where one sometimes sees a singer gamely struggle. Not only did Braid make it look easy, but of course Pynkoski & Zingg make this hysterically funny. I won’t say how...It’s wonderfully funny, owing much to Braid’s comic gift, which we saw amply displayed last year in *Die Fledermaus*. Yes Braid can sing, but she’s very smart and never dull.”

- *Barczablog*, October 25, 2013

“In her first Konstanze, Ambur Braid impressed with stratospheric high notes and coloratura facility...”

- Joseph So, *La Scena Musicale*, October 28, 2013

Ambur Braid
soprano

The Queen of the Night in *Die Zauberflöte* with Opéra Atelier

“There was, however, a wonderful wake-up call given the production by Ambur Braid as the Queen of the Night. She eschewed the diva-esque posturing that many women adopt for the role and gave us instead a ravishing creature of glacially cold evil, which made the sharply carved icicle notes she dispensed during her signature Act II aria seem all the more appropriate.”

- Richard Ouzounian, *Toronto Star*, April 7, 2013

“Ambur Braid more than carried off her two great arias as The Queen of the Night, with their cruelly difficult and stratospheric ranges. To her great credit, she broke through the merely technical challenges of the role to project a real malevolence.”

- Robert Harris, *The Globe and Mail*, April 7, 2013

“Ambur Braid brought the house down with her Queen of the Night’s Aria.”

- John Terauds, *Musical Toronto*, April 6, 2013

“Ambur Braid’s two difficult turns as Queen of the Night were thrilling to hear and her bravery was encouraged by the audience. By the middle of the famous ‘Der Hölle Rach’ aria, Ms. Braid had the wind in her sails and all was brilliant.”

- Anthony Kershaw, *Audiophilia*, April 6, 2013

Vitellia in *La clemenza di Tito* at the Canadian Opera Company

“Ambur Braid was our Vitellia, communicating malice with intense acting and a steely, tight vibrato. She cross-pollinated coloratura with verismo in Act 1; Non più di fiori, in Act 2, was nothing less than a mad scene. I must say this raven-haired Canadian does wicked rather well.”

- Arthur Kaptainis, *National Post*, February 7, 2013

“The standout has to be Ambur Braid’s Vitellia. She was so inside the character it was scary. She sang an extraordinary cadenza in her big first act aria and right at the end she produced a veiled tone that was weird, disturbing and exactly right...She’s not the most perfect technical singer. Her runs don’t have the Brigade of Guards precision of a Sumi Jo but it doesn’t matter. She is so “in the moment”. Would it be ridiculous to invoke Maria Callas? (not that Ambur sounds remotely like Maria Callas). Callas wasn’t technically perfect but she was very, very special. In her way, so is Ambur. And, doesn’t this rather give the lie to the notion that Young Artists Programs only produce technically efficient, bland singers?”

- *Operaramblings*, February 7, 2013

“The Vitellia is Ambur Braid - an extraordinarily versatile singer who seems able to turn her voice to anything. Well who knows? But the Vitellia displayed vocal beauty and technical assurance in abundance, as well as another fiery theatrical presence. I can only assume that Christopher Alden ignited these exceptional young women. Impressive anyway.”

- Brian Dickie, Blog, February 7, 2013

Ambur Braid
soprano

Adele in *Die Fledermaus* at the Canadian Opera Company

“Ambur Braid drops her maid’s gear to emerge in finery as the best Adele ever: sexy, sparky, sensational.”

- Richard Ouzounian, *Toronto Star*, October 4, 2012

“Ambur Braid’s Adèle, the maid who steals her mistress’ gown for the ball where she flirts with her mistress’ husband, is a show-stopper for comic acting, sparky singing and all-around glamour.”

- Stanley Fefferman, *Bachtrack*, October 8, 2012

“As Adele, COC Ensemble Studio soprano Ambur Braid sang well and exuded star power.”

- *La Scena Musicale*, October 7, 2012

“Wilson was matched by her maid Adele as portrayed by Ambur Braid. I’d been expecting to enjoy this portrayal, but was not prepared for how fully she inhabited the maid- who- becomes –Olga. While I’d seen the photos in the publicity, I was unprepared for the power (and comedy) of her transformation from the ugly duckling of Act I into the seductive Olga in Act II. Her rendition of the laughing song had a delightfully angry edge to it.”

- *Barczablog*, October 5, 2012

“Then there was the Adele of Ambur Braid. This was the role she’s been waiting for. The part sits nicely for her voice and she displayed comedic talents quite equal to Michael Schade. She’s also, of course, very sexy. Judging by the applause at curtain call time, she was the crowd’s favourite.”

- *Operaramblings*, October 5, 2012

Title role in the Ensemble performance of *Semele* at the Canadian Opera Company

“Braid had the meaty Act 3 [of *Semele*] and received the biggest ovations for her coloratura fireworks.”

- Joseph K. So, *Opera*, August 2012

“Ambur Braid used vocal power normally associated with Wagnerian sopranos to skillfully morph *Semele*'s characterization into the impassioned and forceful individual who thrusts everything aside in her (albeit unknowing) charge to the cattle-chute. Her performance of 'Myself I shall adore' was a spell-binding high point of the show.”

- Brian Hay, *No Rules-No Lights*

Queen of the Night in the Ensemble performance of *Die Zauberflöte* at the Canadian Opera Company

“Most of the Ensemble singers gave me more pleasure than did the big shots on opening night. The gap was particularly striking in the case of Ambur Braid, who applied a rich rather than merely brilliant voice to the Queen of the Night’s arias while successfully conveying the evil intentions of the character. By taking the tempo down a notch and

Ambur Braid

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paying attention to Mozart's phrasing, this Toronto soprano turned a stock figurine into a scary, knife-wielding matriarch."

- Arthur Kaptainis, *The National Post*

"Ambur Braid was champ as the Queen of the Night, earning huge applause for both of her arias. She brought a seductive presence to the stage with every entrance, always the focus whenever she appeared."

- *Barczablog*

Amore in Orfeo ed Euridice at the Canadian Opera Company

"Soprano Ambur Braid gave a clear and confident performance of Amore's two scenes."

- *The Globe and Mail*

"Ambur Braid, one of the stars of the COC Ensemble, held the stage pointedly as Amore, the capricious Cupid of the story."

- *The National Post*

"Soprano Ambur Braid was strong as Amore."

- *The Toronto Star*

"In Carsen's hands, the role of the God Amor (ably sung and acted by Ambur Braid) is Orfeo's double in the beginning and reappears at the end as Euridice's double."

- *Classissima*

"The performances are superb. Braid's Amore is characterful and spontaneous in voice and presence."

- *NOW Magazine*

"She plays Amore, goddess/god of love (she switches genders midway through the show). She is tall, thin, with Audrey Hepburn eyes, long auburn hair, and perfect teeth."

- Tom Jokinen, *The Walrus*

Christina and Louis Quilico Awards

"A dramatic coloratura, Braid sang with big, rich tone, remarkable accuracy in her fioratura and secure high notes, including the single F near the end."

- *La Scena Musicale*