

WILD PRAIRIE ROSE



WILD PRAIRIE ROSE

SYNOPSIS

In 1952 Rose Miller returns to her rural hometown of Beresford, South Dakota to care for her ailing mother. Once there, she falls in love with a deaf man and must decide if she has the courage to follow her heart. *Wild Prairie Rose* is an examination of the changing roles of women in 1950s America and in the ways that people who have great differences can learn to communicate with one another. It is a film that focuses on one woman's story, and yet challenges the audience to examine their own assumptions about what makes a good life.

Directed by Deborah LaVine, with beautiful cinematography by Ki Jin Kim and a compelling script by Sharon Greene, *Wild Prairie Rose* is a heartfelt examination of a woman's search for love, for connection, for community, for her true self.



WILD PRAIRIE ROSE

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Wild Prairie Rose reflects my love affair with South Dakota, which began in 2010 while shooting a short film in the small rural town of Beresford. The community was incredibly open and enthralled with the adventure of filmmaking, and supported the short film with locations, props, costumes, supporting actors and other critical production elements. It was a natural progression to make a feature film in this place of magical beauty.

In developing this story I wanted to work with professional artists from Los Angeles who are exceptionally talented, but who would appreciate spending time in Beresford, engaging with its community and exploring its natural beauty. The project was an opportunity for a band of outsiders to fully immerse themselves in a new community with all the fascinating challenges that presents.

The film is set in 1952, positioning the story at an intersection of cultural shifts in musical taste, fashion and ideas of morality. I especially wanted to explore the frustrations building as women's roles were being jostled and to examine the spaces between 1950s idealism and the subtle prejudices that eventually erupted in the upcoming eras.

Besides depicting the less ideal aspects of this era, I wanted *Wild Prairie Rose* to express hope and capture the warmth and kinship we discovered working in Beresford. The film's leading actor, Troy Kotsur, was happy to play a role written in his first language, American Sign Language (ASL), but he also wanted to be a part of a story that demonstrated how, with effort, all people can communicate no matter how difficult language, cultural or emotional barriers might be between individuals.

Wild Prairie Rose pays homage to that spirit as embodied by the people of Beresford welcoming our filmmaking team into their community and their investment of time and talent in the making of *Wild Prairie Rose*.

Deborah LaVine

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CREATIVE TEAM



DEBORAH LAVINE, DIRECTOR

Deborah LaVine is the Program Director of the graduate level Film Directing Program at California Institute of the Arts (CALARTS). An award winning director, Deborah's most recent work is the short film, *UNINTENDED*. The film features Jeff Perry, a founding member of the Steppenwolf Theater Company and co-star of the television series, *SCANDAL*. *UNINTENDED* is scheduled for

completion in August 2016.

Other recent film works include, *LOST MUSIC*, a lyrical exploration of loss and memory featuring Barbara Bain that played the Newport Beach Film Festival and the Sedona Film Festival among others. Deborah's short film, *PRAIRIE SONATA*, screened at the Moondance Film Festival in Boulder, Colorado winning the Spirit of the Festival, and Audience Favorite awards there. It has also played the Reel Dakota Festival, The Newport Beach Film Festival, and the Black Hills Film Festival. *PRAIRIE SONATA*, filmed in South Dakota, served as an inspiration for *WILD PRAIRIE ROSE*.

Theatrically, Deborah has directed over 300 professional productions across the United States for which she has received many prestigious awards including 4 Ovation awards, 16 Drama-Logue/Backstage West awards, and a NAACP Image Award citation among others. Select Los Angeles productions include NAPOLI MILIONARA at the Road Theater (Ovation award winner Outstanding Director and Best Production), THE RESISTIBLE RISE OF ARTURO UI at Theater Exchange, Deaf West Theater's STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE (Ovation award Best Production), KINDERTRANSPORT and A SHAYNA MAIDEL at the Tiffany Theatre, THE ACCOMPLICES at the Fountain Theater, and Edgemar Center for the Arts multi-award winning BLACK CAT CABARET.

