



INTERVIEWS

Samantha Wan – Sudden Master

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By: Lisa Steinberg

Q) What made you want to be a part of “Sudden Master?”

A) The project is actually mine because I am the creator, writer and producer. Then, of course, I'm in it. I got involved originally when I talked to OMNI who said that they wanted to make an original online series. They asked me to come up with some ideas. We came up with “Sudden Master” because we wanted to create an Asian language series that is part Mandarin and we thought this was an organic way to do that.

Q) Talk about how the show mixes action, comedy and drama.

A) I have to say, the melding was slightly inspired by Jackie Chan, who I admire greatly. I also have to give credit to Richard Young, my co-creator, who added a lot of the humor into the scripts as well.

Q) What kind of fan feedback have you received to the series?

A) It's been really great, actually. We first started going off to the Action On Film Festival in LA where it first screened and it was really well received and we won a couple of awards. I won Female Action Performer of the Year and the series won Best Fight Choreography and Best Action Short for the Women With A Vision award. Kind of since then, it's been really amazing. Casey Hudecki, who worked on “Lost Girl,” has a lot of followers who are action fans. They seem really excited about it and we've kind of grown our own little fanbase. It's been fun.

Q) What was the most challenging aspect of filming the show?

A) Before the show started, I was like, “How come there aren’t any Kung Fu webseries out there? Let’s make one!” Now that I’ve made one, I fully understand why there isn’t one out there. It’s extremely difficult! The fighting, because we are quite intricate with our fighting styles, (we don’t just play to camera and let the actors fight) you will see the punch and kick. We have more cuts in our series than a feature film because of the fighting. Negotiating a regular script and those fights was incredibly challenging, but rewarding at the end.

Q) Talk about casting the series.

A) There were two really huge factors in the casting. One was diversity. I’m a really, really big advocate that the main characters be diverse and the villains, too. We fight against a group of Dark Daggers who are a diverse so that was a big thing. At first, they brought me a bunch of stunt people and they were all maybe blonde and I said, “No! We have to keep this very diverse.” That was a huge factor. The second thing was that Casey and I knew each other from working together in the past. I knew that she was a stunt woman on “Lost Girl.” Because there was such intense fighting, we had to have really good, professional stunt people. So, I actually wrote the part for her and I wrote the part for myself. From there, it was starting to bring also people from the stunt community that we knew as well into it.

Q) What was it like for you learning the stunt choreography?

A) It was definitely difficult. I practiced for the two to three months leading up. I’m a martial artist so it wasn’t as difficult for me as it would be for someone starting from scratch. Even with all of my fight training and dance training, I was probably doing four to five days a week for three to four hours martial arts training up to the shoot.

Q) There are some great comedic moments in the series. Is comedic timing a natural ability for you?

A) I love comedy and the funniest things to me are things that are true, so true that you have to laugh at it. I think that’s the key really. Whether I’ve honed it, I think I’m still growing in it and it is definitely a forte I enjoy working in.

Q) Did the cast chemistry come together organically?

A) It was really, really great. I kind of already knew Casey and Richard beforehand. Allen [Keng] was kind of new to the group, but he was very friendly and fun. I have to say there is

no better way to bond than to sweat like pigs together for training and trying to do choreography! I would say there was a lot of bonding by rehearsing. You have to build an extreme amount of trust when someone is swinging a sword at their head. I would say there is an even deeper bond built because of that and therefore that helped with the chemistry.

Q) What was it like filming the series much in such little time?

A) I do watch it all together and am like, “Wow! It feels like we went through a bullet train to get all of this. Originally, it was going to be nine episodes, but then we ended up making it shorter for various reasons. What we found was we were able to fit all of that in. You would have a Kung Fu lesson for each episode and that Kung Fu lesson would then reflect on Alex’s (the main character) real life. As long as we stuck to those bones for each episode it helped bring the story along. It was definitely a very, very tight squeeze.

Q) What were some of your favorite moments from “Sudden Master?”

A) There were so many great moments! I would say the giant group fight in episode five and to have so many people (six) fighting all together against each other was almost like a ballet. It was so much fun, so magical and took so much intense concentration from the actors, camera people, the fight choreographers and director. It required such an intense amount of hard work and chemistry. I feel like it is a once in a lifetime experience, (hopefully not because I hope we do more) but I felt that was a really big moment for us, getting that group fight together.

Q) Is there anything else you want to be sure we share with fans?

A) It’s on the OMNI Official YouTube channel. They can search OMNI Television or OMNI TV and they will be able to find it. A fun fact that I like sharing is that both Casey and I have won Female Action Performer of the year. That was a lovely fortuitous thing that happened to us both. Also, I like giving credit to our fight choreographer (Alan Tang) because he is an amazing person and a marital artist as well. We used his school for the whole series. He is a three time world bronze medalist and a Pan American champion. He just won the World Championship recently. I’m really proud of the people we have on our team to make this show.

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