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BRILLIANT: Viennese flautist Karin Leitner says that audiences in Ireland have a different way of listening to music. Photo: David Conachy

World-renowned musician 'inspired by the Irish soul'

Austrian flautist and composer Karin Leitner returns for a tour around the country, writes **Rosalind Fanning**

The Viennese flautist, Karin Leitner, who lives between Vienna, London, and Ireland, started a countrywide tour last week with her baroque ensemble.

'Ireland is my favourite place of all. My heart and soul is Irish. I love it here,' says Karin.

'I think I went on another wavelength when I came here. I became a new person. The Irish psyche is much different from the Austrian. Vienna is somehow greyer.'

Karin has strong connections with Birr, where she performed last night as part of the Vintage Week.

'I think of Birr as my home. When I walk down the street, I know everybody. Shopping takes two hours instead of 15 minutes,' says Karin.

Leitner, affectionately called 'Karina' by some of her oldest friends in Ireland, knows well how the Irish soul responds to music. The international performer and composer says that we have a "different way of listening".

She is touring with pianist Fiachra Garvey, (who's been anointed the National Concert Hall's 'Rising Star' recitalist for 2011) and internationally acclaimed singer Kerstin Doelle, from Dresden. A visual as well as musical delight, the concerts will feature favourite musical gems of the Baroque era, with uplifting arias from Farinelli. And the trio will bring it all into our present time with one of Karin's own compositions, to the words of WB Yeats, in *Faerie Song*.

Not only has the fine musician 'fluted' around the world and played in some of the top orchestras, she's an accomplished composer too, inspired by our countryside, our living and past poets and artists. Her first album, *Earthmagic*, came to fruition last year and it has been selling very successfully through Amazon and iTunes. Like well-known Irish singer-songwriter Luka Bloom, it was also while living in a charming but chilly, period cottage in 'woodsie' parts of

Birr Castle demesne, that Karin came to stay a while, and find her own artistic inspiration to write music.

Her playing is as rich, mellow and passionate as more mature and hallowed flautists. It re-attunes us to our musical heritage through her way of seeing us listening to her. And the way she sees it, art has the power to see us through our poor times, lift depression and awaken us to our inner resources. From triumphal opening overtures to the whimsical, poignant and fey, you are all emotion and joy – from crying with a smile to laughing through teardrops! It is music to be surrounded by; to be creative in; to be thankful for.

In June, at the Vienna Film-ball, Karin performed one of her latest pieces to Hollywood actor Kevin Spacey. Ireland will call her away from Vienna again this autumn when her new album, *Seamagic*, is to be launched, and in September she will be playing Principal Flute at the invitation of the Irish Chamber Orchestra.

Karin Leitner, whose tour is sponsored by the Austrian Embassy, is wearing a dress by Deborah Veale, tel: (01) 214-4536, or email info@deborahveale.ie. Her hair and make-up are by Brown Sugar, South William Street, Dublin 2

KARIN'S BAROQUE DELIGHT CONCERT DATES:

August 17: Bantry House, Co Cork. Tel: (027) 50047
www.bantryhouse.ie

August 18: St Johns Theatre, Co Kerry.
Tel: (068) 22566
www.stjohnstheatrelistowel.com

August 19: Village Arts Centre, Kilworth, Co Cork.
Tel: (025) 32227

August 20: Muckross House, Co Kerry. Tel: (064) 667-0144
www.muckross-house.ie