

Violinist Vanessa Mae Set to Compete in Giant Ski Slalom

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Vanessa Mae taking part in the torch relay for the 2008 Beijing Summer Olympics. **Yemisi Blake / Flickr**

Violinist Vanessa Mae is the surprise inclusion in the women's giant slalom skiing event, which is scheduled to start at 9:30 a.m. on Tuesday.

The British musician, who has sold more than 10 million records worldwide, is skiing on behalf of Thailand and will compete as Vanessa Vanakorn, which is the surname of her Thai father.

Mae, who is ranked 3,166th in the world, has skied since childhood, and moved to Zermatt in Switzerland in 2009 to prepare for the Olympics.

Her participation in Sochi was by no means guaranteed, however, and Mae had to compete in a series of last-minute events in Slovenia, including in a junior competition, to reach the qualification standard.

If she competes, the 35-year-old will become only the third-ever athlete to represent Thailand at a Winter Olympic Games and other competitors have welcomed her participation in the Games.

"It was interesting how ambitious she is, and it's good to see that someone like that starts in our race and is brave enough and bothers with the preparation for a race like that. That's impressive," German skier Barbara Wirth told Yahoo Eurosport.

Sweden will harbor high hopes for Tuesday's event with Jessica Lindell-Vikarby sitting top of the world giant slalom rankings and Maria Pietilä-Holmner in second.

Austria's Anna Fenninger, who won gold in Saturday's Super-G downhill event and who is ranked fourth in the world for giant slalom, will also fancy her chances on Tuesday.

The giant slalom sees athletes navigate a downhill a course marked with flags and gates, which are spaced further apart than in the traditional slalom.

With rain and snow forecast for late Tuesday morning, the race's start time had to be brought forward. The second run will take place at 1 p.m.

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