

A WISP OF SUMMER

Interview by Ethan Nahte

A journalist isn't always sure what to expect when meeting an actress who has very few TV appearances and only a movie or two attached to their name. Especially when one of those movies features her front and center when the TV version of her character was 1 of 9 in an ensemble cast of some veteran actors. The series was called "Firefly". The awesome movie that resulted from the defunct series is the stellar action/sci-fi adventure known as SERENITY.

If you haven't seen the series, don't worry. The movie will still make sense. If you haven't seen the movie on the big screen, do yourself a favor instead of waiting for it to come out on DVD. The sets are grand, the special F/X are amazing and the story is more than just a space battle and warp drives. There is an excellent plot that revolves around the waif-like character known as River Tam. In the series, River is a 17 year old genius who has been experimented on by the Alliance government. Her brother, Simon (Sean Maher) helped her escape the high security facility but the damage had already been done. River is a scared, timid girl who is confused and has wavering moments of lucidity that can quickly turn into assassin-like violence. She also has the ability to read minds and see visions. She was designed to be a weapon for the Alliance. I'm not talking about the lame assassin and fight material that filled the ELEKTRA movie. River is a female Bruce Lee combined with Clint Eastwood - grace and brutality - when she decides to bar brawl or to get from Point A to Point B and someone is ignorant enough to stand in her way. Now, her brother and the ship that harbors them, Serenity, are on the run.

The series is worth buying or checking out on the Sci Fi Channel, but once again, SERENITY will make sense if you haven't seen the TV show. You mainly have missed the growth of her character, played by Texas born Summer Glau, a 24 year-old beauty that has spent most of her life in ballet then moved to Hollywood to get into commercials and eventually TV.

Fans of the show are used to seeing Summer's character sad, angry or a bit dazed and confused looking as she meanders through the ship. More times than not she is scared due to nightmarish dreams of the tests that were conducted on her and by her visions. Her character is normally very serious and extremely torn between reality and what she may become.

In real life, she is a bright eyed, slender and graceful young lady with a charming smile and she loves to laugh, at least she did when she answered my questions during our quick interview during Wizard World Texas thanks to the cooperation of Las Vegas Autographs and Adam Phelps.

HEROREALM: There are a lot of people who have never seen the TV show. I tell people what they're missing is seeing your character grow.

SUMMER GLAU: Right, right. That was the most exciting thing for me. In the TV series, Joss (Whedon) was really keeping River a mystery. She was always in the background. She was developing very slowly. Then for the movie, she starts out at one place in the movie then goes through this huge evolution and by the end of the movie she is like a new character. She has a new place on the ship and a new chapter of her life.

HR: Even though she handles herself well throughout the movie, at the end when she's helping to pilot the ship, it's almost like a Zen moment. Her character still has her lucid and calm moments, too, and she is not just a raging berserker.

SG: Oh no, no. I think that is her character's arc in the movie is that she goes through

this terrible, terrible time. She's moody, has doubt and this deep sadness that she might be a danger to the people that she loves on the rest of the ship. At the end she does find that she can help them and be a part of their world true member of the crew, which is what I think she wants most of all.

HR: I saw something on the WhedonsWorld website that you did about 95% of your own stunts and fighting. How much martial arts combined with your ballet came into play for all of the action that you had to do?

SG: I think that my dancing did help tremendously. The routine of going to the studio everyday, doing the same warm-ups, the same class, the same rehearsals and working myself really hard, physically. My stunt coordinators watched me move. They tried to teach me a few kicks and a few punches to see how I moved. They decided to create a hybrid technique for me that would utilize my ballet physicality so I could still move like a dancer and learn martial arts like a dancer would. That helped a lot in the movie. I don't know if you noticed that there's lots of turning and it's very fluid and round.

HR: It's almost like a Tai Chi style.

SG: Really? I'm glad that they wanted to come and meet me in the middle. It helped a lot even though I worked really, really hard to look like a martial artist. It was not natural.

HR: Did you enjoy it though?

SG: (A big smile) I did. I loved it, I loved it! I miss my stunt crew. You get really, really attached to those people because you're kicking and punching, sweating and boxing. I was very challenged mentally, as well, to try to keep going and to push myself through everyday. I got really attached to my stunt team.

HR: I know you haven't done a lot of movies, but you've done some TV. For the future, now that you've done this type of action (film) would you like to do more action roles?

SG: I would love to! I would love to do more action. I would love to branch out and do other types of movies. But if it ever came up again, I would love a chance to do martial arts again. I'd love to work with my guys.

HR: What about your movie coming out on the Sci-Fi Channel called "Mammoth?" What are you doing in it?

SG: I do a few little stunts (laughs). But mostly, the reason I loved it is because it's a sci-fi comedy, I've never done comedy before. I just love the idea doing something different. I play this normal, cool high school girl. That was fun for me because I've never done that.

HR: Do you play the lead in that?

SG: I'm one of the leads.

HR: Any idea when that is supposed to be out?

SG: Next year (2006) sometime. Maybe like in the spring, I think. I just saw a trailer for it. They cut a rough trailer and it's really funny. It looks really good.

HR: Was there a big difference for you in doing television versus a movie with "Firefly" and SERENITY in regards of having to be on the go to shoot a TV show

in approximately a week compared to the normal sitting around and waiting to shoot your scenes on a film?

SG: No, I didn't sit around and wait very much on the movie. I'm in so much of it and Joss works very fast. It was his story. Every idea and every scene came out of his imagination. He was on set with us everyday so it went really fast. He knew what he wanted and he got it. So it wasn't a lot different.

HR: I know the fans will kill me if I don't ask this. I had heard Alan Tudyk (plays the character named Wash in the movie and the series) had signed on for a 3-picture deal. Any idea if there's going to be a sequel?

SG: We are waiting to see the numbers. The movie is still out. We're waiting to see what happens. We're all hopeful that we're going to keep going. We are optioned for a sequel. That's what we all dream about.

Taken from **Herorealm's** website:
http://www.herorealm.com/Interviews/s_glau.htm