Johanna Rusanen Soprano



Finnish dramatic soprano **Johanna Rusanen**, acclaimed for both her soaring Wagnerian heroines and her commanding presence in the *Zwischenfach* and dramatic mezzo-soprano repertoire, was born into a family of musicians in Kuopio, Finland. Having received her Master's degree in Music at the Sibelius Academy under the guidance of the renowned Wagnerian soprano Anita Välkki, she completed her studies in Berlin and Vienna and was a member of the young artist program at Deutsche Oper Berlin for two years.

Today, Johanna Rusanen stands as one of the most compelling Finnish dramatic voices of her generation, seamlessly bridging flagship soprano roles and the dramatic mezzo repertoire. She made her debut as **Venus** (*Tannhäuser*) at the Tampere Opera in March 2012 in a production by stage director Vilppu Kiljunen. Soon after, she sang the lead role of **Old Aliide** in the world premiere of *Purge* by Estonian composer Jüri Reinvere, based on the bestselling novel by Sofi Oksanen. Her next role debut was **Turandot** at the Finnish National Opera in 2013, followed by performances of the title role under Maestro Pinchas Steinberg at the Teatro Regio in Turin and at Deutsche Oper am Rhein in Germany. In the following season, she interpreted **Tosca** at the Savonlinna Opera Festival and Leonora (*La forza del destino*) at Tampere Opera, as well as her first **Ortrud** in Wagner's *Lohengrin* at the Theatro Municipal in São Paulo. In spring 2016, Rusanen celebrated her debut as **Isolde** at the Finnish National Opera, and in the summer of 2021 she debuted as **Chrysothemis** in *Elektra* at the Théâtre du Capitole in Toulouse. Her debut as **Brünnhilde** in *Der Ring des Nibelungen* at the Finnish National Opera under the baton of Hannu Lintu earned enthusiastic international acclaim. Continuing her expansion into major dramatic mezzo and *Zwischenfach* roles, she made her latest role debut as **Madame de Croissy** in *Dialogues des Carmélites* at the Finnish National Opera in 2024.

Johanna Rusanen has won particular praise for her portrayals of strong women in Finnish opera, including **Riitta** in Kokkonen's *The Last Temptations* in Nivala (2009), **Anna** in Sallinen's *Ratsumies* at the Savonlinna Opera Festival (2005–2006), and **Aalo** in *The Wolf's Bride* by Pylkkänen in Helsinki (2006). Equally sought after on the concert stage, she has performed as an oratorio soloist and given lieder recitals across Europe as well as in Japan, Chile, the United States, and South Korea. The soprano part in Jean Sibelius's *Kullervo* Symphony has become one of her trademark pieces, with recent performances at the Prague Spring Festival, in Tokyo, and at the Grant Park Music Festival in Chicago. Her interpretation of Krzysztof Penderecki's *Polish Requiem* under the composer's baton was awarded a Grammy in 2017.

Updated November 2026