

Karen Mueller: Performance and Instruction

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Karen Mueller is one of the top autoharp and mountain dulcimer players performing and teaching today. Her exciting and innovative performing style, featuring Appalachian, Celtic and contemporary music, has been applauded by critics and audiences from LA to Boston. In 2006 she was inducted into the Autoharp Hall of Fame, twenty years after winning the International Autoharp Championship (1986), making her the youngest player recognized for either honor. Karen has made her mark on the acoustic music scene as both an interpreter of tradition and an innovator, and has performed with such legendary artists as Liz Carroll (all-Ireland fiddle champion) and Tony Trischka (banjo master).

Karen has recorded four critically-acclaimed solo CDs: *Landscape of the Heart*, *Clarity*, *Still Point* and *Autoharp Gourmet*, and is featured on numerous anthologies, including *Autoharp Legacy* and two volumes of the *Masters of the Mountain Dulcimer* collection. She is the author of Mel Bay Publishing's *Celtic Autoharp* book, and her own *Autoharp Gourmet* book. She maintains a year-round national touring schedule as a performer and workshop leader, and is also in demand in England.

Karen has taught and performed at weeklong programs such as the Augusta Heritage Center (WV), the Swannanoa Gathering (NC), and Sore Fingers Week (England), and at festivals coast to coast, including the California Traditional Music Society Summer Solstice Festival, New York's Old Songs Festival, the Mountain Laurel, California and Willamette Valley Autoharp Gatherings, Dulcimer Week at Western Carolina University (NC), and the Walnut Valley Festival in Winfield, Kansas. In 2006 she co-founded the Seattle Autoharp Week, which has become a popular annual event.

While touring extensively as a soloist, Karen also performs and records with Katie McMahon, original lead singer of *Riverdance*, and with the Celtic group Piper's Crow, named "Best Acoustic Performer" in the Twin Cities in 2007. Karen is an accomplished multi-instrumentalist; besides autoharp and dulcimer, she plays and teaches guitar, mandolin and Irish bouzouki. In 2000, the Minnesota Bluegrass and Old-Time Music Association awarded Karen its "Recognition of Excellence."

Based in Minneapolis, Karen gives private lessons to students of all ages and is an active teaching artist in schools, both independently and with Young Audiences of Minnesota. She has served as music specialist at a private elementary school since 1998, working with students from pre-school age to junior high. Her music has been featured in the last two editions of the Silver Burdett elementary curriculum materials used nationwide.

Karen was born and raised in Winfield, Kansas, home of the Walnut Valley Festival. It was there that she was introduced to the autoharp and dulcimer as a teenager and taught herself to play both instruments.

"In the hands of a few gifted people, the autoharp can swell into the sound of a whole orchestra. Karen Mueller is one of those few."

—*Minneapolis Star Tribune*

"A true virtuoso. Her talent and clarity of musical vision deserve a wide audience." —*Bluegrass Unlimited*

"She's taking the autoharp into new and exciting territory." —*Dirty Linen*

"She is a skilled, articulate teacher who is both focused and goal oriented. She has the ability to help students achieve a high level of competence in a short time frame." —*workshop student, Chicago*

Visit her website at www.karenmueller.com.