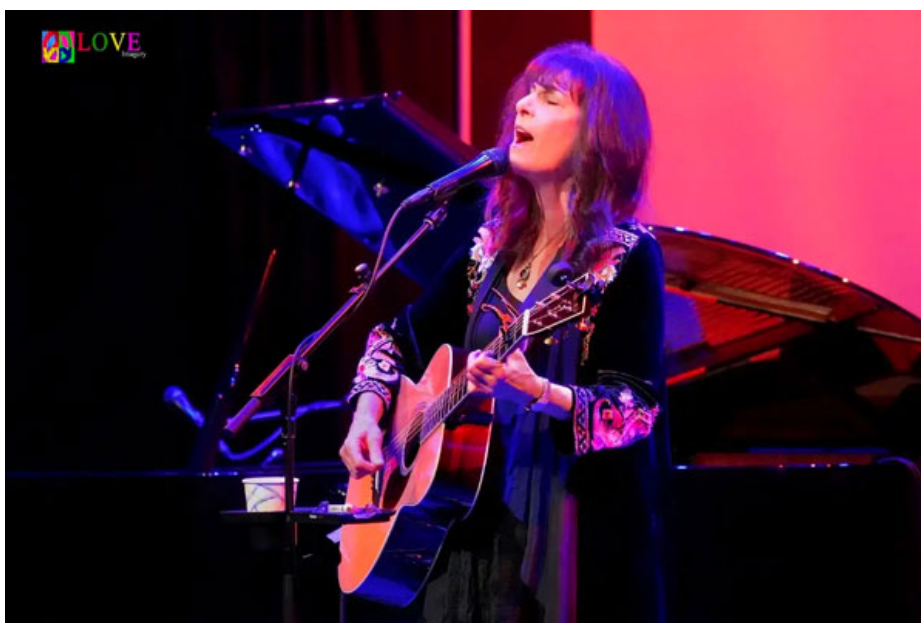


## "She Really Touches Your Heart" Karla Bonoff LIVE! at APAC

*By Spotlight Central, Photos by Love Imagery*

originally published: 11/25/2022



Music lovers inside Avenel, NJ's Avenel Performing Arts Center this Saturday, November 12, 2022 evening eagerly await a concert by singer/songwriter Karla Bonoff.

Concert producer Bill Brandenburg greets the packed house, announcing, "Welcome to Avenel. It's a thrill bringing to the APAC, Karla Bonoff!" Bonoff, 70, takes the stage along with her accompanist, guitarist Nina Gerber.

Opening with "Home," Bonoff stands strumming her acoustic guitar as she's accompanied by Gerber on electric. Sounding resonant and focused, Bonoff sings, "And home/Sings me of sweet things/My life there has it's own wings/To fly over the mountains/Though I'm standing still," on this country waltz that dances across the theater.

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The crowd cheers, and Bonoff and Gerber launch into “I Can’t Hold On” where Bonoff vocalizes, “I’m walking down the road/And you’ve just got to let me go/Cause I can’t hold on” on this appealing country-rocker.

Bonoff tells concertgoers that although she wrote her next song for a movie, it was never used in a film. On “Baja Oklahoma,” Bonoff’s soulful voice calls out over her softly-strummed guitar on this slow country-western tune.



Gerber impresses on a twangy electric guitar solo which echoes the sound of a pedal steel guitar.

Bonoff talks about going to LA's Troubadour at the age of 16 for open mic night and meeting a young Jackson Browne. Later on, Browne asked Bonoff to open for him when he went out on tour. Continuing with Browne's original folk song, "Something Fine," Gerber plays acoustic guitar while Bonoff stands at the mic singing, "The dreams are rolling down across the places in my mind/And I've just had a taste of something fine," her voice as full and rich as Browne's story song.

The crowd applauds, and Bonoff moves to the grand piano, recalling, "This is a tune I wrote after 10 or 12 years of writer's block. It kind of appeared out of the air." Gerber adds bell-like electric guitar tones to "New World" which

Bonoff confesses, "I wrote this next song about Tex, my cat, who could meow on pitch. He had a four note range — which was pretty good for a cat — but he got out and never returned." Bonoff's grand piano accompaniment sounds like an orchestra and Gerber adds wavering harmony electric guitar sounds to "Goodbye My Friend," a gentle Bonoff ballad about loss. Following up with "Restless Nights," Gerber's guitar cries in contrast to the strong chords of Bonoff's piano playing as she warmly sings on this catchy rock ballad.

Bonoff dedicates her next number, "All the Way Gone," to musicians Kenny Edwards and Andrew Gold with whom she worked in the band Bryndle. Bonoff plays acoustic guitar with an open tuning, strumming as she vocalizes to Gerber's swirling electric on this country/folk waltz.



The guitars resonate beautifully inside APACs cozy listening space as Bonoff sings in her clear, melodious voice, “And now the nights go on and on/And the tide just sweeps me along/At the end of the road/And I’m all the way gone.”

Acknowledging, “I wrote this song for myself, but it was a big hit for Wynonna,” Bonoff’s sweet-sounding vocal floats out over the audience as she strums her acoustic on the country-rocker, “Tell Me Why.” On this appealing arrangement, Gerber plays electric guitar low and twangy with incredible fingerwork which includes a series of fleeting and seemingly impossible sixteenth note runs.



Bonoff exits the stage to give Gerber a chance to shine in the spotlight with her acoustic guitar on “The State Anthem of Ukraine.” Playing with skill and feeling, Gerber caresses the notes out of her instrument on this beautiful yet haunting presentation. Segueing into The Youngbloods’ “Get Together,” the audience joins in singing the song’s famous “Come on people now/Smile on your brother/Everybody get together/Try to love one another right now” chorus before whistling and cheering for Gerber’s top-notch performance.

Recalling, “I once lip-synced this next song on TV’s *Solid Gold*,” Bonoff reveals that she also appeared on *American Bandstand* with Dick Clark and on *The Merv Griffin Show*, where “Peter Noone of Herman’s Hermits and Richard Simmons were guests on the couch with me so I didn’t have to worry about having to talk.” Here, Gerber plays a soulful distorted electric guitar solo and Bonoff sings with conviction while strumming her acoustic on “Please Be the One.”

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Bonoff reveals, “I wrote this next song for a movie but they didn’t use it. Then, I recorded it and the record company went out of business,” joking, “Linda Ronstadt asked me if I had a song and I told her it was ‘cursed,’ but she and Aaron Neville still won a Grammy for it.” On “All My Life” — one of her most recognizable compositions — Bonoff earnestly sings, “And hey/I’ve looked all my life for you/Now you’re here” as she accompanies herself on the piano and Gerber tastefully echoes her vocal line on the guitar.

Music lovers applaud when they recognize the piano intro to “Someone to Lay Down Beside Me,” a Bonoff composition recorded by Linda Ronstadt. In her melodious and vibrant style, Bonoff sings, “Someone to lay down beside me/And even though it’s not real/Just someone to lay down beside me/You’re the story of my life,” on this striking ballad before thanking audience members who rise to their feet cheering.

Bonoff exits the stage and returns to play an encore, explaining that she learned this number from Frank Hamilton, her guitar teacher who was a member of The Weavers. On the Scottish folk song, “The Water is Wide,” Gerber plays a bluesy electric solo and Bonoff plays acoustic as she gives a tour de force vocal performance to cheers, applause, and a standing ovation before bowing and waving goodnight.



As music lovers make their way out of the APAC auditorium, we chat with several audience members who share their thoughts on Karla Bonoff's performance this evening. Comments Laurie from Wall, "I first learned about Karla Bonoff when I was in college 40 years ago. A singer next to me in my dorm was singing 'Falling Star' and I just fell in love with it," before acknowledging, "I can't believe I never saw Karla live before tonight. I just loved her show and I'm going to see her again the next time she performs in New Jersey."

Joel from Colorado remarks, "It's always great when you get a chance to hear a singer/songwriter perform her own work — it's special," prior to adding, "And hearing her at APAC was really sweet, where they repurposed an old factory into a concert venue and did a really great job."

Jacqueline from Colonia discloses, "I really liked the stories Karla Bonoff told, and it was very nice to be able to experience a concert where you could understand the lyrics. Also, it was nice to escape and forget about the world for a while. Karla Bonoff's performance was soothing, warm, engaging, and melodic, and Nina Gerber is an extraordinary guitarist — I loved how she transitioned from the Ukrainian national anthem to 'Get Together,'" prior to noting, "I want to see more shows like this at this theater." Lindsay from Colonia agrees, adding, "Karla Bonoff's performance completely transported this old man back in time, and Nina Gerber was phenomenal on guitar."

David from Woodbridge asserts, "There's no doubt about it, at 70, Karla Bonoff has still got it! I loved all her songs — it's obvious that Linda Ronstadt knew exactly where to find good material," prior to noting, "And I thought Nina Gerber was great, too. Her tone is absolutely pure, and her playing is really very comforting."

Lastly, we chat with Linda from Basking Ridge who exclaims, "Karla Bonoff is amazing! Her lyrics resonated with me when I was in my twenties and they still do now that I'm in my seventies." Explaining, "Her words are still pertinent — I listen to her albums over and over — and her voice is so pure," Linda concludes by declaring, "She's a great storyteller, she's funny, and she expresses so much emotion with her voice, she really touches your heart."

*Photos by Love Imagery*

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### **Karla Bonoff delivers powerful, memorable show at the Kessler**

By Michael Granberry at 4:13 pm on October 27, 2014

At 62, it's no secret that Karla Bonoff's appeal lies in the hearts of Baby Boomers, who filled almost every seat for her show at the Kessler Theater in Oak Cliff on Sunday night. I, too, am 62, and while none of us need to be reminded of our age, she told a sweet, funny story that reminded us nonetheless.

When she signed a deal with Columbia Records to record her 1977 debut album, she got a telegram — yes, a telegram — from friend and colleague Jackson Browne. Now 66, Browne extended his congratulations in the fastest written form then available. Both Bonoff and Browne cut their musical teeth at the Troubadour, the legendary West Hollywood club that birthed the careers of the Eagles, Linda Ronstadt and many more.

Bonoff proceeded to sing a killer version of Browne's "Something Fine," which she recorded for the JB tribute album conceived by Dallas energy executive Kelcy Warren. And the aptly titled "Something Fine" may have been the high point of a show whose only criticism is that it could have lasted an hour longer, and no one would have minded. At least no one in the crowd, that is. (A friend of mine who also attended the show emailed me to say that Bonoff's version of "Something Fine" was more than fine, it was "magnificent.")