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CAROL MONROE, PRODUCER

Carol Monroe was responsible for both the acquisition and development of new intellectual properties, as well as production, for SD Entertainment. While at SD, she executive produced numerous DVDs and television series for such properties as Bob the Builder, Angelina Ballerina, Care Bears and My Little Pony. Prior to joining SD, Carol served as Executive Producer and head of the Entertainment Division of the Hasbro Properties Group, where she produced numerous television shows and movies based on the toy company's legendary brands, including Transformers, GI Joe, Action Man, Tonka and CandyLand.

As Senior Vice President of Programming and Development, she was integral to the success of Fox Kids Worldwide in the 90s, then the #1 children's television network. In that capacity, Carol was responsible for 19 hours of original programming per week, including such hits as *Power Rangers*, *Spiderman*, *X-Men* and *Goosebumps*.

Carol was Vice-President of Steven Spielberg's Amblin Television, where she produced *Fudge* and *Harry and the Hendersons*, and was involved in the development and production of *ER*, *Animaniacs*, *Tiny Toon Adventures*, *Back to the Future* and *Fievel's American Tales*. Prior to that, she worked on the feature side of Amblin, on films ranging from *Land Before Time* to *Arachnophobia*.

Carol is the author/editor of Over There, Over Here, an electronic book about literature during WW2, as published in the Saturday Evening Post. Previously, she served as editor for Gatsby Girls, a collection of early F. Scott Fitzgerald stories, originally published in the Post. She is a special consultant to Mitroff & Associates, the leading provider of educational and curriculum services in the children's' entertainment space. Carol has served on the Boards of Directors and special committees for Children Now, Girls, Inc., the American Center for Children and Media, and the Fred Rogers Scholarship selection committee. Carol worked as a theatrical producer and has won three Drama-Logue awards for outstanding production of the year.

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CLIFF SCHULZ, EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

Cliff Schulz was born in Le Mars, Iowa, where he grew up and attended college at Westmar University. He was involved in theater and wrestled, NAIA Division II, for two seasons. After college, he spent ten years in the insurance industry in various sales and sales management roles across the U.S. In 1992, he moved from Atlanta to L.A., where he first joined the SAG/AFTRA union as an actor in 1993, while selling insurance in southern California. His most notable appearances include the season seven finale episode of *L.A. Law* (Hackett or Pack It), *Sister Act 2: Back in the Habit* and *3 Ninjas Kick Back*.

Cliff moved back to Iowa in 1994 where he met his wife, got married, started a family and eventually settled in the Sioux Falls, SD. area. After a few more years in the insurance industry, he made a career change and spent five years as a Business Development Manager in the commercial banking software industry. In 2002, he took a position as Director of Sales & Marketing for an international manufacturing firm, where he traveled the world. In 2007, he started an insurance agency that currently covers the state of South Dakota.



KI JIN KIM, DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Ki Jin Kim is a filmmaker, cinematographer and producer, working and living in Los Angeles. In 2012, he co-founded Nonetheless Productions, an independent production company dedicated to helping its talented collective of diverse directors in the production of feature films and digital content for a variety of platforms. The latest feature he produced and shot, *Spa Night*, premiered at Sundance 2016 in US

Dramatic Competition. His other work as producer includes the feature film, *Aurora Notte* (BAFICI 2014), and the MTV Other web-series, *Myrna the Monster* (Sundance, SXSW 2015), and clients such as Intel and GoPro.

Ki Jin moved from his native Korea to Los Angeles to attend the Film Directing Program at the California Institute of the Arts, where he now teaches Film Production.

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GIULIA CARUSO, ASSOCIATE PRODUCER

Giulia Caruso is an LA-based Italian filmmaker and one of the founding members of the independent production company Nonetheless Productions. She recently produced Andrew Ahn's debut feature *Spa Night*, premiering at Sundance 2016 in US Dramatic Competition, and *Myrna the Monster*, starring Kathleen Hanna and executive produced by MTV(other), that premiered at Sundance and went on to play more than 100 festivals worldwide, including SXSW, Palm Springs and the Florida Film Festival. With Nonetheless Productions, Giulia has produced content for clients such as Intel, Wired, GoPro and MTV, and is

currently producing Ian Samuels's debut feature *Still Lives* (working title) and a number of other projects for different platforms and formats.

