



Flautist Karin to flaunt it

Mark McAvoy finds out what Austrian flautist Karin Leitner finds so creatively stimulating about Ireland

AUSTRIAN composer and flautist Karin Leitner returns to Cork this week for two very special concerts celebrating the best of baroque music.

Performing alongside Karin will be recently appointed 'Rising Star' of the Irish National Concert Hall for 2011 - Irish pianist Fíachra Garvey and internationally renowned German soprano Kerstin Doelle.

Although born in Vienna, Karin Leitner found herself drawn to Birr in County Offaly - a place that she acknowledges has been a source of great inspiration.

"I found that a lot of music came to me when I was there. Birr is so artistic. There are so many artists such as painters and sculptors in Birr. It is very thriving in that way.

"The landscape was also very inspiring. We were in Birr Castle Gardens and it was just so quiet and peaceful, and everything was just so conducive to the music."

While Karin adopts a busy touring schedule, she clearly enjoys life on the road. At present, the classically trained flautist divides her time between Austria, England and Ireland.

"I am touring worldwide with chamber music concerts, mostly flute and harp. But in Ireland the concerts are going to be with soprano and piano. The reason for this is that I

have done a lot of flute and harp concerts in Ireland and I just want to vary it a bit and make it much more interesting for the audience.

"I do play in the Irish Chamber Orchestra as well and I also play in London a lot. So I'm basically living between three countries, which is very unusual.

"I live between Vienna, London and Ireland. Being a freelance musician, I can choose what I want to do. So I can pick very nice projects in each country and create more projects."

Karin is currently midway through recording her second album entitled *Seamagic*. The

music for the album was written while living in Birr.

"I composed four CDs at the Birr Castle Estate in Offaly, where I had rented a cottage. The first CD is already released and it is called *Earthmagic* (2009). I'm recording the second CD *Seamagic* at the minute and while it is a lot of work, it is also great fun. Of course, it is much easier than recording the first one because I know how to do it now."

Discussing the inspiration behind her first album, Karin indicates that the beauty of nature was central.

"The music itself would describe the spirit behind

things, like the spirit of nature. When you are surrounded by nature, you start to feel good because there is something there, which you can't really grasp. There is vibrancy there. So I would find nature particularly stimulating."

She adds: "I would also find people, and in particular, Irish people, really stimulating. In general, I feel at home in Ireland. My soul can breathe when I'm in Ireland and that is why I love being there so much."

Earlier this year, Karin performed at the prestigious Vienna Film Ball in front of an audience that included US

actor Kevin Spacey and Austrian actor Christoph Waltz who won the Oscar for Best Supporting Actor in Quentin Tarantino's *Inglourious Basterds*.

Asked how she found this experience, Karin replies: "It was fun. I did meet Kevin Spacey briefly but there were so many people that you can't really talk. I am not much of a red carpet person. I like it more when I meet real people and talk about real things. What I enjoyed most was the smoke on stage because normally, as a classical player, we don't have smoke. So it was so much fun standing on stage with a smoke machine know-

ing that people were listening. The smoke looked really mystical."

Looking towards her Cork concerts, Karin indicates what she has in store.

"All our concerts are special because we like to interact with the audience. It is not just an upfront thing, where we arrive, perform and go.

"We like to draw the audience in and we tell stories about what we are playing. Fíachra Garvey is 21 and a very young pianist. It is great that we have teamed up.

"Kerstin Doelle is a brilliant singer from Dresden. She has been touring worldwide and has performed in Ireland many times. We will do some baroque repertoire this time because most of the people would love the old arias for Farnell (famous Italian contralto and soprano castrato singer).

"We had mixed programmes before and people would always ask for the arias for Farnell."

For more on Karin Leitner, see www.karinleitner.com.

● *The Baroque Delight Concert* featuring Karin Leitner, Kerstin Doelle and Fíachra Garvey takes place at Bantry House on Tuesday, August 17. Tickets are €20 and €16 with concessions. For tickets call (0277) 50047. *The Baroque Delight Concert* will also take place at the Village Arts Centre in Kilsworth on Thursday, August 19. For tickets call (025) 32227.