

# It's All Flowing For The Flautist

By Rosalind Fanning

Austrian classical flautist Karin Leitner has been coming and going from our small, but nevertheless very arts-cultured midlands town of Birr over the past ten years but for the past year, has lived in a rather chilly cottage in the woods at the edge of town. She has given many concerts across the whole of the country, but heading off to near and far international locations to play with orchestras, quartets and in duets.

Constantly proving to be a highly committed and hardworking professional, over the past year, Karin has begun composing for flute and orchestra. Much of this stunning new music has been inspired by her time living in the Midlands. One piece, called Celtic Lough, was written after her first visit to Lough Boora one evening. Another, called Celtic Airs and Graces, was inspired by the gardens of Birr Castle (as others have been). If all continues on the present path, all her hard work will soon be paying off: a CD will be released later this year through a big record company in London.

During her previous and current tour dates, Karin and harpists (Irishman Cormac O'Barra or Vienna based Bulgarian harpist Krassimira Zeigler) have been testing out audience reaction to some of her compositions: glances, nods, smiles and whispered comments during performances, and afterwards great applause, said it all!

For lovers of nature, mountains, music, art, and ancient sites, her compositions are truly captivating and exhilarating. These pieces push all the buttons, and there's almost a guarantee much of what is written so far could find its way as film music. She has been genuinely inspired by the heart of Ireland itself, not just our rich Celtic and musical heritage but the castles, the ancient monasteries, mysterious dark boglands and our glorious Slieve Blooms - it is as if she has transcribed from nature and old stones. Her music stimulates the imagination; it fulfills.

These days, not that long back out of our economic boom, there is a lot of soul-searching going on. Our own myths are shattering. From this perspective there will be tears wept in hearing the full orchestral force of Karin's powerfully evocative music and you never know, it could just help us feel a surge of joy and optimism and re-inspired energy!

One could say that flute and harp is a truly magical combination for us Irish, and nothing particularly challenging for those who waver in their tastes for classical music. But what intrigues us is how very well Karin interprets and gives great spirit to our traditional music too. The glorious music of 17th century Carolan; the many popular songs we know so well but which may not have authorship - she transcribes them for flute/flute and grand concert harp naturally - but by God, she picks up her flute and occasionally the tin whistle and plays them, not quite as an Irish musician but as a person who adores the music and captures the spirit; the essence. We love it! On the 5th July she will play again at Birr Castle and then continue with her prestigious Blue Book Tour (check her web-site for details of great offers in the country houses. [www.karinleitner.com](http://www.karinleitner.com))

It would be amusing if it takes a charming, rather quaint, pretty little Austrian woman who loves dressing up in flowing fairy gowns to keep Ireland on the worldwide musical charts. Indeed, a flaxen-haired and very determined young musician who shows she now has much more to offer than a flourish of her accomplished fingers on a silver flute, who can compose, conduct and perform a magnificent, stirring, 'Celtic'-themed piece to keep Ireland in hearts and on lips worldwide, as did Riverdance. Never mind Vienna, we'd quickly claim her as a woman of our country, and even of our town.

Summer Concert at Birr Castle on Saturday July 5th at 7p.m. Karin Leitner - Flute; Krassimira Ziegler - Harp. Tickets at (057) 9120056 and at the Science Centre. Dress Up, enjoy exquisite music and free wine.