

Friday, February 22, 2013

To whom it may concern:

Onalea Gilberston approached me in 2011 about a piece that she was working on that explored her grandmother Blanche's life through song combined with the photos and audio tapes she had of Blanche recounting her memories. I was intrigued and the dialogue continued.

In January 2013 I was thrilled to present ***Blanche: The Bittersweet Life of a Wild Prairie Dame*** at Lunchbox Theatre as part of our regular season, in conjunction with One Yellow Rabbit's High Performance Rodeo. The show was being remounted after a very successful production in NYC. The audience and critics in Calgary went wild for it.

*"With **Prairie Dame**, Gilbertson has crafted one hell of a play which ranks right up there with the classic Canadian memory musical *Billy Bishop Goes to War*...."*

*I readily admit **Prairie Dame** moved me to tears of sadness and joy and I know I will return to see it again because shows like this are all too rare.*

- Louis B Hobson, Calgary Sun, Jan 18, 2013

*"As Tuesday's sold-out show wound down to its blackout, one of the Lunchbox ladies, sitting in a wheelchair in the front row, couldn't wait to deliver a verdict.*

*"That," she more or less announced to the cast — and the audience — "was fabulous!"*

*It really was."*

4 out of 5 stars

- Stephen Hunt, Calgary Herald, Jan 16, 2013

For the two week run at Lunchbox we played to near capacity houses and in the last week of the run it was nearly impossible to get a ticket. The audience loved the production. The combination of the audio and old photographs of the actual Blanche melded with the incredible music provided live by three musician/characters, Onalea's husky vocals that range from fiery to heartbreaking and her incredible dynamism on stage was a winning combination. We could have sold out another week of performances!

I would highly recommend ***Blanche: The Bittersweet Life of a Wild Prairie Dame*** for the artistry, the simple set up and execution, the power of the outstanding performances, the engaging storytelling and the tremendous response that every audience that I have seen has had to this beautifully simple, surprisingly complex piece.

Sincerely,



Pamela Halstead  
Artistic Director  
Lunchbox Theatre