

## Summer Glau: Serenity's psychic reveals all

*Texas-born Summer Glau plays the troubled teenager at the heart of Serenity, River Tam. A trained ballerina who first came to Joss Whedon's attention during a cameo on Angel, Glau appears here in her first starring feature role.*

### **How surprised were you by the size of River's role in the film?**

It's amazing isn't it? I couldn't believe it. When I read the script and saw how much River had to do I thought it must have been a mistake. I thought they were going to recast me! Seriously. I had the conversation with Joss and said 'It's okay, I understand if you have to do that'.

### **Is there an aspect of River you like the most?**

I think the thing I like about River is that she gets to be barefoot so much of the time. I don't like shoes very much. But River is this amazing character, and I'm constantly amazed at all that crazy things I get to do. And the more things I mention, the more things she ends up doing, like I remember in the first episode I was thinking "you know, I think really River needs a gun" and then by episode ten I got one. It was the captain's gun.

### **Do you think people will have to know Firefly to fully understand Serenity?**

The way Joss did it was brilliant because we picked up the story where we left off so fans of the show won't be bored. But he also introduces the characters fresh for anybody who doesn't know them. You're immediately invested in each character. He did an amazing job of making sure that everyone's storyline continued and had depth.

### **How much did your ballet training help with the considerable amount of action you have here?**

Being a dancer I was used to the routine of going to the gym every day and doing choreography. I could mimic the shapes that they taught me was pretty easy but learning the aggression and retraining my muscles to move in that fast, switch, attack way was completely different from ballet, so it took me a long time to adapt. I wasn't prepared for how hard they were going to train me for this. When they I first came in they said, "she's kind of scrawny and she's kind of leggy and I don't know what we can do with her." And then they started training me and they said, "You know, we're going to train you for real because you can really do this." So they had me come in, I worked so hard. I cried every day.

They formulated a sort of a wushu kung-fu kick boxing hybrid for me, that was suited to my body. Being a ballet dancer and the way I move and what's going to look good on me, and what's going to look realistic because I do a lot of fighting with big guys. What was going to make me look like I really had some power and I could really do some damage? In dance, everything is very fluid, but you hold your positions longer, whereas in martial arts, it has to go out and come back super fast. I pulled every muscle in my body. I cried every day and then one day, I just got really fast. I did pretty much everything myself.

### **How have you found working with Joss over the years?**

Most of the work I've done has been with Joss. He hired me for my first role. He cast me in my first television series and he cast me in my first leading role in a movie. I do think he's amazing to work with because he knows exactly what he wants. He's my guru and I wouldn't have it any other way.

### **We've heard you're the butt of most on-set jokes. How did that come about?**

Oh God! There was a really long take with lots of talking and I had, like, one line right at the very end, which I messed up. Everyone yelled "Summer!" Then on the next take

Nathan messed it up and he yelled "Summer!" too. Now my name's become synonymous with messing up. Even when I'm not on set!

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