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ARTIST BIO: KARLA BONOFF

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Born and raised in Southern California, Karla Bonoff was a songwriter by the age of fifteen. She and her sister Lisa were writing songs and playing as a duo titled "The Daughters of Chester P" named after their father, Dr. Chester Paul Bonoff. She had already fallen in love with the guitar and studied with Frank Hamilton of the famous folk group, The Weavers. By 16, Karla and her sister Lisa auditioned for Elektra Records. An 11-song demo [recorded by Doors' engineer Bruce Botnick] was recorded but no deal came of this first effort.

Karla's sister became a teacher of history and religion, but Karla's passion was always music. She became friends with other singer-songwriters and musicians [in the '60s] who were creating their own unique sound. She talks about lining up at the legendary Troubadour at noon on Mondays to get a slot in the famous Monday night Troubadour "hoot," which was a breaking ground for many artists who went on to great success. She says, "It was an amazing time. Jackson Browne, James Taylor and Elton John were around the Troubadour in those days." There were some other writer-singers who became friends of Karla's, and eventually, they decided to put a band together. They were Kenny Edwards, (who had started the Stone Poneys with Linda Ronstadt and Bobby Kimmel), Wendy Waldman, and Andrew Gold. Something powerful in their combined sound drew them together. Thus the band Bryndle was born - one of the early songwriter groups, even before the Eagles. The band made an album for A&M, but it was never released. They were, unfortunately, a bit ahead of their time.

Speaking of the A&M project, Karla says, "They didn't release it. I think they didn't really know quite what to make of it. This was right before Crosby, Stills and Nash, and before Fleetwood Mac. We were these two girls and two guys... the closest thing they could compare us to was the Mamas and the Papas. They actually had Lou Adler [producer for the Mamas and Papas] produce a single to try to make us like that. In the next few years, had we stayed together, I think we could have done well." A single, with Karla singing lead, was released from those sessions, but failed to forward the band's career. "It was a hit in Santa Maria [California]," Karla remembers. Bryndle broke up, but it launched four very illustrious careers. Kenny and Andrew joined Linda Ronstadt's band, and through that connection, Ronstadt was to hear a demo of hers. Karla recalled playing a tape of "Lose Again" for her. "Hey, you know that's real good," Bonoff remembers Ronstadt saying, "What else have you got?" On Linda's "Hasten Down the Wind" album [released in 1976], there were three Bonoff songs: "Someone to Lay Down Beside Me," "If He's Ever Near" and "Lose Again."

As Ronstadt was scoring hits with Karla Bonoff songs, Karla herself was signed as a solo artist to Columbia Records in 1977. There, she not only recorded the three songs Linda had done, but also the hit single "I Can't Hold On" and the tune "Home," which later wound up on one of Bonnie Raitt's albums. The producer of this great first album [and the next two] was Karla's old friend and partner, Kenny Edwards. Bonoff then embarked on a solo tour to promote her album, and by the time she reached Seattle, "I Can't Hold On" was Number 1 in the Pacific Northwest. "I was headlining and I barely had enough songs to play," Karla recalls, still amazed at the memory. "So I just kept playing them longer!" She went from there to coveted spots on major tours, opening for James Taylor and Jackson Browne and earning a rave review in Time magazine. Two subsequent albums, "Restless Nights" [released in 1979] and "Wild Heart of the Young" [released in 1982], established Karla as one of LA's major artists and songwriters. Musicians such as Russ Kunkel, Joe Walsh, Waddy Wachtel, Danny Kortchmar, Don Henley, Timothy Schmit, Peter Frampton, Bill Payne, J.D. Souther, and her old partners from Bryndle, Wendy Waldman, Andrew Gold and Kenny Edwards all participated in the making of these wonderful records. Bonoff had a big hit with "Personally," from her album "Wild Heart of the Young" - a song Karla did not write. "I'm sure there're people out there who only know me from this song, but I really enjoyed singing and recording it."

Her fourth album, New World [first released in 1988], was originally released on Gold Castle, and is now available on the Valley Entertainment label. Karla began to tour in Japan, where audiences fell in love with her, and where she became a very successful artist - and continues to be to this day. There's been work in film - she and J.D. Souther wrote songs for the motion picture "About Last Night." She is also the voice on the Tom Snow/Dean Pitchford song from "Footloose" called "Somebody's Eyes." In 1994, Karla had a top-ten AC hit single with a song from the film "8 Seconds," called "Standing Right Next to Me." This track was produced by the legendary Keith Thomas (a longtime fan of Karla's) and written with her old partner, Wendy Waldman. Throughout the years, Karla has continued to do what she does best. She's toured with Bonnie Raitt, John Prine, J.D. Souther and others, building up a passionate audience, resulting in sold-out houses everywhere. In 1990, strange things began to happen in Karla's life. Her career came full circle. She wrote three songs which wound up on her old friend Linda Ronstadt's album "Cry Like a Rainstorm, Howl Like the Wind." "All My Life," a duet with Ronstadt and Aaron Neville, won the Grammy for Best Vocal Performance by a Duo or Group. People magazine ranked "All My Life" as one of the top 5 most popular wedding songs.