Like many, I suspect, I loved Bonoff's music from the moment I first heard it, albeit on Linda Ronstadt's 1976 album, *Hasten Down the Wind*, which contains three Bonoff classics. It's sleek, soothing finely crafted pop music with attention paid to real feeling, or for that matter raw emotion. Hers are ballads that hold up perfectly almost 40 years later and address the joy and pain of our early relationships as well as any.

Bonoff walked onstage with her guitar player par excellence, Nina Gerber, and the two of them blessed the crowd for almost 90 minutes with music that qualifies as beautiful regardless of whose ears hear it. She opened with "I Can't Hold On," from her self-titled debut album. She sang "Home" from the same album, a song recorded by Bonnie Raitt and even San Francisco Giants third base coach Tim Lincecum, as I let you know in this story.

She moved to the piano to sing "Like a Compass," a song that emanates from her days with Bryndle, the band she shared with Wendy Waldman and two men no longer living, Andrew Gold and Kenny Edwards. She sang "Rose in the Garden" from her debut album; "New World," the title song from her 1988 album; "Isn't It Always Love" from her debut album; and "Trouble Again" from her 1979 album, *Restless Nights*. She sang "All the Way Gone," a tribute to Edwards, who until his death traveled with Bonoff and Gerber. She sang "Please Be the One"; "All My Life," which Linda Ronstadt and Aaron Neville recorded as a hit duet; the sad, sweet elegy "Goodbye, Friend"; and the one that drew perhaps the largest ovation of the night, "The Water Is Wide."

When she finished, a woman in the crowd shouted, "So, is this intermission?" Bonoff smiled and said, "Whose intermission?" She returned for a two-song encore, singing "Tell Me Why," which Wynonna Judd made a hit, and closed with "Someone to Lay Down Beside Me." She then proceeded to the lobby, to sign every CD put in front of her by a Kessler crowd of adoring fans.



*Karla Bonoff and Nina Gerber performing at the Kessler Theater  
(Michael Granberry, The Dallas Morning News)*

## Landmark Launches Fabulous Folk Series with Karla Bonoff, Steve Forbert

Ann W. Latner , November 19, 2012

Landmark on Main Street kicked off its Fabulous Folk series on Friday, Nov. 16, with an impressive, sold-out, double bill of Steve Forbert and Karla Bonoff.

Steve Forbert opened the show. Armed with just a single guitar and an array of harmonicas, the musician launched into a set that spanned songs from his very early albums in the late 1970s to his latest release, "Over With You," released in September.

Forbert has a distinctive raspy and strained singing voice, and an energetic performing style. Though he rarely moved from his spot on stage, he was in constant motion: vigorously stomping his foot and wildly strumming his guitar. His songs have clever lyrics, such as "She's a fool for loving me, but she's in love and love's a funny state of mind" from the song "Goin' Down to Laurel" from Forbert's very first album. He also took audience requests – and the audience had plenty. Highlights of Forbert's set included the audience sing along "Autumn This Year," the 1979 pop hit "Romeo's Tune," and the very beautiful "Over With You," title track of his latest CD.

After a brief intermission, Karla Bonoff took to the stage, with backing guitarist Nina Gerber. Bonoff, a superb performer in her own right is well known for providing backing vocals for almost anyone you can think of (Warren Zevon, Linda Ronstadt, JD Souther, Michael McDonald, and more), and for writing songs that became hits for other performers, most notably Linda Ronstadt. Bonoff has a beautiful voice, clear, clean and strong, that is reminiscent of Ronstadt and KD Lang. She played both piano and guitar during the course of a set that included "All My Life" made famous by Ronstadt and Aaron Neville, and "Home," which was recorded by Bonnie Raitt.

Bonoff is a consummate professional, and it showed in her performance. Her set spanned her career and included her early 1980s singles "Personally" and "Please Be the One," as well as a beautiful cover of "The Water is Wide."

Without a doubt, Bonoff is fabulous, but her performance would not have had the same fullness without the absolutely exquisite guitar playing of Nina Gerber. Rarely ever have I heard a backup guitarist as good as Gerber. She was reminiscent of another outstanding backup performer who appeared at Landmark several times (with both Suzanne Vega and Duncan Sheik), Gerry Leonard. Guitarists like these are few and far between. Gerber's guitar sounded at times like a violin, a cello, or some otherworldly instrument, and her playing was always beautifully tasteful, blending with Bonoff's melody line or meandering off in a complementary harmony. Perhaps their most extraordinary few moments came during the song "Someone to Lay Down Beside Me" with Bonoff on Landmark's Steinway and Gerber adding the perfect guitar line.





## KARLA BONOFF

Live review, ArtsCenter (Carrboro, NC), February 13, 2010

By Peter Blackstock on February 15, 2010 at 2:30pm

"That was scary. I haven't played that song in about 25 years," Karla Bonoff confided to the crowd of a couple hundred after performing "Only A Fool". It was a surprising revelation, given that the song is one of the better-known tracks from her 1979 sophomore album *Restless Nights*. What prompted Bonoff to mothball it for a quarter-century is unclear, but let it be said that the rendition she delivered on this quiet winter's night proved the song was well worth being added back into her repertoire.

In a way, Bonoff's comment wasn't all that out-of-line with her own artistic profile in general. While she's not exactly a recluse, she's also far from a spotlight-seeker. After an auspicious introduction to audiences in the mid-'70s through songs of hers that were recorded by the likes of Linda Ronstadt and Bonnie Raitt, followed by the release of Bonoff's classic self-titled solo debut in 1977, she gradually withdrew from sight. Another record came in 1979, then 1982...then 1988.....and then nothing, for two decades, until a live album that surfaced a couple of years ago. (In fairness, there was also the rekindling of Bryndle, an early-'70s partnership with Wendy Waldman, Kenny Edwards and Andrew Gold, which reunited for a couple of albums in 1995 and 2002.)

How often she actually tours these days, I'm not really sure, but I do know that despite having been a fan of her music ever since I heard that first album in my teenage years, she's one singer-songwriter I'd somehow never managed to see in concert. It seemed worth doing something about that, and her performance on this night indeed fully rewarded the effort.

I'd written a little something about Bonoff a couple years ago on an earlier iteration of the ND website (the passage is now posted [HERE](#) if you're interested) shortly after the Live album arrived at my doorstep in 2007. The record had been a nice reminder of my appreciation for Bonoff's songs and singing, and I found it intriguing that fully eight tracks from her first album were rendered on the live disc.

We got five of those songs on this night, with somewhat mixed results. "Home", the fourth song in her set (after two Bryndle numbers and "Trouble Again" from *Restless Nights*), was every bit as good as remembered; somehow I'd been unaware that Bonnie Raitt had recorded the tune back in the day, and so Bonoff's mention of this was a welcome invitation to track down the Raitt version over the weekend.

"Isn't It Always Love", delivered after Bonoff had switched from acoustic guitar to piano, didn't fare as well; somehow the sound wasn't right, and she seemed to know it, asking the soundman to tweak several things after the song was done.

"I Can't Hold On", a little later in the set, was just fine in terms of Bonoff's performance, but somehow seems incongruous with the artist's persona so many years later. It sounds like a twentysomething heartbreak song, and it's a very good one at that, but it strikes me as something that would be harder for its writer to relate to a couple of decades later.

I suppose the same might be said for "Falling Star", which followed "I Can't Hold On" in the set -- but it's just such a fabulous song that any such thoughts are completely transcended by the beauty of the melody and those high flights that Bonoff still reaches with her voice. I'm not sure how often this one has been covered, but it strikes me as the number in Bonoff's catalogue that's most worth being revisited by other artists.

Not surprisingly, the show concluded (before encores) with what's probably considered Bonoff's signature song, "Someone To Lay Down Beside Me". If it's not my personal favorite of everything she's written, it's nevertheless unmistakable as a truly great composition, from the dramatic, almost classical piano progression that sets the tone from the beginning to the way that major and minor keys push and pull against each other throughout the duration of the tune. No wonder it became one of Ronstadt's most recognizable numbers.

If I came to the show mainly for those early songs, it should be noted that several of her later ones compared quite favorably. "Goodbye My Friend" is probably about as fine a song anyone has ever written for a beloved pet, and its piano opening was second only to that of "Lay Down Beside Me". That was one of four tracks Bonoff pulled from her largely forgotten 1988 disc *New World*, and the quality of those tunes suggest the album probably never got the recognition it deserved.

Bonoff also did three songs from the Bryndle records, appropriately enough given that her Bryndle cohort Kenny Edwards was among her two accompanists for the evening (the other being Nina Gerber on electric guitar). Bonoff also allowed Edwards (who opened the show with a short solo acoustic set) to step out front in the middle of her set for a song called "On Your Way To Heaven" (from his new album *Resurrection Road*) that was well worth the accommodation she provided for it.

## Live review: Karla Bonoff @ Swallow Hill

*Singer-songwriter Karla Bonoff has written for a variety of artists, but it's her own voice that makes her music unique.*

Posted October 19, 2009, 4:57 pm || By Colleen Smith

*For the complete blog, click here:*

<http://blogs.denverpost.com/reverb/2009/10/19/live-review-karla-bonoff-swallow-hill/>

Karla Bonoff took the Swallow Hill stage by storm again on Saturday, packing the intimate Denver venue with aging Boomers. Bonoff's set list led concertgoers down a '70s and '80s Memory Lane as she sang her songs, rendered huge hits by other singers like Linda Rondstadt and Aaron Neville, Bonnie Raitt and Wynonna Judd.

But true Bonoff fans turn out to hear the songwriter's singular voice, still as velvety as the black skirt she wore. Bonoff makes her home near Santa Barbara, Calif., which means she comes from sea level and humidity to our mile-high-dry air — no easy transition for the lungs or the vocal chords. "I'm out of breath," Bonoff said early into her set, later thanking the audience for putting up with her "froggy throat."

The truth is, Bonoff continues to carry all her notes. With integrity and clarity and admirable modulation, she belts out her lyrics. And she hits artistic grace notes, whether on piano or guitar.

Bonoff grew up in Los Angeles and wrote her first song by age 15. She came of musical age in Southern California's singer-songwriter stew, performing at the Troubadour, also frequented by the likes of James Taylor and Jackson Browne — both of whom she toured with later.