Giulia's directorial debut feature *Aurora Notte* premiered at BAFICI 2014, and her latest short was executive produced by James Franco as part of the omnibus film *Holyland*. Giulia is a Berlinale Talent Campus alum and 2016 Project:Involve fellow. She holds an MFA in Film Directing from the California Institute of the Arts, for which she was awarded the Hollywood Foreign Press Scholarship.



SHARON GREENE, WRITER

Sharon Greene is screenwriter, producer and teacher living in Los Angeles. Her feature film *Operator*, co-written with Director Logan Kibens, premiered in 2016 at SXSW. *Operator* participated in the Sundance Labs, and was supported by Film Independent and the Sloan Foundation. She holds a MFA from USC's Writing for Screen and Television program where her TV pilot *Cherryland* was nominated for the Student Humanitas Prize.

Sharon wrote, directed and performed in the late-night experimental comedy show *Too Much Light Makes The Baby Go Blind* in both Chicago and New York. The Chicago Tribune selected her play, *Fake Lake*, as one of the ten best plays of 2008. She is currently developing a television show.

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MERIDITH SOMMERS, EDITOR

Meridith Sommers is originally from New York. She received her B.A. from American University in Washington, D.C. with a double major in Performance Music (cello) and Law & Society. Since moving to Los Angeles over a decade ago, she has worked on numerous television shows including *Numb3rs* (CBS), *In Plain Sight* (USA), *The Client List* (Lifetime), *Vegas* (CBS), and *Covert Affairs* (USA). In addition, she has edited numerous short and feature films including: *Acquired Taste* (dir.: David Ruchman, Best Editing Finalist), *Model Minority* (dir.: Lily Mariye), *Death in the Desert* (dir.: Josh Evans), *Wild Prairie Rose* (dir.: Deborah LaVine), and *Thrill Ride* (dir.: Chris Parrish). She was also a finalist for the 2015 Sundance Institute's Sally Menke Memorial Editing Fellowship.



HANNAH ROSE DEXTER, MUSIC

Hannah Rose Dexter is a 23-year-old bass player and composer with expansive range and interests. Had she never heard the album *Funk Power* by James Brown, she'd be well along the slippery slope to a career in classical music. Six years after putting that record on the stereo, her style is a combination of all that she loves: funk, ragtime, old time, jazz, pop, world, experimental, new wave, 50s rock'n'roll, country western, and (still) classical.

Since graduating with her Bachelor's from CalArts in 2015, she has scored the feature length film *Wild Prairie Rose*, performed an original solo bass score to a series of 19th century films at REDCAT, and another to *The Glass Menagerie*, directed by Deborah Lavine and James Franco. In her spare time, she can be seen biking around Los Angeles and performing with the psychedelic children's band, A Horse A Spoon A Bucket.

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BETSY BERENSON, COSTUME DESIGNER & ACTOR

Betsy Berenson divided her time in front of and behind the camera on *Wild Prairie Rose*. Betsy has been designing and building costumes for over 30 years. With a BFA in Theatre Design from West Virginia University, Betsy worked for several years as a dresser and seamstress at the prestigious South Coast Repertory for Mainstage productions of *Amadeus*, *The Seagull*, *Saint Joan*, *The Gigli Concert*, *Galileo*, *The Debutante Ball* and many others, sometimes working singlehandedly as

dresser/quick change artist for casts of over 30 actors. After her daughter was born, Betsy designed and dressed many children's theater productions for Rainbow Kids in Los Angeles, including *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Hello Dolly*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *As You Like It*.

Betsy began her stage career in pastoral Pennsylvania, working at the Red Barn Theatre with roles in such plays as *Plaza Suite*, *See How they Run*, *Charlie Brown and Butterflies are Free*. After moving to Los Angeles, Betsy became a member of Pacific Theatre Ensemble, (now Pacific Resident Theatre) and her credits there included a featured role in the acclaimed production of Jamie Baker's *South Central Rain* and an adaptation of Dorothy Parker's *Here We Are*. This is her first role in a feature film.