In 1993, Karla's song "Tell Me Why," sung by the legendary Wynonna Judd [with Karla on acoustic guitar, and Bryndle members singing backup vocals], was the title song to Wynonna's second album, and a tremendous hit. The Eight Seconds soundtrack album [released in 1994], featured the aforementioned "Standing Right Next to Me" and a duet with Vince Gill on "When Will I Be Loved," [a '70s hit for Linda Ronstadt] bringing Karla's sound to an even bigger Country music audience.

Karla and her three old partners, Kenny Edwards, Andrew Gold and Wendy Waldman, then decided it was time to put Bryndle back together again. The thought had always been there, but now with each person having experienced many successes alone, there was much more to bring to the Bryndle experience. "When we decided to put this band back together," Bonoff explains, "we realized that one of the things that was wrong with it the first time was that we all wrote separately. We thought it would be great to write together this time. It's been new and really fun to do that, the four of us." Twelve out of the 14 songs on Bryndle's CD were written as a group. In the fall of '95, after four years of hard work, the first Bryndle CD came out, released in the United States and Japan. The band toured Japan in the summer, then began to tour the United States. Karla had some incredible showstoppers on the record and onstage. "On the Wind," "Under the Rainbow" and "Daddy's Little Girl" brought the house down every single night no matter where Bryndle played. Bonoff fans flocked to the shows and were thrilled to see her with her old friends, having a great time. In 1996, Andrew Gold left the band but Bryndle continued on, performing into the summer of 1997.

A duet with the Dirt Band, "You Believed in Me," written with Wendy Waldman, was released in January of that year on a prestigious MCA album honoring the 1996 Olympics.

In 1999, Sony/CBS Legacy released "All My Life - The Best of Karla Bonoff," a 16-song fully remastered collection spanning Karla's entire career. An extensive article by Billboard Editor-In-Chief Timothy White and an interview with Karla were included with the CD.

Progress on Bryndle's follow-up CD [with the working title of "Bryndle 2"] stopped and started after 1997 and for a few years, it appeared there might not be another release by the band. At one point, parts of the unfinished "Bryndle 2" digital recordings were lost in a hard drive crash - a nearly fatal omen to the project. Meanwhile, Karla [accompanied by Kenny Edwards] began touring more as a solo act as Bryndle stopped performing live.

In 2001, enthusiasm for the "Bryndle 2" project built up within the band and the recording pace intensified. Regular sessions took place at Kenny's Santa Barbara studio and Wendy's San Fernando Valley "Long House Studio." Former bandmate Andrew Gold contributed to the recording as well. Finally, in the first week of 2002, "House of Silence," the second collection of songs from Bryndle, was independently released. Although there's a different feel to the recording compared with the first album, it still reflected the unique sound that these artists make when their talents merge. Autographed editions of this CD are available from the [Karla Bonoff Store](#) and it's been released in Japan through Japan/JVC. Karla often plays the song "(My Heart Is) Like A Compass" from this release when she tours.

In November of 2002, Karla, Kenny Edwards and Wendy Waldman played their first show together under the Bryndle banner in more than 4 years. The setting was an intimate house concert in the Los Angeles area. Rumors of a CD release of "The House Concerts" have begun circulating. Although there are no plans for Bryndle presently, the members remain friends and there's always the possibility of future recordings and performances.

In a 2000 magazine article, Karla described herself as "semi-retired" - content with going out on short tours a few times a month. But she's also talked of recording a new album as well - perhaps at home. "I'd like to make a record completely for myself, one that isn't governed by what other people in the business think it needs to be," she said. "I don't have to go audition. I don't need a record company to pay for it. I can put it out on the Internet and it doesn't really cost anything. If a record company picks it up, great. If they don't, it doesn't really matter."

"I always had somebody mad at me because I wasn't making records, keeping up the pace," revealed Ms. Bonoff, who writes about four songs a year. "I'm really not that prolific - 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. 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.'" When it comes, a new collection of songs from Karla Bonoff will be exactly her vision of what it should sound like, and well worth the wait.

Karla continues to perform all over America, with her longtime friend, producer and band mate, Kenny Edwards accompanying her onstage [on vocals, guitar, mandolin and bass] - and at most shows, he performs as her opening act. Often after her concerts, Karla talks with fans and signs CDs and well-worn LP covers people bring to her shows. Japan has also been very supportive of Karla's music and she's toured there twice in recent years. An expanded version of her "Best Of" CD collection as well as Bryndle's "House of Silence" were released in Japan in 2002.

In 2007, Karla finally released a live double CD, a project she had talked about for years. "I think many of these songs have improved with age and and I have never really documented what we do." Karla recorded all but one song of it at a small club in Santa Barbara with her long time touring band, Kenny Edwards and Nina Gerber, plus Scott Babcock on percussion.

Karla's legacy as a performer and writer was summed up in a review of her "All My Life" recording in Billboard Magazine: "Long before Alanis and Jewel, there was a breed of singer/songwriters whose earthly anthems of soul-searching, heartache and joy touched souls in a way few can muster today."

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