Bonoff has written passionately, if not prolifically, so her set on Saturday consisted of her four albums' melodious and emotional old favorites: "Home," "Someone To Lay Down Beside Me," "Tell Me Why" and "All My Life." "You're so well behaved," Bonoff told the audience at Swallow Hill, where people tend to take both making music and listening to music seriously.

Bonoff's albums include back-up performances by J.D. Souther, Glenn Frye, Don Henley, Christopher Cross, Michael McDonald and Peter Frampton. She recalled for the Swallow Hill audience an anecdote about singing with James Taylor at Red Rocks.

Saturday night at Swallow Hill, Bonoff was joined by her current band. Her longtime friend and producer, Kenny Edwards, a strings virtuoso, also provided backup vocals. Formerly of the folk-rock trio Stone Poneys and Linda Rondstadt's touring band, Edwards also performed a song from his new solo CD. (Edwards, Bonoff, Wendy Waldman and Andrew Gold form the all-star band Bryndle.) Also with Bonoff was Nina Gerber, who can coax her electric guitar into sounding like a dobro, at times, or a slide guitar.

Between songs, Bonoff riffed about her "jerk songs," record company misadventures, a television show host mispronouncing her surname as "bone-off," watching on television as other artists collected a Grammy for covering her song, and her beloved cat that died. But Bonoff's self-deprecating sense of humor and her sweet speaking voice prevented the tales from tasting too bitter. And one of her most recent songs, "What About Joanne" — absent from her Saturday set — demonstrates her ability to transcend pain with an uptempo, toe-tapping tune.

Bonoff, as she often does, closed her concert with an achingly lovely rendition of "The Water Is Wide," a song she learned as a teen from her guitar teacher, Frank Hamilton of the Weavers. And she gave a shout-out and a thumbs-up to Denver singer-songwriter Megan Burt, who opened the concert. It must have been a thrill for the younger singer-songwriter, who had, in her set, mentioned that she had "grown up at Swallow Hill" and declared Karla Bonoff one of her heroes.



**Lydia Hutchinson**  
EDITOR AND PUBLISHER

## MY FAVORITE THINGS: KARLA BONOFF 'LIVE'

I was at a dinner party last week with some songwriter friends, and when I mentioned that Karla Bonoff had a new CD coming out, the whole room erupted in some version of "Oh my God! Karla Bonoff! I love Karla Bonoff!" We broke into a few offbeat bars of "Falling Star," "Someone to Lay Down Beside Me," "Rose in the Garden," and then launched into the entire version of "Lose Again," warbling it like some misfit emotional choir. Apparently there wasn't one of us who didn't wear a groove in that song as we picked the needle up and played it over and over as a complement to our teenage angst.

So when I finally got this two-disc live set in my hands this week, I went over to a friend's house—whom I'd driven to Knoxville with one night about 15 years ago to see Karla in concert—and we sat in her driveway listening to all 21 songs. We remembered every word, and even cried listening to "Daddy's Little Girl" and "Goodbye My Friend," two heart-wrenchers that brought back our own memories of the days we wore those tunes out.

Karla's *Live* album offers all of the above mentioned greats, plus two

new nuggets—"What About Joanne" and "Baja Oklahoma." While some people might only know the hits she penned for other artists like Bonnie Raitt ("Home"), Linda Ronstadt ("All My Life") and Wynonna ("Tell Me Why"), Karla delivers them as only the writer can. And her voice is simply stunning.

It sounds even more beautiful than it did 25 years ago when she was the prequel to the stylings of singer-songwriters like Shawn Colvin and Sarah McLachlan.

For so many of us, a new Karla Bonoff album is like hearing from an old friend you've missed and think of often. Her songs are comforting, familiar and timeless, and make us feel a part of them just by singing along. This collection will make her fans mighty happy.



# MAVERICK

## Karla Bonoff

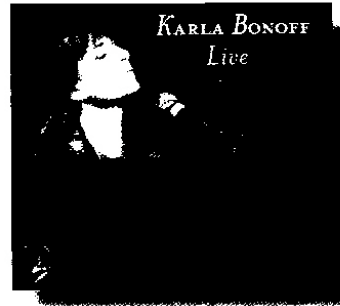
### Live

[www.KarlaBonoff.com](http://www.KarlaBonoff.com)

★★★★

*1970s songbird releases fine concert double disc; stirring up memories of lost youth and great songs*

Californian singer-songwriter Karla Bonoff cut her teeth back in the early 1970s with the band Bryndle. This legendary outfit included high school friends, and future notables; Andrew Gold, Kenny Edwards and Wendy Waldman. Although their debut album didn't see the light of day Edwards and Gold later became key players in Linda Ronstadt's band, while Waldman established a successful solo career.



Karla Bonoff's 1977 debut, *Karla Bonoff* released by CBS, was an immediate critical success. Containing brilliant self-written songs like *Home* and *Someone To Lay Down Beside Me*, Karla's songs and beautiful voice heralded the arrival of a major talent. Her profile was further raised when Linda Ronstadt and Bonnie Raitt chose to cover her songs. Karla toured with the likes of James Taylor and John David Souther releasing three more solo albums, the last being *New World* back in 1988. She has continued to write, and perform live, while the reformed Bryndle belatedly issued two CDs in the mid 1990s.

This self-released package contains a 2004 concert recorded on home turf in Santa Barbara. Karla is supported by a sympathetic band who don't steamroll her, but let the music breath through. The players are old pal Kenny Edwards on bass, guitar, cello and mandolin and vocals, Scott Barcock; drums and vocals and Nina Gerber on guitar. The first thing that will strike the listener is how well Ms Bonoff's voice has survived the years, Karla sounds like a wise 25 year old. All the old chestnuts are here; *I Can't Hold On*, *Home* and *If He's Ever Near* form a nostalgic trio of songs that begin the set in superb fashion. These songs have retained their power and more. The newer Bryndle songs; *Like A Compass* and *Daddy's Little Girl* favourably match up to her solo material.

Most of Karla's gems are featured here; *All My Life*, kicking off Disc 2, sounds as poignant as ever while *Someone To Lay Down Beside Me* remains a classic. The traditional *The Water Is Wide* closes the concert beautifully; Karla informing the audience that she learned to play the song as a teenager. The 'new' *What About Joanne* examines the affects of adultery. It features a strong melody and superb musicianship. A word too for Nina Gerber; she's a wonderful guitarist having played so beautifully on record with the late Kate Wolf. It would appear Karla's music provides a perfect vehicle for her talents.

Karla Bonoff isn't a prolific writer; she usually whittles a handful of songs every year. It is a pleasure to hear from her again after so long; I'm sure there is an audience out there who would snap up a new collection. In the meantime this live set feels like a precious gift from a long lost friend. **JB**

<http://www.maverick-country.com/>

June 2008 :: Issue #71

Tue September 25, 2007 :: <http://newsok.com/article/3133191/1190677192>

## Review: Karla Bonoff shares inspiration behind classic songs

Singer-songwriter Karla Bonoff enchanted her audience Saturday night at the University of Central Oklahoma Jazz Lab both with storytelling and song.

Bonoff took the stage about 9 p.m. after opening act Kenny Edwards. She played for about an hour and a half, using much of the time to tell the stories behind her songs, a move that evoked a warm response from the gathering of about 200.

The UCO Jazz Lab seemed the perfect venue for Bonoff, 55. Seating was tight, but the intimacy allowed the audience to chat with the entertainer while she tuned her guitar between songs.

At one point, an audience member called out, "You bring us joy," to which Bonoff smiled.

Bonoff recalled the first time she'd been in Oklahoma — to open for Jackson Browne in 1979. She asked the audience to remember for her the venue — the Lloyd Noble Center in Norman.

Edwards opened the show with songs from his compact disc, "Kenny Edwards."

He played along on acoustic guitar or mandolin as he sang songs such as "Gotta Let It Go" and "No Tears." Edwards has a pure voice, at times soaring for the high note and at other times dropping low into a bluesy resonance.

His fine guitar playing fills in at the right places, serving in part as percussion and making one forget he's a solo act.

Bonoff opened her set with "Home," a song sweetly evocative for anyone who's spent too much time on the road.

Of her next song, "If He's Ever Near," she said she wrote it "back when I was still optimistic about stuff."

She then segued to a more recent tune, "What About Joanne," a song she wrote after meeting "another jerky guy." The song is on her newest CD, "Karla Bonoff Live."

Bonoff played several songs she wrote for movie sound tracks such as the unused "Baja Oklahoma" and one that earned a Grammy for recording artists Linda Ronstadt and Aaron Neville, "All My Life."

"Yeah, they were winning the Grammy (Awards), and I was home watching on TV," she said.

Bonoff switched between playing the piano and her Taylor guitar inlaid with her signature scroll, adding her heartbreakingly beautiful voice above the music.

Edwards accompanied her on guitar, bass or mandolin and lent background vocals. Bonoff said the two have been together since the start of her career, nearly 40 years ago — "almost like an old married couple."

Bonoff earned a standing ovation for "Falling Star." Other crowd favorites were "Rose in the Garden" and "The Heart Is Like a Compass," a song she wrote with Wendy Waldman and recorded with her sometimes band "Bryndle."

She surprised the audience by telling them the song "Goodbye My Friend" was written for a cat named Tex.

After a lengthy standing ovation, Bonoff and Edwards returned to the stage to play an encore of "Tell Me Why," a song recorded by Wynonna Judd. The two ended the concert with a rendition of old English folk standard "The Water Is Wide."

— Tricia Pemberton ©2007 Produced by NewsOK.com



**RECREATION AND CULTURAL SERVICES**

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March 19, 2007

SRO Artists, Inc.  
Attn: Steve Heath  
6629 University Avenue, #206  
Middleton, WI 53562

Dear Mr. <sup>Steve</sup> Heath,

On behalf of the Kent Arts Commission, I would like to thank SRO Artists for helping to arrange Karla Bonoff's concert in Kent. Our community was thrilled to have her as part of the Kent Arts Commission's Spotlight Series on March 9.

Nearly 300 people attended and thoroughly enjoyed the concert. Karla, Kenny and Nina are wonderful artists and engaging performers. They took the time to meet their fans and sign autographs after the show, which was much appreciated. In addition to putting on a fantastic show, Karla, Kenny and Nina were a pleasure to work with – easy-going and flexible. Please pass my sincere thanks along to each of them.

Thank you again for a wonderful Karla Bonoff concert. I look forward to working with you and SRO Artists in the future!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ronda Billerbeck".