CARYN DRAKE, PRODUCTION DESIGNER

Caryn Drake is a Post Production Supervisor and Graphic Designer living in Los Angeles, who went back to her theatrical design roots when asked to be *Wild Prairie Rose*'s Production Designer. She is also the feature's postproduction supervisor. She holds a BFA from Valparaiso University where she studied Graphic Design and Production and has been working in digital post production, graphic design, and marketing with social media campaign planning and execution. Caryn has worked with independent filmmakers as well as entities such as FOX, Mattel, Hasbro, Disney, Warner Bros, LEGO, Universal, The Jim Henson Company, Apple, Cirque du Soleil, Carmike, DigiNext, AEG Live, and Lionsgate.

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NATHAN RUYLE, SOUND

Nathan Ruyle is the founder and principle designer, supervising sound editor, and re-recording mixer at This is Sound Design. He has an MFA in Sound and New Media Design from California Institute of the Arts, where he is currently an adjunct professor in the School of Film/Video and Center for Integrated Media. Nathan is also a technologist and software developer, creating new tools and infrastructure for a variety of traditional and emerging contexts.

CAST



TARA SAMUEL/ROSE

Samuel hails from Toronto Canada, where she was classically trained at George Brown theatre school, and began her career on the professional stage. She is most widely known for her television role "Tara Williams" in *Sue Thomas: F.B.Eye.* which continues to air around the world. Other television credits: *The Mindy Project, The Neddeaus, The Division, Beachwood Charter, Singled Out, The Bold & The Beautiful, Twice In A Lifetime, Killer Deal.*

She received a Best Actress Award from the Manhattan International Film Festival, for her role "Ruby" in the film *Ruby Booby*. Other film credits: *Tiger Orange, Way Down In Chinatown, Hunt the Maguffin, The Interview, The Rwanda Blend, Tanya & Gary, Prairie Sonata, The Drain, The Third Eye.*

As a filmmaker, Tara wrote, directed, produced and starred in *FIND* (The Journal of Short Film) which screened at festivals around the world; was nominated Best Narrative Short at the Oscar-qualifying Austin Film Festival. Also as producer-actor: *Ruby Booby*, dir. Jon

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Rannells, *The Rwanda Blend*, dir. Sam Zvibleman, and *Prairie Sonata*, directed by longtime collaborator Deborah LaVine. Tara's screenwriting credits include *Find, Last Wish* and *Karen Of God*, and she is co-founder of both Busterhouse Productions and of the notorious Los Angeles indie film collective www.wemakemovies.org. As story-consultant, Tara is CEO of www.sriptkicker.com and is published in Movie Maker Magazine online. In 2014, Tara was honored at the LA Business Journal's Women Making A Difference Symposium & Awards for her notable work in the Los Angeles filmmaking community.



TROY KOTSUR/JAMES

Troy Kotsur has been acting and directing for over 20 years, winning multi-awards along the way. Deaf since birth, he was raised in Mesa, Arizona. Troy graduated from Westwood High School and went to Gallaudet University, where he played basketball from 1987 to 1989. In 1990 he left to become a professional actor with the National Theatre of the Deaf/Deaf West Theatre and a freelance-director.

Troy's first film project was a short that he wrote and directed called *Got Matches*, which premiered at the Toronto International Deaf Film Festival. His other film work includes *Ray's Potion, The Eye, and True West*, a film that he starred in as well as directed. In 2013 Troy directed his first feature length film, *Super Deafy: No Ordinary Hero*. He is attached to direct an independent film called *Deaf Ghost*, filming next year.

As an actor, Troy has had success in both film and television. His guest starring roles include but are not limited to, *Scrubs, CSI: NY, Criminal Minds*, and *Sue Thomas F.B.I.* Eye, a show where he had a recurring role and was a fan favorite. In film, Troy has had strong supporting roles in *The Number 23* with Jim Carey, *Father's Day Breakfast*, and *Universal Signs*. Troy will play the leading role in the upcoming film, *Inside Track*.

Troy's stage performing credits include the Tony-Award winning *Big River* on Broadway. He has had starring roles in *Pippin* at the Mark Taper Forum, Deaf West Theatre's production of *Spring Awakening* (2015 Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle Award, Nominee – Best Production), *American Buffalo* at Cal State University Los Angeles, *Cyrano* at Deaf

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West/Fountain Theaters, (2013 Winner of seven Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle Awards including Best Actor), *A Streetcar Named Desire*, (2001 LA Weekly Award, LA Drama Critics Award), and *Of Mice and Men* (1994 Lenny-Best Actor, LA Weekly). Troy will next be seen on stage in Edward Albee's *At Home at the Zoo* at the Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts, and in a production of *American Buffalo* in Ohio.

