

We've had the opening weekend in America - how is everyone feeling? Are we looking good for a sequel?

To be truthful, this week is going to make a big difference. Right now we're fine but this next weekend is really going to show us properly where we're going.

I'm just trying not to think about it. I took a bus tour yesterday of London to try to forget. We've been with this for so long it feels just like a dream. I've thought about what this opening is going to be like, what people will be saying... I just feel a little bit foggy right now, but once the dust settles after next weekend we'll have a better idea.

How did it feel to walk back onto Serenity after the break?

It wasn't built like a set, that thing was built like a ship. It's not just like a wall here, and a wall there, you really feel like it's your home. I remember when we were doing the series, even, people would have their special places and we would never go back to our trailers. We'd just find a couch and rest on a couch. During the lunch breaks a crew guy would always sleep in my bed. It was just my little room, but it still feels like our home. We got attached to those little details.

What was it like to hear the news that you'd get a chance to go back?

I think I cried a little. I cried on my crocodile pumps; I remember my outfit, I remember what I was drinking, I remember everything about it. It's one of my favourite memories.

Serenity takes what would have been the plot up to the end of season 2 of Firefly - did you know what was going to happen or was it a wow-moment when you read the script?

It was wow. Oh my gosh. I didn't know... Joss is really good at keeping secrets from us about our characters and the story. I was amazed and thrilled by the script. I can't think of any role for a girl my age that is more satisfying and challenging than River - she's ten girls in one.

Was your training as a ballerina a help or a hindrance to the type of action on-screen?

I think, being a dancer, I was used to the routine of going to the gym everyday and working in a class and then learning choreography. I could mimic the shapes that they taught me, but learning the aggression and using my muscles to move in that fast-switch-attack-crouching way, it's completely different than ballet. So it took me a long time. I was used to working hard but this was completely different.

Do you think you'll ever return to dancing or are you stuck to acting now?

I danced classical ballet my whole life. That was my destiny; that was my identity. I was known as Summer The Dancer. And I thought that's what I'd do all my life but I got an injury which wouldn't heal. I was forced to say to myself, "The worst has happened, what do I do now?"

I started dancing other kinds of dance, I started doing Tango and Ballroom and other things to get by having moved to LA, while I was auditioning to be an actress. And it just worked out, thank god. It could have been a disaster and I was just fortunate that Joss found me and picked me up for that episode of Angel.

He's very loyal to his actors.

He is. I couldn't believe I even got an audition for Firefly. I had never auditioned for a pilot before; that's a big thing. To book a series is like winning the lottery. Everything that's happened to me when it comes to Joss has been a miracle.

And when you auditioned for X-Men, you wound up reading one of Joss' scenes...

Yeah. It was funny; I was very nervous about this audition because they wouldn't give me the sides [portions of script] ahead of time. Usually you get the sides the day before or a few days before so you can decide how you want to play it. It makes a big difference to the choices that you make because when you go into that room you only get a few minutes. But they were guarding the script. Come to find out there wasn't a script, it was just this scene. I read it and I had this strange feeling. I said, "I know exactly how I'm going to do it." I felt very emotional right away and I memorised it like that.

Afterwards I called Joss to tell him how it went and I started describing the scene. He said, "I wrote that." And I said, "Of course you did!" It made sense how it came so naturally; I can recognise his words.

So what next?

I just got back from Romania and haven't really had a chance to get home yet. It was called Mammoth and it's a sci-fi comedy. It was really fun, I've never done comedy before and it was a really different kind of role for me. I had a great time.

It's an independent film directed by Tim Cox and it has Vincent Ventresca and Tom Skerritt in it. We had a great time and I learned a lot. It was hard for my not to laugh though, having never done comedy before! We'd be in the middle of a scene and everything around me would be hysterical. The weird thing about comedy is you don't think you're funny. You think you're dead serious. All these hilarious things around me; I ruined quite a few takes.

But that was your reputation on the set of Firefly too, wasn't it?

laughs Well, that wasn't my fault! Well, OK, it was my fault, actually. But it was just this one time we were doing this long-shot - you know how Joss loves to do these sweeping long-shots - and I was the very last one. It was during Objects in Space and I'm holding the ball and I only have one line. The camera's moving, it's beautiful, beautiful, beautiful, and I'm looking at the ball, and there was silence. And Joss goes, "Summer, do you want to say your line?" And I heard Nathan go, "SUMMER! You've ruined it!" After that, anytime anything on set happened it was my fault. It wasn't fair!

And he gave you the final line in another huge long-shot at the start of the film.

I know! He gave me another chance. That time - perfect.

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