Ronda Billerbeck  
Cultural Programs Manager  
Kent Parks, Recreation and Community Services

Cc: Jeff Watling, Director, Parks, Recreation & Community Services  
Lori Hogan, Superintendent, Recreation & Cultural Services

Subject : Karla at the Sunrise Theatre  
Date : Sun, 14 Jan 2007 16:18:00 -0600  
Linked to : David Jenkins  
From : "David Jenkins" <exec@sunrisetheatre.com>  
To : John Schimmelman <jschimmelman@sroartists.com>

John, my apologies for taking so long to respond.

The Karla Bonoff date was to be the first of our more intimate "Limited Edition" reduced seating shows.

My desire going in was to sell 250 seats. We sold 242 for a gross of \$7,612, and with comps we had 290 or so in the house, so I was delighted.

I've always known who Karla was but would never have considered myself a fan - that's no reflection upon her, she just wasn't on my personal or professional radar... I'm a bit too much of a rocker I guess...

I booked the show because she's a classy name, she was perfect to inaugurate this new seating format, and as SRO had been cooperative with me in the recent past I was pleased to assist in providing a tour date at an extremely reasonable price.

Well....what I expected to be simply a pleasant night turned into something very, very special, kind of like thinking you had a nice little opal on your finger but looking down and discovering a diamond.

I find it difficult to put into words how enormously impressed I was with Karla's performance. She was brilliant, she was charming, she's that rare performer that perfectly balances a highly polished professionalism with an intimacy that makes her fans feel she's very aware of their presence and their loyalty.

Great band....especially some of the tastiest lead guitar I've heard in ages....

It couldn't have been a better show. I was absolutely and positively knocked out, as were my staff. We're a very jaded lot, but we did something we almost never do. We sat and watched Karla's entire set.

Karla was great fun to deal with, we had a nice chat before the show, she's a woman with no obvious pretenses, she's comfortable in her own skin, and it was a real treat to meet her.

Karla is as fine and as captivating a live performer as those women who've had hits written by her. I've seen them all, many times. Karla's performance was the best, the very best of the lot. With all due respect it boggles the mind that Linda R. is such a huge name and Karla B. is, shall we say, a harder sell... but there's little fairness in this business and talent doesn't always equate with box office success.

But I don't care. I'll be very pleased to bring her back.

The greatest pleasure for me these days are the shows that sneak up on me. Karla snuck on me and as the British ungracefully but effectively put it, I was pleasantly gobsmacked.

I feel like I've been in this business since before the Civil War and the great nights are fewer and farther between, but the night we presented Karla I felt proud of what I do for a living.

Best wishes,

DAVID JENKINS, Executive Director  
Sunrise Theatre  
Ft. Pierce, FL



# Presenters' REPORTS

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**Criteria:**      C – Communication      T – Tech      M – Marketing      Out – Outreach  
                    Atd – Attitude      Au – Audience      Con – Program Content

**Rankings:**    4 = Outstanding; 3 = Professional; 2 = Some improvement needed ; 1 = Unacceptable

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## Karla Bonoff/Kenny Edwards (SRO Artists) Discipline: Pop Music

---

Upper Merion Township (King of Prussia, PA)  
David Broida, Director ((610/265-8467)

Park & Recreation Department (Concerts Under the Stars/1000 seats)  
01-Sept-02( perf/ attendance)

C: 4    T: 4    M: 4    Out: 4    Atd: 4    Au: 4    Con: 4

**Comments:** No problems - Karla was wonderful - and caring, too.

---

Westhampton Beach PAC (Westhampton Beach, NY)  
Mark P. Alexander, Executive Director (631/288-2350)

Westhampton Beach Performing Arts Center (Proscenium/423 seats)  
17-Aug-01 (1 perf/158 attendance)

C: 4    T: 4    M: 4    Out: -    Atd: 4    Au: 3    Con: 4

**Comments:** Performance was spirited, engaging and at the same time very intimate. Karla and Kenny Edwards are two outstanding artists who value their audience as much as they value their music.

**Was this presentation meant to challenge your audience?** Very little

**How satisfied were you with the number of people who attended?** Somewhat

---

Lakeside Association (Lakeside, OH)  
Keith Addy, Director of Programs (419/798-4461)

Hoover Auditorium (Proscenium/2,900 seats)  
16-Aug-01 (1 perf/658 attendance)

C: 3    T: 4    M: 4    Out: -    Atd: 4    Au: 3    Con: 4

**Comments:** A great singer-songwriter - performance was outstanding -easy to work with - audience was delighted.

**Was this presentation meant to challenge your audience?** Very little

**How satisfied were you with the number of people who attended?** Very much

---

Lebanon Opera House (Lebanon, NH)  
C.P. Boswell, Executive Director (603/448-0400)

Lebanon Opera House (Proscenium/760 seats)  
20-Oct-00 (1 perf/432 attendance)

C: 4    T: 4    M: 3    Out: -    Atd: 4    Au: 3    Con: 4

**Comments:** Devoted fans traveled great distances to hear Karla (she's never been to the area before and seldom teaches down in New England). Her play list is a heartfelt litany of one hit after another. The audience fell in love with her music all over again. Superb harmonies/accompaniment from Kenny Edwards. Highly recommend!

**Was this presentation meant to challenge your audience?** Very little

**How satisfied were you with the number of people who attended?** Very much



# The Birmingham News

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## Bonoff delivers with great sound

Saturday, November 06, 2004

**MARY COLURSO**  
News staff writer

Let's call her a sentimental favorite.

Karla Bonoff made two fine, extremely sing-alongable albums during the late 1970s: "Karla Bonoff" and "Restless Nights." If you were an impressionable teen then, nobody could grab your heart and wrench it like Bonoff.

She was queen of the lovelorn ballad, singing about unrequited emotions, failed relationships and frustrated passion. Her strong, clear voice caressed the verses and soared during the choruses.

Listening, you felt she understood you. Sometimes she made you weep, but that felt right and good.

Fast-forward to November 2004 and Bonoff, now 51, in concert at the Sirote Theatre at the Alys Stephens Center in Birmingham.

It's a Thursday night and the 350-seat hall looks nearly full. Thank goodness, because Bonoff's bright, swoony pop music meant a lot to you when you were younger and has left a lingering mark.

You want her to do well. Sound great. Live up to your expectations. Maybe even give you chills.

She does.

Bonoff's 80-minute show with her duet partner and producer, Kenny Edwards, seems extremely short - probably because there about 20 songs you'd like her to perform and you keep waiting to hear all of them.

The set list includes a fair number: "Someone to Lay Down Beside Me," "Home," "Isn't It Always Love," "Falling Star," "Rose in My Garden," "I Can't Hold On," "The Water Is Wide," plus "How Long," "Goodbye My Friend" and "Tell Me Why."

Missing: "Baby Don't Go," "Restless Nights," "Lose Again" and her cover of Jackie DeShannon's "When You Walk in the Room."

Turns out that Bonoff - who plays piano and guitar during the 8:20 p.m. concert - has kept busy since you stopped dropping a needle onto those well-worn LPs. She has written tunes for films, television and the Olympics.

She's also reunited with Bryndle, a folk-rock band from the late '60s that included Edwards, Andrew Gold and Wendy Waldman.

The Sirote Theatre appears to be stuffed with devoted fans who know the music, remember Bonoff's heyday and appreciate that Edwards is in the house. (This multitasking man was important to Linda Ronstadt's career, too.)

Although the set and encores are over too quickly, you leave nearly satisfied and immediately slide "The Best of Karla Bonoff: All My Life" into the CD player for the ride home.

Although Bonoff and Edwards live in California and rarely perform in Alabama, you think they'd be perfect for a house concert - one where you could plan the set list.

Plane tickets, anyone?

E-mail: [mcolurso@bhamnews.com](mailto:mcolurso@bhamnews.com)

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# Karla Bonoff performs at UCCC

Show also features  
Kenny Edwards

BY TRACEE HERBAUGH  
gtreporters@greeleytrib.com

From the famous Troubadour in  
Los Angeles to the Union Colony



Bonoff

Civic Center in Greeley, Karla Bonoff and Kenny Edwards will entertain audiences with the familiar sounds of their Grammy-winning hits.

Bonoff and Edwards will be playing at UCCC Thursday.



Edwards

Most know Bonoff and Edwards from the pop group Bryndle, but the two will be performing original works and covers from artists such as Wynonna Judd and Linda Ronstadt.

"We are hoping this sells out," said Lonnie EJ Cooper, UCCC spokesman. "I first saw Karla perform at a conference and thought that we really needed to get someone with her talent and range here to play."

After Bryndle broke up, Bonoff and Edwards embarked on solo careers.

"I was headlining and barely had enough songs to play," Bonoff said. "So I just kept playing them longer."

Bonoff soon heard about her first No. 1 hit while touring the

northwestern United States, according to her Web site.

## TO GO

**WHAT:**  
Karla Bonoff and Kenny Edwards, in concert

**WHEN:**  
7:30 p.m.  
Thursday

**WHERE:**  
Union Colony  
Civic Center,  
701 10th Ave.,  
Greeley

**TICKETS:**  
\$11-\$15, call  
356-5000

**BONOFF**  
FROM PAGE B1

Along with songwriting, Bonoff is a gardner, a passionate cat lover and a collector of vintage American ceramics.

In 1990, Bonoff wrote three songs with friends Linda Ronstadt and Aaron Neville, and one went on to win a Grammy for Best Vocal Performance by a Duo or Group.

Bonoff also reunited with bandmates Kenny Edwards, Andrew Gold and Wendy Waldman and decided it was time to re-establish Bryndle.

"When we decided to put this band back together we realized that one of the things that was wrong with it the first time was that we all wrote separately," Bonoff said. "We thought it would be great to write together this time."

In 1995, the first Bryndle record was released and followed by a tour in Japan. Now, Bonoff and Edwards are touring as a duo.

Greeley, Colorado

# SANTA BARBARA NEWS-PRESS



newspress.com

Life

## Songstress in a new hometown

### MUSIC REVIEW

10/15/02

By JOSEF WOODARD

NEWS-PRESS CORRESPONDENT

Five years back, singer-songwriter Karla Bonoff became another celebrity escapee from Los Angeles, stealing her way up north to Montecito where the living is easier. Friday night at the Lobero Theatre, Bonoff finally played her first adopted homecoming gig, lavishing the crowd with a surprising passel of songs she's penned over the years. It was an evening of pleasant surprises and reassuring moments from one of the more talented singer-songwriters to emerge from the '70s Los Angeles scene.

