



Press Release Salzburg Festival 2026

Cast Change in the New Production *Ariadne auf Naxos*

(SF, 26 May 2026) To her great regret, **Elīna Garanča** has been forced to cancel her appearance in the double role of Prima Donna / Ariadne in *Ariadne auf Naxos* for personal reasons.

"I accepted the offer from the Salzburg Festival with great appreciation and honest enthusiasm, but after careful consideration, I have decided not to add this role to my repertoire. Therefore, I am withdrawing from this production. The decision was not made easily."

The Salzburg Festival thanks the Swedish soprano **Christina Nilsson** for taking over the role, in which she makes her Salzburg debut this summer.



Christina Nilsson © Peter Knutson

The soprano **Christina Nilsson** was born in Ystad (Sweden) and graduated from the University College of Opera in Stockholm with a master's degree in vocal performance in 2017. In 2025, she was named a Court Singer by the King of Sweden. Her appearances during the 2025/26 season have included the title role of Aida and her role debut as Liù (*Turandot*) at the Royal Swedish Opera in Stockholm, Aida and Elisabetta di Valois (*Don Carlo*) at the Deutsche Oper Berlin, Strauss' *Vier letzte Lieder* and Chrysothemis in a semi-staged performance of *Elektra* with the NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra in Hamburg,

Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra and Mahler's Eighth Symphony at the Komische Oper Berlin and with the Noord Nederlands Orkest in Groningen. In September 2026, she will sing the role of Elisabeth in a new production of *Tannhäuser* at the Zurich Opera House.

In the 2024/25 season, she made her house debut at the Metropolitan Opera in New York as *Aida*, a role she has also performed at the Frankfurt Opera, the Deutsche Oper Berlin and the National Theatre in Prague. In addition, she sang the title role of *Tosca* in Stockholm and made her role debut as Eva (*Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*) under Daniele Gatti at the Bayreuth Festival, where she also appeared as Freia (*Das Rheingold*) and Third Norn (*Götterdämmerung*). Her breakthrough as *Aida* in 2018 in Stockholm was followed by important role debuts and international engagements, including the title role of *Ariadne auf Naxos* at the Frankfurt Opera, the Opéra de Lausanne and in Stockholm, *Elsa (Lohengrin)* at the Dortmund Opera and the Tyrolean Festival in Erl, *Elisabeth* in Frankfurt and Bayreuth, *Countess Almaviva (Le nozze di Figaro)* and *Chrysothemis* in Stockholm, *Aida* at the Irish National Opera and *Rosalinde (Die Fledermaus)* at the Bavarian State Opera in Munich. Recent concert engagements have included *Vier letzte Lieder* with the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra under Alan Gilbert, with the Turku Philharmonic Orchestra under Christian Kluxen and at the Opéra national de Nancy-Lorraine; *Verdi's Requiem* with the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra under Domingo Hindoyan and with the Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra under Andrés Orozco-Estrada; Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with the Tokyo Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra under Gilbert and Bruckner's *Te Deum* with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra under Nathalie Stutzmann. She also appeared in the gala concert *Bolshoi and Plácido Domingo: Life in Opera* at the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow.

Christina Nilsson's awards include third prize and the Birgit Nilsson prize at the Operalia competition in 2019, first prize at the Renata Tebaldi International Vocal Competition in 2017 and first prize and the audience prize at the Wilhelm Stenhammar International Music Competition in 2016. She has received scholarships from the Birgit Nilsson Foundation, the Jenny Lind Society, the Royal Swedish Academy of Music in Stockholm and the Vadstena Academy. In 2012, she received the culture prize of the newspaper *Ystads Allehanda*.

Richard Strauss (1864–1949)

Ariadne auf Naxos

Opera in one act with a prologue Op. 60

(composed 1911–1912, second version premiered 1916)

Libretto by **Hugo von Hofmannsthal**

New production

6 performances from **Sun 2 August – Fri 28 August**

Leading Team

Manfred Honeck Conductor

Ersan Mondtag Director / Sets / Costumes

Ashley Alexandra Wright Choreography

Till Briegleb Dramaturgy

Cast

Kate Lindsey The Composer

Christina Nilsson The Prima Donna / Ariadne

Eric Cutler The Tenor / Bacchus

Ziyi Dai Zerbinetta

Johannes Silberschneider The Major-Domo

Christoph Pohl A Music-Master

Jonas Hacker A Dancing-Master

Blaž Stajniko* A Wigmaker

Fabian-Jakob Balkhausen A Footman

Leon Košavić Harlequin

Michael Porter Scaramuccio

Lukas Enoch Lemcke Truffaldino

Theodore Browne Brighella

Jasmin Delfs Naiad

Anja Mittermüller* Dryad

Marlene Metzger Echo

Vienna Philharmonic

* YSP participants

Tickets that have already been purchased remain valid.

<https://www.salzburgerfestspiele.at/en/p/ariadne-auf-naxos-2026>