

NOTE: This is not a serious review but more along the lines of "My afternoon and evening with Karla, Kenny and Nina." They played in Sebastopol, CA. in Sonoma County in March of 2003. I live 30 minutes away in Marin, making this the closest to my area that Karla or Bryndle have played.

Article and photos by Paul Grosso,
Karla Bonoff's Webmaster
May - 2003

In the last 10 months, I've had the chance to see Karla and Kenny play in a number of varied situations. Last summer, I watched them play in a small theater not far from the California/Oregon border and then a few days later, at an outdoor folk festival. In the fall, I saw them play a winery in the middle of (what's left of) Silicon Valley. This show in Sebastopol, in the middle of Sonoma County's wine country, was very different from all of those.

Background information

In the summer of 2002, Karla and Kenny played the annual [Kate Wolf Folk Festival](#) in Mendocino County. [Kate Wolf](#) was a noted singer/songwriter who lived in a small valley in Marin County where I used to live and she was an artist whose music I played when I was a disk jockey in Marin. [Nina Gerber](#) was Kate Wolf's guitarist for nearly her entire musical career - up until Kate's untimely death from leukemia in 1986. Here in Northern California and especially in Sonoma County, people have seen Nina accompanying lots of musicians traveling through the area. I saw her a few years ago with Cheryl Wheeler at the Great American Music Hall in San Francisco. She's played with Nancy Griffith, Jerry Jeff Walker, Terry Garthwaite, Tom Paxton and many others. I was backstage with Karla and Kenny at the festival this summer and noticed that Nina and Kenny were talking before the show - and during Karla's performance, Nina sat at the soundboard, just a few feet to the left of the performers and watched Karla's set up close. The promoter of the Kate Wolf Festival also produced this show in Sebastopol and it was his idea to have Nina play with Karla and Kenny.



March 15th, 2003 - Sebastopol, California

I got to the venue in the late afternoon and was able to photograph the sound check. Karla said something about not being dressed for a lot of photos and Kenny added that she looked a bit like [Neil Young](#), with a lumberjack shirt over a white t-shirt. "Karla Bonoff and Crazy Horse." I expected there to be a good amount of rehearsing since Nina hadn't played with Karla before, but she stuck close to Kenny and they briefly went through the songs they thought would be the most difficult. Nina picked up everything right away and the combined soundcheck/rehearsal lasted less than half an hour and no song was played all the way through. I sat back and watched them talk in a shorthand that only musicians understand as they worked out the changes.

I had a little time to visit with Karla and Kenny before the show. Karla and I talked about cats and her almost-finished website (which has since been completed). Kenny chatted about wanting to play in the Bay Area more and about plans for a Bad Haggard album in the near future. Karla thought I'd lost weight (I haven't) - Kenny said my beard was entering the [Lee Sklar](#) category (not quite, but getting there). Small talk.

A pre-show dinner was prepared by the concert promotion people and I got invited into a back room with Karla, Kenny, Nina and the promoter Cloud, for a nice home-cooked meal. (The perks that come with being a webmaster) Lots of great tour stories were swapped between the musicians during dinner - but I'd have to change the names and places before repeating most of them. Karla and Kenny haven't played much in the Bay

Area so Nina added some local Bay Area color. Since I've lived here most of my life here and spent a good amount of time backstage at shows, I always find this stuff entertaining.

Sonoma attracts a nice crowd of upscale baby-boomers and aging hippies, and I felt right at home with the crowd, which was nearly sold out as the show began.

[Kenny Edwards](#) did a great opening set. He's obviously become much more comfortable playing solo in the past five months since I've seen him and his music, mostly songs from his solo album, as well as a couple from Bryndle's House of Silence, were well received. I wish that he'd disclose more of his credentials to the audience during his performances. Kenny produced Karla's first three albums and recorded and toured with Linda Ronstadt longer than the Beatles were together. I think few in the crowd were aware of most of this until Karla mentioned that Kenny produced her recordings later in her set. Yes, he's that Kenny Edwards and he's that good.



After a short break, Karla, Kenny and Nina came out together. Karla had played two shows the night before in Santa Cruz (130 miles to the south) and I thought her voice sounded richer and fuller than normal - possibly from all the singing. The wood walls of the room also seemed to effect the overall warmth of the sound and the mix was solid throughout the show. I noticed a slight hesitation from all the musicians during the first song, possibly unsure of their little-rehearsed, three-person arraignment, but that quickly was replaced by some wonderful performances. On "Home", Nina made her guitar sound like a pedal steel, completely appropriate for the song. On "Please Be The One," (see below) Nina played a lead that had influences of Mark Knopfler. Kenny played the role of band leader, turned more toward Nina, giving her visual cues on changes as the show progressed. Karla covered songs from all of her albums and sang "Compass" from the most recent Bryndle recording during her 14 songs set. I think Karla played and sang as good as I've heard her and I noticed some vocal variations that probably came from having another instrument onstage. Everyone seemed in good spirits and Karla joked with the audience when a technical problem with her guitar pickup forced her to the piano earlier than expected. (The problem was quickly resolved but not before she made up a song called "Kenny's Trying the Guitar") It was an inspired performance by all. Karla and Kenny signed CDs after the show, spent the night in Sonoma and drove back down the coast the next morning.

These mp3s were made from digital soundboard recordings
3/15/03 - Sebastopol, California
Thanks to Cumulus Productions

[This Time Around](#)

Kenny Edwards, vocals and guitar
written by Kenny Edwards and Wendy Waldman
(introduction by Cloud)

[Please Be The One](#)

Karla Bonoff with Kenny Edwards on bass
& Nina Gerber on electric guitar
written by Karla Bonoff