"Santa Barbara, finally," the amicable and witty performer sighed, before launching into one of her lovely tunes, "Home."

This was a show close to home in more ways than one, being also a benefit show for the Santa Barbara Zoo. Bonoff, a confessed animal lover, demonstrated the good humor of her stage manner by plopping two toy stuffed meerkats on the grand piano, like mute mascots for the evening.

Her living, breathing partner was the multi-faceted Kenny Edwards. Switching from bass to guitar to mandolin, he always offered tasteful solo turns and seamless vocal harmonies, to boot. Sporting a fine new CD himself, Edwards -- who also produced some of Bonoff's '70s albums -- opened the concert with a warm set of his own songs, ranging from the bluesy "You Tore Me Apart" to the restless chordal and lyrical motions of "Will I Ever See You Again."

Edwards is a romantic, clear-eyed and wary in just the right degree, an attitude that also describes Bonoff's songbook, but with pop savvy added.

Bonoff's songbook is chockablock with well-crafted tunes, simple enough to state their unpretentious case. She's from the era of unapologetic sincerity, before irony crept into the firmament of pop music through new wave and other movements. Heard afresh all these years later, her songs sound like models of restraint and emotional directness, and they usually veer just to the side of cliché. A song like "If He's Ever Near" relies on more than just the usual folk and pop chords, dipping into some Brill Building sophistication.

Many of her best-known songs sneaked into the Top 40 via versions by Linda Rondstadt, whose own vocal style Bonoff's resembles. Her voice is intimate, but capable of belting, and the distance between those two poles is always in control.

On Friday, the hits, of both the single and album-cut variety, kept coming. "All My Life" made its way to pop's collective memory through a dust version by Rondstadt and Aaron Neville, but sounded great in Bonoff's court, as did the grandly dramatic, set-closing finale of "Someone to Lay Down Beside Me."

One of Bonoff's newer hits, Wynonna Judd's fetching take on "Tell Me Why," scored on the country charts, which shouldn't be a shock. Bonoff has some country and western and folk elements in her songwriting vocabulary, a touch of twang, as heard in a song like "I Can't Hold On."

Inversely, Nashville has leaned heavily towards the legacy of the L. A. folk-rock singer-songwriter heyday of the '70s lately.

A sense of irony was not lost on Bonoff that her one Top 10 hit, 1982's "Personally," wasn't an original, and she subjected the tune to injections of comic relief. For the final encore, Bonoff again turned away from her own songbook, but this time without flippancy. She chose the lovely old English folk song "The Water is Wide," which, she explained, she learned as an L. A. teenager from Frank Hamilton of the Weavers. Bonoff sang the tune with a persuasive purity that had nothing to do with the Hit Parade, embellished by Edwards' lovely tangled vocal harmony on the last verse. It was hardly show biz as usual.

Bonnie Raitt • Joan Armatrading **the** Karla Bonoff • Wendy Waldman

# PERFORMING SONGWRITER

Volume 7, Issue 43 • January/February 2000

FIRST IN A SERIES OF SPECIAL ISSUES

*Women Changing  
The Face Of Music:*

## Bonnie Raitt

Karla Bonoff  
Joan Armatrading

PRODUCER'S CORNER WITH:  
Wendy Waldman

- What Instrument Manufacturers and Dealers  
Need To Know About The Women's Market
- A Century of Women In Music

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RISKY BUSINESS:

**A New Definition  
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WOMEN  
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# Karla Bonoff



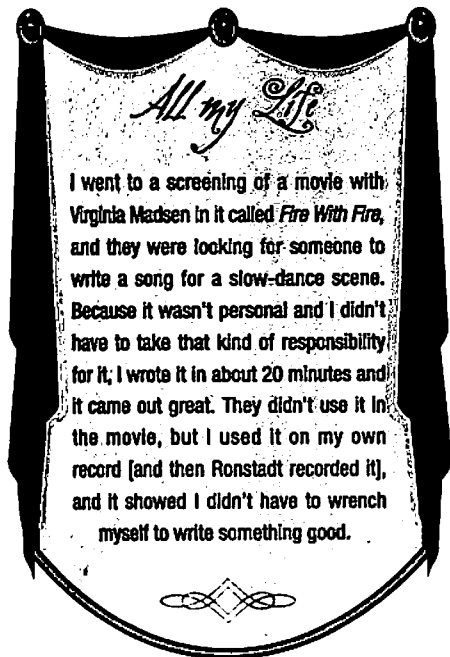
*by* CATIE CURTIS

**I remember** spending much of the early '80s in a stiff Shaker chair by the record player in my parents' kitchen, hunched over my guitar, completely absorbed in the contentment of learning and playing Karla Bonoff songs. I was drawn in by the honesty in her voice, soaring melodies, and lyrics that seemed to spill from her heart like intimate conversations. I learned at least twenty of her songs when I was in high school, and would play them over and over. The experience of her music felt relevant to me, unlike much of what was coming over FM radio in southern Maine at the time. My friends were listening to AC/DC, Lynyrd Skynyrd, and ZZ Top. They took me to see Journey. But Karla...Karla was real. Karla spoke to me.



**Growing up** in the fertile Los Angeles music scene of the late '60s and early '70s, Karla and her sister, Lisa, were hoot-night regulars at the legendary Troubadour, watching then-unknowns such as James Taylor and Jackson Browne trying out their new songs. She soon teamed up with other Troubadour regulars Wendy Waldman, Kenny Edwards, and Andrew Gold to form Bryndle – the first singer-songwriter supergroup that was, unfortunately, just a few years ahead of their time. After making an unreleased album for A&M, Bryndle disbanded and the four went on to develop their own careers. Karla had three of her songs (“Someone To Lay Down Beside Me,” “Lose Again,” and “If He’s Ever Near”) cut by Linda Ronstadt on her 1976 *Hasten Down The Wind* album. This led to Karla signing a solo deal with Columbia and putting out four records, *Karla Bonoff* (1977), *Restless Nights* (1979), *Wild Heart of the Young* (1982), and almost a decade later, *New World* (1988) on Gold Castle Records.

After a few years’ retreat from the music industry, Karla re-emerged in the '90s and had three more songs recorded by Ronstadt (“All My Life,” “Goodbye My Friend,” and “Trouble Again”) for her *Cry Like A Rainstorm, Howl Like The Wind* album, with “All My Life” winning a Grammy for Best Pop Vocal Duo. In 1993 she topped the country charts with Wynonna’s version of “Tell Me Why.” And in '95 Bryndle reunited and released an album, touring together for the first time in fifteen years.



All concert photos by Lydia Hutchinson



Now, she has just released a retrospective on Sony/Legacy called *All My Life: The Best of Karla Bonoff*.

Even though her songs have been covered by some of the most impressive singers of our time, Karla’s fans know that nobody sings them quite like she does. I can’t tell you what it is, exactly. I can only say that when I hear her aching and unadorned voice, I slump in my chair in a deeply satisfied, melancholy way. Bonnie Raitt nailed it when she said, “Karla breaks my heart every time she sings.”

Cole. And even though her thoughtful ballads like “Restless Nights” and “Goodbye My Friend” never had a chance to get radio play at that time, they paved the way for songs like one of the '90s biggest hits, McLachlan’s “Angel.”

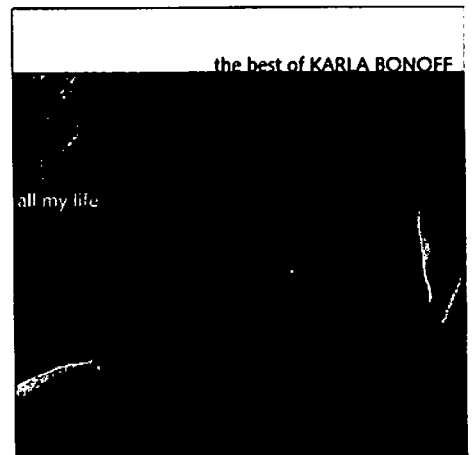
I met Karla Bonoff at her house near Santa Barbara. She’s in the process of having a new home built, so in the meantime, she’s living in a cottage that she has decorated in a colonial/farmhouse style. Her taste is unpretentious and down to earth, much like her music. She welcomed me in to sit

*I think when you’re a songwriter – until you have that first moment when someone records your song and you hear it back – there’s some part of you that goes, “Maybe I’m wrong, maybe I’m really not good, maybe I just think I’m good.”*

The role of a singer-songwriter in the spotlight hasn’t always been easy for Karla. As a shy person, she has struggled with the scrutiny and expectations that come with being a successful artist early in one’s career. When Karla’s cover of “Personally” became a hit in '82, she had to go on *Solid Gold* wearing a miniskirt and white go-go boots. This was pre-grunge, pre-Lilith Fair. Female singer-songwriters were not all over the pop charts, and the thoughtful folk sound of the '70s was on its way out. But against the backdrop of omnipresent electronic and heavy metal music, her straightforward, heartfelt, acoustic-based material sustained a legion of adoring folk-rock fans. Timothy White, editor of *Billboard*, summed it up best when he said, “Karla Bonoff’s works are a bold expression of humanistic searching and belief during an often faithless era.”

While Karla was providing us with a respite from the sounds of the '80s, she was also influencing the next generation of female singer-songwriters. Her melodic sense, personal lyrics, and vocal stylings have found their way into the work of everyone from Shawn Colvin and Jonatha Brooke to Sarah McLachlan and Paula

in a creaky wooden chair at a beautiful old kitchen table, and our conversation was easy and open. At one point her cat jumped up on the table and became fascinated with the microphone. I kept having those out-of-body sensations, realizing, “Here I am, sitting in Karla Bonoff’s kitchen, talking to Karla Bonoff about Karla Bonoff’s music.” Partly that’s just the typical star-struck thing, because when you’ve lived with the album covers for long enough and then you meet the person, it’s always surreal. But more importantly, I had this sense of reverence. Here was the person that first moved me to



## *Isn't It Always Love*

I wrote that around 1973, and at the time Bryndle was working with Chuck Plotkin as a producer. He kept telling us we weren't writing hit songs and needed to learn how to write a hit chorus. I was determined to prove to him that I could do that, and sat down and wrote that chorus to show him that I could. But even when I was doing something as an exercise, something would come out of my heart at the same time.

write and sing my own words – someone who seemed to care about music because of its ability to convey emotion. At the risk of admitting an unobjective interviewer status, I have to say I'm thankful to Karla for giving me such great tunes to ponder back then, and to still have kicking around in my head – word for word – after all these years.