Troy is currently studying writing and directing with Luca Ceccarelli of the Director's Edge in Hollywood, California.



SUANNE SPOKE/PEARL

Suanne Spoke has an extensive career in theatre, television, film and the classroom. In theatre she has been recognized for her work as both an actress and as a producer, re-envisioning classic works and helming West Coast & National premieres. Suanne was most recently seen at the Fountain Theatre in the West Coast premiere of Athol Fugard's "The Painted Rocks at Revolver Creek", named by the LA Times as one of the 10 best plays of 2015. She has been seen on innumerable stages and has won every major acting and producing award given in Los Angeles; a three time recipient

of the prestigious Ovation Award for Lead Performance by an Actress, the Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle award for both Best Production (Producer) and Best Actress, the LA Weekly Award for Best Production (Producer/Actress) and the Backstage Garland Award for Best Actress and many other nominations, honorable mentions and acknowledgements over her 30 year career on the stage.

Suanne continues to cultivate a career in front of the camera as well, appearing in over 100 television episodes and feature films. She recurs on "Switched at Birth", appears in a very special feature on the DVD release for season 4 of "Once Upon a Time", and will be seen in Christopher Guest's new film "Mascots" and upcoming in three independent films "Wild Prairie Rose", "Mom" and "Dumped".

She currently serves on the faculty of the prestigious California Institute of the Arts in the Film Directing Program.

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COURTNEY JONES/MACY

Courtney Jones was born and raised in northern California. She studied at the *American Conservatory Theatre* in the Studio program in San Francisco, and with the acclaimed acting teacher *Robert X. Modica* at Carnegie Hall in New York City. She currently studies with Sharon Chatten at the *Sharon Chatten Studio* in Los Angeles.

Some of her previous credits include a recurring role on *All My Children*,

Friends with Benefits for Fox TV, *Stupid Face/Bad Dad* on Fuel TV, *I'm with the Band* on the Disney Channel and *NTSF-SUV-San Diego* on Adult Swim/Comedy Central. Films such as, *Nightfall*, the short *Look at Me, Pandora Machine* where she portrayed Isabella Von Liechtenstein, a trophy wife who murdered her husband and got away with it, *Beautiful Kid*, *Slider*, *Thor* with Marvel Studios as an Asgardian Goddess, *J. Edger* directed by Clint Eastwood, the short film she co-wrote and produced titled *Forget You, Fortune Cooky* that competed at the *International Athens Film Festival* in the short films program about love. She has appeared in numerous commercials and theatre productions in San Francisco, New York and Los Angeles.



DEANNE BRAY/CAFETERIA WORKER

Deanne Bray has received rave reviews since she burst onto the scene in her critically acclaimed starring role as Sue Thomas in the award winning television series *Sue Thomas: F.B. Eye*. She then brought a new legion of fans to her work when she was a regular on the NBC hit show *Heroes* where she played the role of 'hero' Emma. *Heroes* director SJ Clarkson said about working with Deanne, "She's spectacular. Her natural instincts are right on when she performs." *Heroes* Executive Producer Dennis Hammer says, "she's an extraordinary actress. Her

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talent and heart have made us all proud.”

Ms. Bray is now known within the Hollywood industry and beyond as someone who brings honesty, depth, and her own unique charm to her growing list of roles. She has also done work for Disney, Paramount, HBO, Sony, CBS, ABC, and NBC as well as having been a stalwart performer at the prestigious Deaf West Theatre and CTG Theater Group, earning accolades and awards for her performances.

For Deanne, working in Hollywood is a bit like coming home. As a little girl she grew up riding her bike around studio lots while her single father worked as a lighting technician. Little did she know she'd end up being in front of the camera.

