

Review: Karla Bonoff shares inspiration behind classic songs
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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."