*Do you think it was important to live in L.A. when you were starting your career, and do you think it's important for people trying to make a living in music to live in New York or L.A. today?*

Oh boy, I think then...my whole musical career would be completely different if I hadn't been there, only because at that time there seemed to be this beginning of the singer-songwriter movement – that California part of it, anyway – and it was really centered there. All these influences were there at that time, like hearing Jackson Browne playing new songs at open mics. I think the fact that we had places to perform where people who could sign us could hear us was an important thing. In that sense, it's probably still important to play somewhere where people can hear you, otherwise you are just in a vacuum.

I think a lot of the music scene there was so vital because a lot of the record companies and all the recording studios were there. So people would come there thinking "Well, this is where we have to go to get signed and make records." But now the whole music business is so different. Not that there aren't a lot of record companies there, but the whole nature of the fact that you can make your own record has changed that.

Now I don't know if it makes any difference where you live. But, on the other hand, I don't know what it's like to be 19 or 20 in L.A. Maybe there's a music scene I'm not aware of that goes on. But, just from my perspective, it doesn't seem like you need to be anywhere in particular anymore.

*Do you remember the first time you heard Linda Ronstadt sing one of your songs?*

Actually, the first one I heard she learned out on the road. I heard through Kenny [Edwards] she had learned "Lose Again." They had played it in their sound check and she liked it and they were doing it in the show. I was like, "Oh, that's so cool." I saw them at the Universal Amphitheater, and they played it. So that was the first time I heard her do it, and I was in the audience.

It was amazing for me, because I think when you're a songwriter – until you have that first moment when someone records your song and you hear it back – there's some part of you that goes, "Maybe I'm wrong, maybe I'm really not good, maybe I just think I'm good." But it takes somebody else mirroring back at you...and she just sang the shit of it (laughs). It was great.

*These days, how do you approach getting songs written?*

I guess for me it's just getting out of my own way. The best writing I've done comes from a subconscious, deeper place. And whatever writer's block I have comes from something in my head that's criticizing or editing what I'm doing, and not letting it just come out. For me the issue is about just avoiding that whole inner dialogue that's so paralyzing. That's the fascinating part, I think – where these songs really come from when that channel is open. Because I've had experiences where I have written stuff and then I looked down on the paper and went, "Wow, where did that come from?" So it's kind of non-intellectual.

*Are you saying that the process feels less like creating than discovering...like you just found this song?*

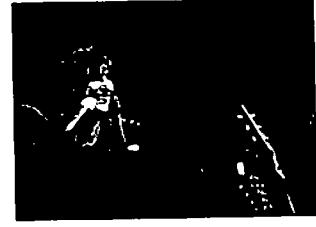


Karla during the Solid Gold days

Right. Yeah, I think the innocence of not judging yourself along the way, "Oh, I don't like that chord," or "What would so-and-so think of that?" Yeah, I would really get into it playing these songs. And instead of just doing them for myself, I was thinking about what other people would think of them. All that stuff that people do in their lives – not just in songwriting. I think the lesson is to stop worrying what other people think of you. Just do what is purely you. It's the lesson for me in every step of life, especially songwriting. I don't know, I think when I was younger and I had nothing to lose, I felt like if I would write something great, then great. If I didn't, no one would hear it anyway. I think there is more at stake when you've had some success, then all those other voices start. For me it's really about getting back to the purity of doing it.

*I read that you did some work with a writing coach. What was that process like?*

Well, I've always had a lot of writer's block, and someone recommended to me a writer's coach who had developed a system of tools to help you break through that. And really it's just learning the discipline of

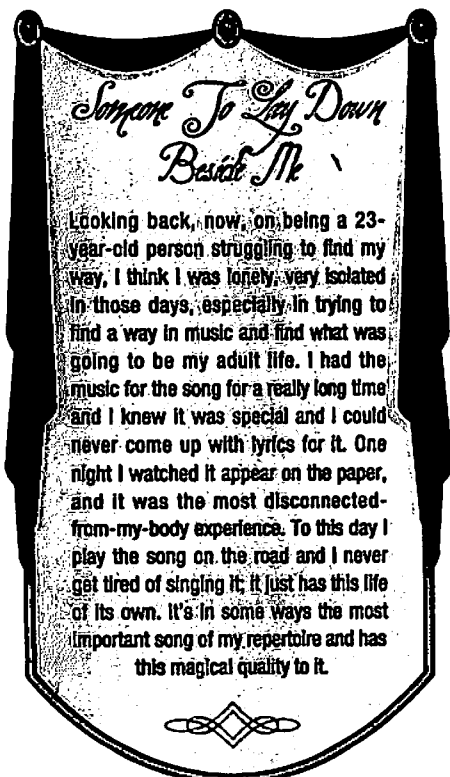






working on anything. So he taught me about writing in a journal everyday. There's also a book called *The Artist's Way* which has a lot of these same techniques in it...doing it every day, doing it right when you wake up in the morning before other things distract you.

So I'd feel like I had nothing to say or nothing to write about, but I would write in my journal for a week and then I'd just go read pieces of it to him. And he'd go, "There are so many ideas in there," and I'd go, "No, there's not." And he'd go, "Yes there are. There's this and that." He would



just pull out a phrase and go, "What about that? You could write about that." I would go "No," and I'd be really negative. At one point as an exercise he just said, "Try to write a song about this. I don't care if it's bad. Just take that phrase and write a song. That is your homework assignment." It was actually this phrase, "daddy's little girl," and I walked out of there going "Oh, I do not want to do this...I hate this."

The amazing thing was I sat down to do this, and this great song came out. Even with all my negativity and everything, I realized that if you're good at this and you're talented at it – even with all that, "Okay, this is an assignment I don't want to do," – if you show up for your job and you do the work, then at some point the songs will get written. And it really proved to me that I could come to the keyboard with something I really didn't think was going to work and was negative about and write a great song. That just blows my whole theory about all of this, "Oh no, I have to wait until I am inspired." So, he really proved something to me.

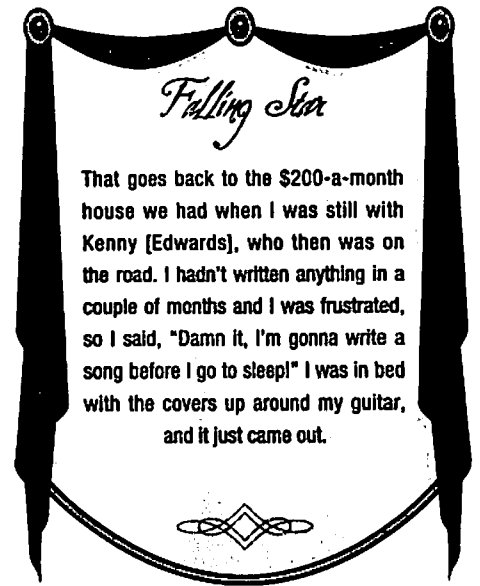
However, knowing all that I still have a hard time. It's like anything else, I think. If you want to run three miles, you have to go every day and run a quarter of a mile, and then a half mile, then a mile...and then maybe after three or four weeks you can run three miles. But I'm always impatient. I want to go out the door, never exercise, and then I want to run three miles.

*Because you've had those experiences where there are songs that do just come to you like gifts.*

But I think you still have to be playing your guitar, or playing your piano, or you have to have those days where you just play for an hour and go, "I hate everything I just played," because then maybe the third or the fourth or the fifth day you'll play something you do like. But you can't just never play and then sit down and expect that you're going to write this really cool song. Although, like you said, sometimes that happens.

*Why is it, do you think, that it's still important for you to write?*

Well, I don't know...in some ways it's not. Frankly, I'd be fine if I didn't, but I think the process of writing a great song is so enjoyable, and I think there's a sense of well-being that a writer gets from creating. I



like that feeling. I can get that from being creative in other things, too, but I just think it is such a positive reinforcement of who you are...for me, my identity is so tied up in that, if I don't do it I feel like, "Who am I? What am I supposed to do with my life?" And I think that it's the place where I'm able to express myself. And if there's any sort of fear around that – in terms of really being open and expressing yourself – I think that's the hurdle. If you get over that hurdle, then there's a great sense of relief in being able to dig down deeper.

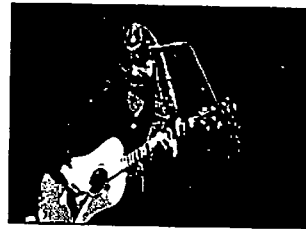
*Is there anything else in your life that you have applied the kind of intensity, focus, and desire to as songwriting?*

Actually, not until these last two years. I've been building a house, and it takes that same kind of discipline. It's very creative – I started off just designing it, and now I am in the last three months of finishing it. But it's just one big, huge, creative project – it's like one big, huge song (laughs). You keep going back and questioning yourself, and so I've been really wrapped up in that and it's really drained a lot of my creative energy for writing. But I'm going to have to get back to the writing to pay for it (laughs).

*It sounds like it's creating a balance to have another means of expression.*

Yeah. I use a lot of things to distract me from songwriting. I get really into gardening, you know, "I'll just go out there for an hour and do some weeding and planting and then I'll come back in and write." Next thing you know it's five o'clock. "Oh no, now its time

for dinner – I can't write now, I have to make dinner. I'll play later." I don't know about you, but I think a lot of songwriters avoid it, because you don't go to an office, and you don't have to show up. I think that's the hardest thing about it – the self-motivating thing. You have to discipline your own hours and your own time, and nobody knows if you don't show up. So I find days just go by where I am wandering around and all of a sudden I'll realize I haven't written for weeks. So, to me that's really the hardest part of it. Somebody said to me, "the work won't get done if you don't show up for your job." That's true, I really don't show up very often (laughs).



On the other hand, there is always that sense of insecurity. Where's the next dollar coming from? Where's the next gig? Will there be any more gigs? Will I make another record? Will my record be good? Will my record be bad? You are so vulnerable all the time. And when you lose your voice, it's such a terrible feeling, like someone has just cut off your arm or something. You are

got married to 'All My Life'." I hear that a lot.

I think there came a point in my life where I realized that my music really did touch people, and had a healing property for people. When I was younger it was hard for me to accept that, I think. To accept the gift I was given as a songwriter, and as someone who could maybe express feelings for people that they couldn't express. I've really come to value that as a gift that I certainly have no control over having. But the fact that it's been healing for people makes all the stuff that we go through in this career worth it, because it actually does have a beneficial effect on people.