Perhaps *Sue Thomas: F.B. Eye* creator, writer, and executive producer Dave Alan Johnson summed up the experience of working with Deanne Bray when he said, “Deanne is simply the best actress and nicest person I’ve worked with in my twenty years of writing, producing, and directing in Hollywood. She’s one of a kind and no one should ever put limits on what she can do. I can’t wait to see what she does next.”



MAYA BRATTKUS/ANNA

Maya Brattkus started acting in 8th grade when her theatre teacher, Tim Wright, cast her as Haydee Sanabria in *With Their Eyes*. Since then she has played many diverse roles such as Kay Banks in *Father of the Bride*, Ismene in *Antigone*, Annelle Dupree DeSoto in *Steel Magnolias*, Little Jesus Girl in *The Pillowman* and the Ash Girl in *The Ash Girl*. She has worked with James Franco in the collaborative theatre piece *Paradise* at the California Institute of the Arts (CalArts), and she has acted in several student films.

Maya is pursuing her BFA in Acting at CalArts and has written and acted in two plays being produced by the *New Works Festival*. She was named a California Scholar of the Arts in 2014, and this summer she will be studying Shakespeare at the British American Drama Academy's Midsummer in Oxford. *Wild Prairie Rose* is Maya's first feature film.

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SAMUEL SCHULZ/DALE

Samuel Schulz was born in Sioux City, Iowa where he lived until he was two years old. He then moved to South Dakota with his family and settled in the Sioux Falls area, where he lives today. He is currently a senior in a private high school studying acting and college prep courses. Samuel has been acting in theatre since his early teens and has done independent study at Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis, MN. He has also been working closely with his acting coach in Studio City, CA., since August 2014. *Wild Prairie Rose* is Samuel's first feature film.. After he graduates from high school, Samuel plans to move to Los Angeles to pursue his acting career and further studies.



DONNE MCRAE/MRS. ROEBUCK

Donne McRae is pleased to join her favorite collaborator, Deborah LaVine, on the *Wild Prairie Rose* adventure. Donne has also been seen in feature films *Arc* and *The Trouble with Lou* and short films *Manatee*, *Jack the Snipper* and *Blessing House*. She has worked several times with Ms. LaVine on stage, notably in *The Accomplices*, *True West* and *A Streetcar Named Desire*.

WILD PRAIRIE ROSE

INTERVIEW WITH DIRECTOR, DEBORAH LAVINE

You have made two films set in the small town of Beresford, South Dakota. What drew you there?

A coffee date with actress Tara Samuel, (the beautiful Rose in WILD PRAIRIE ROSE), started the whole journey. Tara invited me to discuss possible projects we could make together. I found her passion and energy for filmmaking infectious, and knew immediately I wanted to collaborate with her!

In looking for material, we landed on the idea of working out of Los Angeles, preferably in rural landscapes. Los Angeles is trounced by masses of people making films, which has created weariness for small budget films in the city. Expensive permitting is ubiquitous, props, costumes and other production values are readily available, but generally come at a high cost. By moving out of town, we could extend our limited resources much farther.

Problem was, we didn't have a story.

Tara and I became interested in the work of playwright, Tom Jacobson. His play, THE FRIENDLY HOUR, was based on journals and diaries from a rural South Dakota ladies social club in Beresford, South Dakota. The stories were beautiful and abundant with characters based on complex, intrepid women from Tom's family! We decided to focus on two particular characters from the play and adapt elements from the play into a short film set in the early 1930s.

Tara and I traveled to Beresford with another professional actress from Los Angeles, a DP, Line Producer, sound engineer and my 15 year old daughter as the PA. There wasn't any pre-production, just trust and a keen sense of adventure. Once in Beresford, we were greeted warmly and supported with more beautiful production elements than we could have imagined, but more importantly the community became central to the emotion of the story by participating on camera and off bringing meals to set, holding the boom, providing personal stories about their families that became anecdotes in the script, all coalescing the experience as an act of communal collaboration.

That experience became a short film, PRAIRIE SONATA. I knew when I left Beresford after making it that I needed to return and continue finding stories in that place with that community. The feature film, WILD PRAIRIE ROSE, grew out of this.