*If there's any sort of fear around really being open and expressing yourself – I think that's the hurdle. If you get over that hurdle, then there's a great sense of relief in being able to dig down deeper.*

*It seems like there are a lot of elements to this kind of life that are about not having control. Like if your voice goes out or whether a great song comes to you or not. Do you feel like there is something good about that element that you have learned in your life by being an artist?*

I guess sometimes I crave having a more controlled life. You probably do, too, where you go to the office, and go to your work, and at five o'clock you drive home and it's done. Somehow when you do this, it's never done, it's never finished. It's this ongoing walk through life. Like you say, it's out of control, and yet I wouldn't trade it for anything. I mean, the fact that I have had this kind of freedom in my life and I have been able to travel all over the place...I really appreciate what is great about my life.

always at the mercy of, "What's happening next?" And I think when you're really pouring out your soul in this way, and you're putting it out there in the world and want people to like it...I think that the rejection factor – people not liking it...

At least now you can make your own records to some extent. But, in the days when you made a demo and then sent it out there to the record companies to see if they wanted you, you would get these rejections, and I think it just takes a lot of strength to have that kind of career. At least now people can make their own CDs, and you can take them on the road, and you can sell your record, and you can promote your own career. It's a little less painful than waiting for some company to say "yes" or "no" to you.

*How do you view your relationship with your fans? Do you talk to them at shows?*

Yeah, I do. In the old days we never did that. When I was younger I was kind of afraid. Now I sign CDs after shows and I talk to people, and I think I came to appreciate them a lot more as I got older. My fans have hung in with me for so long and have been so supportive, and really hung in with so little material (laughs), with only four albums. I just appreciate them so much. I hear the same things from my fans like, "You got me through my divorce," or "We

*Lose Again*

Like "Someone To Lay Down Beside Me," I wrote that song while I was living in a tiny \$200-a-month house in the San Fernando Valley and we had turned the garage into a music room. The water used to come down into the garage when it rained, so the piano sat in this wet place. When I think of some of some of the songs I wrote in this very, very uncomfortable situation, maybe that contributed to it. I remember that I was trying to imitate John David Souther (laughs). It was before Linda had recorded anything of mine, and she had done a bunch of his things. I was thinking, "I could write something she could do," and I was consciously trying to be in his shoes.



Bryndle – From left, Andrew Gold, Wendy Waldman, Karla, and Kenny Edwards

I don't know. I've been asked those questions since the '70s... "How does it feel to be a woman songwriter?" (laughs). I can remember these articles that would be done on women songwriters, and they would put me and Valerie Carter and somebody else together. It seems like the same article is being written and it's 20 years later (laughs). But the thing I see now is that there is so much more acceptance of it. I mean, Lilith Fair could not have happened when my record came out. Women wouldn't play with each other on the same bill. And I think there's so much acceptance for women on radio now. The thing I remember hearing was, "We already have one female singer on the radio; we can't play another one." So it seems easier, in a way, to be out there doing it. On the other hand, there seems like there's a whole lot more competition – there are so many women out there. But I think the biggest change is really that women are playing with each other on stage. That really didn't go on before.



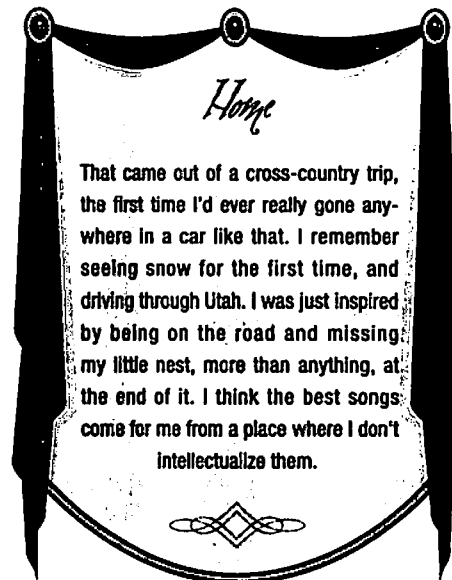
*Is there anything new that you want out of your own music for your life?*

Well, in a way I feel like I've been semi-retired for a while. I really have taken a long break from writing in a way that I think I needed to, because a part of me didn't want to do it. And now I feel like it's starting over and I feel like I can do it from a place of really doing it just for me. I think part of what happened for me was trying too hard to please other people or make the kind of record I thought I had to make, and I think in the time I've taken off I've watched music change to the point where I really see songwriters – and women in particular – being able to write about what they want to. So it encourages me to just go, "You know what? I'm just going to write whatever I want, and I'm just going to make the record I want." I think I've spent so much time trying to fit a round peg into a square hole that I just sort of worked my way out of wanting to write anymore. And I got a bad taste in my mouth about not being able to just be myself.

So now I am excited about just doing it...and in a way, I don't care if anybody



buys it or hears it, because I know I can print them up myself and sell them over our web page. I can put it out myself and probably make a better living than I did when I had a record contract. I made three albums for Sony, and I think I finally got a royalty check about two years ago. It took so long to re-coup the money that was spent. I mean, the cost of the record was so expensive, and the tour support, and the kind of deal you make as a new artist - you get so little per record that it took like 15 years to pay all that money back to the label. If I hadn't been a songwriter, I would've starved. If you're just an artist and you're trying to make money, I don't know how people survive. I would have long ago been working at Der Wienerschnitzel (laughs). So the prospect now of being able to do your own record – even if you sell five or ten thousand copies – if you own that record, then you can do okay. So I'm excited about what's ahead.



That came out of a cross-country trip, the first time I'd ever really gone anywhere in a car like that. I remember seeing snow for the first time, and driving through Utah. I was just inspired by being on the road and missing my little nest, more than anything, at the end of it. I think the best songs come for me from a place where I don't intellectualize them.



## Karla's Required Listening:



Shawn Colvin - *Steady On*

Joni Mitchell - *Hejira*

Bruce Hornsby - *The Way It Is*

Jackson Browne - *Late For The Sky*

James Taylor - *Sweet Baby James*

Song boxes are from the liner notes to *All My Life: The Best of Karla Bonoff*, written by Timothy White

The photo of Karla and Catie on page 37 is by Valerie Davis

Karla Bonoff's Web Site: [www.Bryndle.com](http://www.Bryndle.com) • Catie Curtis' Web Site: [www.Rykodisc.com](http://www.Rykodisc.com)



**Karla Bonoff**  
Singing In  
Westhampton  
pg. B-2

**PREVIEWS**

**The Independent**  
August 15, 2001

# Karla Bonoff: A Troubador Comes To Town

By Valerie Pillsworth

In the beautiful coastal California town of Santa Barbara, amidst the sweet-smelling flowers and fruit-bearing trees, Karla Bonoff makes folk music rich with tender words and sentiments. The melodies and lyrics that have earned her many devoted fans and a respected name in the music business continue to allow her to pursue her adolescent dreams. This Friday she will share her talents with a local audience at the Westhampton Beach Performing Arts Center at 8:30 p.m.

Outside the Troubadour club on Hollywood Boulevard in L.A., Bonoff and her sister would sit on the sidewalk with other musical aspirants. Skipping school to ensure a spot on the famous Monday night open-mike lineup, the young sisters would sit with the likes of Jackson Browne and James Taylor seeking a chance to display their musical talents at the reputable club. Hours were spent on the asphalt instead of in her high school classes just to be at the heart of the music business of the early 70s. Bonoff recalled "feeling drawn to a career in music," a feeling made more intense by the thriving music business of the time.

Asked about memorable nights she treasured from her nights at the Troubadour, Bonoff recalled watching Jackson Browne playing on stage when she was 19 years old. Another incredible experience was being able to see role



Karla Bonoff will be performing at the Westhampton Beach Performing Arts Center on Friday at 8:30 p.m.

model Joni Mitchell on several occasions within the span of two weeks.

**Regular Gigs**

The opportunity to take in numerous performances by favorite artists

was possible at the Troubadour in those days as headlining performers were scheduled for two-week blocks of shows, much to the delight of fans. The uniqueness of the small venue and its long-running shows seemed to have

been made more magical by the fact that the Troubadour was a haven for others attempting to launch their careers, such as Bonoff.

She and her sister played at the Troubadour numerous times before her sister went off to college. In the early '70s, Bonoff and others started the band Bryndle, whose members she would remain friends with throughout her life. Bryndle's members were Kenny Edwards, Wendy Waldman, and Andrew Gold.

"With the band we had some regular gigs and got a record deal with A&M," said Bonoff. "We were given some money but it was pretty much living hand to mouth."

Fortunately for Bonoff and the other members of Bryndle, Los Angeles was a cheaper place to live in those days than it is today. Thus, musicians were able to survive on the money they received from bar-room gigs and small-time record deals while continuing to chase their dreams.

Eventually Bryndle disbanded, with band members branching out in their own directions and achieving success in their diverse ways. The men of Bryndle, Kenny Edwards and Andrew Gold, joined Linda Ronstadt's band and over the following years would expose Ronstadt to the soulful and affecting lyrics written by Bonoff.

**The Hard Part**

A new phase of Bonoff's life began with her spending the next five years

— Continued on page B-13

## Karla Bonoff

Continued from page B-2. —

writing songs. In the years that followed, she wrote songs that would be made hits by singers such as Bonnie Raitt and Ronstadt. "Someone to Lay Down Beside Me" and "Love Again" were huge hits for Ronstadt and the song "Home" was a winner for Raitt. Bonoff's songs and voice would also be featured in films such as *About Last Night*, *Footloose*, and *3 Seconds*.

Though widely successful as a songwriter, it is that area of the business that Bonoff finds challenging. "Writing is the hard part as you can't count on being able to write something," explained Bonoff. "That for me is the work. Performing is the fun part."

Years of persistence paid off when Bonoff received her own record deal from Columbia. "I felt like I had made the right decision when my first album came out and I opened for Jackson Browne," said Bonoff. "Things started to turn around."

What enabled Bonoff to press on following her passions was faith. A decade-plus period of using faith and hard work to keep going was worth it when Bonoff's father finally gave his stamp of approval to her career choice, saying she had done the right thing.

Bonoff produced her own hit single, "I Can't Hold On," and went on tour to promote her first album. Such albums as *Restless Nights*, *Wild Heart of the Young*, and *Personally* followed and secured her a reputation of an accomplished songwriter and musician. Bonoff's tour route extended to Japan, where she was loved by audiences. She found the audiences of Japan "very knowledgeable and meticulous about the details of the music and the musician," and she continues to enjoy performing there.