***Wild Prairie Rose* takes place in 1952. Why did you want to set the film in the 1950s?**

This era represents seismic cultural shifts in many aspects of American life; music, entertainment, literature, social customs, and moral conventions. The adjustments women experienced during and after World War II were central to the development of the American social revolution in the 1960s and 1970s that resonate today. So, I wanted a narrative that focused on one woman confronting identity in that era. Looking back is fascinating when considering what "forward" might look like.

At the start of the journey I didn't realize we would ultimately make a work focusing on roles for women and other underserved communities on screen and behind the camera, but both Beresford productions organically developed around strong female protagonists pushing against the grain of accepted norms. Our production teams were comprised of wonderfully diverse artists, the majority of whom were women, landing in a location that tends to be fairly insular. The connections between such diverse groups grew in remarkable ways that deeply affected the emotional timbre on-screen.

Your lead actor, Troy Kotsur, is deaf. How did you meet Troy and how did he become attached to the film?

The characters in WPR are all written for, and built around actors I know and believe are truly exceptional. This includes Troy. I had the honor of directing Troy in a production of A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE for the Deaf West Theater Company. This is the vaunted company that has produced Broadway revivals of BIG RIVER and SPRING AWAKENING performed in both English and American Sign Language.

Troy is one of the most dynamic leading men I've had the pleasure to work with. He is a true artist and gentleman, gifted with amazing skill as a tragedian as well as comedian. The role of James was designed to demonstrate Troy's wide range. His character is the love interest...period. Not the "*deaf* love interest". Troy was very interested in playing a role that did not fetishize deafness. Instead he hoped WILD PRAIRIE ROSE would honestly represent 1950's perceptions of deafness, some of which were very ugly, balanced with universal story points.

How long was your shoot and what were your budget constraints?

We shot with a minuscule budget. We shot for 12 days in Beresford, during the heat of summer, and 3 days outside of Bakersfield, California. Catering was often donated by friends in the community who provided amazing lunches and dinners, the actors handled their own hair and makeup, and a member of the community let us use their RV as a place for the cast and crew to rest in when they weren't on set. Housing for the majority of our actors and crew was in a gorgeous historic bed and breakfast provided at a fantastically reduced rate, and members of community helped with costuming, props, and as extras. The entire budget for this film would not cover the porta-potty budget for films of its nature shot in traditional methods.

With such a short shooting schedule things must have been hectic.

Crazy, but in wonderful ways! Lack of time meant the production team focus was 100% devoted to shooting and making the film happen. Deprivation encouraged unique creative ideas. There's something magical in the communion of such singular passion compressed into a very tight period of time!

How did the community of Beresford help you out?

The community of Beresford gave so much in terms of time, talent and resources. That generosity allowed us to create high production values minus the impossible costs typical in filmmaking.

Tom Jacobson's family became the sherpa's of PRAIRIE SONATA and WILD PRAIRIE ROSE by guiding us to period props (including pristine antique vehicles), period costumes straight from their attics and closets, landscapes and town buildings, all available without permits required! We were able to mount a production that authentically tickles our sense of history, nostalgia and even a pinch of theatricality at a price that would only cover a few days catering on a typical feature film.

More importantly, a disparate group of collaborators from Los Angeles and Beresford became life long friends with a hope to continue making more films together in the future.



WILD PRAIRIE ROSE

WPR PRODUCTIONS AND NONETHELESS PRODUCTIONS PRESENT

Wild Prairie Rose

TARA SAMUEL TROY KOTSUR AND SUANNE SPOKE

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER CLIFF SCHULZ MUSIC BY HANNAH ROSE DEXTER

SOUND DESIGN BY NATHAN RUYLE COSTUMES BY BETSY BERENSON

PRODUCTION DESIGNER CARYN DRAKE EDITED BY MERIDITH SOMMERS

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY KI JIN KIM WRITTEN BY SHARON B. GREENE

ASSOCIATE PRODUCERS GUILIA CARUSO KI JIN KIM

PRODUCED BY CAROL MONROE DIRECTED BY DEBORAH LAVINE

Run Time/90 minutes

World Premiere/ Bentonville Film Festival 2016

Website/ WildPrairieRosetheMovie.com

Facebook/www.facebook.com/WildPrairieRose

Twitter/@WPRtheMovie

Instagram/WPRtheMovie

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