In 1995, Bryndle reunited and the band is now working on finishing an album. Bonoff has plans to do another solo album and will continue to tour with an acoustic show across the country. Her goals now are to "keep writing, stay inspired and motivated." The web site [www.bryndle.com](http://www.bryndle.com) allows Bonoff and other members of the band to remain aware of their fans and receive feedback on albums and shows. Those interested in more information on Bonoff or Bryndle can access the web site.

Music enthusiasts wishing to see Karla Bonoff perform at the Westhampton Beach Performing Arts Center on Friday at 8:30 p.m. can call 288-1500 to purchase tickets or can visit WHBPAC at 76 Main Street in Westhampton Beach. Box office hours are Wednesday through Monday, noon to 5 p.m.

As for Bonoff, living on an acre with well-landscaped gardens and three old cats, her career continues to blossom and remains living proof that you can live your dreams if you just have faith.

In a world where just a fraction of those working achieve the lion's share of the financial rewards and fame, one has to be truly committed and almost addicted to his vocation. Hayes reveals his love of theater and film when he says, "It's a crazy business. If I could do anything else I would, but I can't. Besides, I'm too old now to be a life-guard."

# Karla Bonoff says her classic pop hasn't changed, despite struggles with fame

By Bill Livick  
Special to the Gazette

There are certain artists who represent a distinct period—a specific time and place—in the lives of music lovers. For many who came of age in the 1970s, Karla Bonoff is one of those artists.

When her self-titled first album was released in 1977, Bonoff was in her early 20s and already a veteran of the Southern California music scene. That debut recording catapulted Bonoff into the national limelight, an experience she found overwhelming.

"If I'd been older, I could have handled it better," she says in a telephone interview. "It's a lot of pressure being famous. It's a lot to deal with emotionally and professionally, and I kind of resented it."

What she resented, she says, is the fact that her first recording was 10 years in the making and, after that initial success, the record company "wanted another right away. The problem is I wasn't a song-writing machine."

"My songs grew out of my experiences and my feelings, and they didn't seem to understand that. I was never gonna make a lot of records," she says.

But Bonoff has stuck with the music business, releasing four solo recordings and two with her group, Bryndle, which formed in the late '80s.

Over the years Bryndle's members—Kenny Edwards, Wendy Waldman, Andrew Gold and Bonoff—have continued to work together collectively and on each other's projects.

When Bonoff appears in the Starlight Theatre of the Madison Civic Center on Sunday, Dec. 3, she'll perform on acoustic guitar and piano, accompanied by Edwards, who plays guitar and mandolin. And they'll be drawing from more than 30 years of music-making.

"My music is basically the same, although lyrically it's more mature and appropriate for my age," Bonoff says. "My approach has always been a classically simple song structure. I like to think of myself as a classic pop-song writer."

While Bonoff's songs may be categorized as pop, they are uncommonly intimate and poignant, shedding light on secrets of the heart that resonate with so many. She says writing those songs was, and continues to be, a cathartic process.

"When I'm writing songs it can be helpful for me and for a lot of other people, too. They often tell me how much the music has meant to them," she says.

Her songs have struck a chord with other musicians as well. Even before Bonoff began recording, stars such as Linda Ronstadt had taken notice of her work. Ronstadt recorded three Bonoff-penned gems for her 1976 record, "Hasten Down the Wind," then helped launch Bonoff's solo career by appearing as a background vocalist on "Karla Bonoff."

"When she recorded 'Someone to Lay Down Beside Me,' 'Lose Again' and 'If He's Ever Near,' that really set things in motion

for me," Bonoff says.

Other major artists, including Bonnie Raitt, began recording Bonoff songs, and soon she found herself touring as a solo artist, opening for acts that drew big crowds.

"I remember opening for Jackson Browne in front of 10,000 people. I was terrified."

After her initial success, Bonoff struggled with personal issues ranging from self-imposed isolation, self-doubt and creative blocks. Yet she continued—"in the back-

ground as a songwriter and doing some regional touring."

She released her second solo album, "Restless Nights," in 1979, and followed with "Wild Heart of the Young" in '82 and "New World" in '88.

She says the music industry has changed completely since her professional initiation.

"It's so much bigger and more corporate and impersonal. That never used to be the case," she says. "Our generation was kind of more laid-back and relaxed about the music. Now there's way too much product, and I think the quality has suffered. You're disposable if you don't sell a million records. It must be very difficult for new artists."

She calls the efforts of some of the younger artists, such as Ani DiFranco, who record, release and promote their own work, inspiring.

Five years ago, Bryndle regrouped to record an album that's clearly rooted in their sound of earlier decades. It was critically acclaimed, and the band began touring to pro-

mote it. Since then, they've returned to the studio and expect their latest release to hit store shelves this spring or summer.

Meanwhile, Bonoff continues to write new songs and perform them alongside the earlier material.

Many of Bonoff's songs are so emotional and moving that you wonder how she can continue to get in touch with those feelings after repeated performances.

"It's like getting into character, or the character of the song," she says. "For me, the music kind of transcends the tedium of doing the songs repeatedly. It has sort of a life of its own. Of course, a lot depends on the situation."

She says her favorite venues have intimate settings where people pay close attention to the music.

"I like best the small theater environment and performing arts centers. I was in Madison a couple of months ago and got a look at the Starlight Theatre. I think I'll love playing there."

## ENCORE

# Karla Bonoff in memorable gig

By DAVID MALACHOWSKI  
Special to the Times Union

SCHENECTADY — It would be hard to find a Californian singer-songwriter with a better pedigree than Karla Bonoff.

In 1969, she sang at the legendary Troubadour, where she rubbed elbows with James Taylor, Jackson Browne and Elton John. She was then referred to record execs by a member of the Doors and soon formed a band called Bryndle with Wendy Waldman, soon-to-be pop-star Andrew Gold and future Stone Pony Kenny Edwards.

Eventually, her compositions were recorded by Linda Ronstadt, Aaron Neville, Wynonna and Bonnie Raitt, and she even had a top-40 hit of her own — “Personally” — which oddly, was a cover.

In Schenectady, the now 40-something Bonoff made her way through the packed room carrying a cup of tea, looking quite youthful in dark straight hair with bangs and a colorful patchwork velvet top.

She and her longtime musical sidekick Kenny Edwards picked up guitars and broke into the yearning “How Long” as her soothing and seductive voice rose up to the bare wood rafters in an understated, pure and honest way.

From the lilting country waltz

## CONCERT REVIEW

**KARLA BONOFF**  
with Kenny Edwards

- **When:** 7 p.m. Saturday
- **Where:** The Van Dyck, 237 Union St., Schenectady
- **Musical highlights:** A breathtakingly haunting “Someone To Lay Down Beside Me,” expansive “New World,” hopeful “Way of the Heart” and moving “Goodbye My Friend.”
- **Length:** Over an hour
- **The crowd:** Packed house of adoring fans.
- **Last time in town:** With Bryndle, here about a year ago.

feel of “Home,” the expansive “New World” and the hopeful “The Way Of the Heart” to the anxious “Please Be The One,” Bonoff showed she may have written a lot of hits, but never in a calculated or pragmatic, chart-conscious manner. Her tunes have become popular purely because of their undeniable greatness.

Kenny Edwards offered superb support on guitar, bass, mandolin and harmony, which was steeped in their 30 years of collaborating. A solo turn on his own “Hate Letter to Los Angeles” called “Bitter Wheel” was impressive. Angry? Yes. Good? Very.

Bonoff’s content, knowing smile came with soft, sad eyes, and you knew “Lose Again” (about a broken romance) “Goodbye My Friend” (about the loss of a loved one) weren’t just songs, but personal pages from her life. She sings of an epic life of love and loss that some dream of, but most are simply scared of.

*“Well morning is breaking, the street lights are off/The sun will soon share the cost/Of a world that can be sort of heartless.”*

There are few songs that document bleak isolation, loneliness and inner struggle of being alone in the city as deeply as the haunting “Someone To Lay Down Beside Me.” From the eerie piano intro chords to the harrowing chorus, Bonoff brought the crowd with her on an intensely moving musical journey — one few there will soon forget.

Given the emotional impact of her tunes, Bonoff has a relatively reticent and laid back manner, but she holds the grace and passion of a true artist. You can’t just listen to her, you have no choice but to become drawn in and involved and invest something yourself.

The end result was one of the most meaningful and memorable shows to have come to the Van Dyck in quite some time.

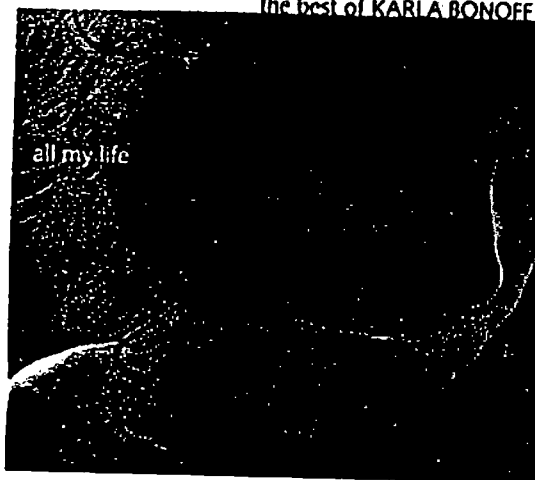
SUNDAY OCT. 27, 2000

# Reviews & Previews

ARTISTS & MUSIC

## SPOTLIGHT

the best of KARLA BONOFF



### KARLA BONOFF

#### All My Life: The Best Of Karla Bonoff

PRODUCERS: Kenny Edwards, Mark Goldenberg,  
Josh Leo, Bryndle

Columbia/Legacy 65765

Long before Alanis and Jewel, there was a breed of singer/songwriters whose earthy anthems of soul-searching, heartache, and joy touched souls in a way few can muster today. Karla Bonoff, who released four albums between 1977 and 1988, primarily pens moody, pained ballads that are simple and direct in style and yet as forceful and affecting as the emotions that love and love lost conjure. Of course, there's also that sweet, soft voice. Included on "All My Life" are songs made famous by Bonnie Raitt, Linda Ronstadt, and Wynonna, as well as Bonoff's sole top 40 hit, "Personally," which, ironically, she did not write. Enduring favorites include "The Water Is Wide," "Goodbye My Friend," and "Daddy's Little Girl," a song recorded in 1995 by her four-member ensemble Bryndle. This essential collection stands as a testament to the ideal that the good ones are indeed ageless.