

# “LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION!”

## SAMANTHA BEAULIEU STARS ON STAGE, SCREEN AND TV

*By Anita Oubre*

**W**hen a local talent enjoys success as an actor, director and writer this is something surely to be celebrated. And Samantha Beaulieu certainly has a lot to celebrate.

With dozens of film credits under her belt she has co-starred in the films “Unhinged,” “Bad Moms,” “Now You See Me” and “Big Momma’s House,” just to name a few. She has guest starred on the television series “Leverage: Redemption” and starred in recurring roles in “Queen Sugar,” “NCIS New Orleans,” “Tyler Perry’s The Oval” and “Treme.”

PHOTOGRAPHY BY LAURA FLANNERY

Overall, in a career spanning nearly two decades, Samantha has appeared in over 50 films and videos, 30-plus TV programs and 14 live theatrical productions, according to the most recent Internet Media Database (IMDb) listings, plus two more films currently in production. One of those two, in which she has a co-starring role, is titled “Heart of a Lion,” the inspirational story of boxer George Foreman, directed by George Tillman Jr. and coming to theaters in 2023.

Quite an impressive list of accomplishments for a talented young woman who grew up in a talented household in New Orleans East!

“Bringing a character to life brings me so much joy,” Samantha proudly stated. “Especially flawed characters that resonate with people. Those are my favorite types of roles. We can talk about depression and anxiety through characters who bring these issues to life. I take pride in creating the mood, the way a character moves, how they talk and of course the words on the page and memorizing the script. The devil is in the details.

“Being able to tell stories gives me life and hopefully by telling these stories change can come about,” Samantha continued. “I recently did a Hallmark movie ‘Girlfriendship’ where I played the character Ariella who leads a spiritual retreat. I learned so much from this role.

It was about being true to who you are, the person you are intended to be; not who society expects you to be. Playing this role was so enlightening!”

Another role that resonated with Samantha was playing Harriet Tubman in the NOLA Project’s acclaimed stage production of “Harry and the Thief” by Sigrid Gilmer at the Contemporary Arts Center here in New Orleans.

Growing up in “The East,” Samantha attended Cabrini High School. She fondly remembers the carefree days of playing outdoors with friends and impromptu gatherings like Friday night fish fries. There was always something going on and her family enjoyed being part of the local arts culture and community.

Samantha’s father, the late Paul Beaulieu, was an educator and community leader who paved the way for many in journalism careers. “My father was a New Orleans icon; a media legend who knew that the importance of the Black perspective was critical to our community,” Samantha stated with pride. “I think all of my gifts trickled down from my father and I am constantly being blessed through my dad’s legacy every day.”

An equally strong supporter is Samantha’s mother, Cynthia. “She is an amazing, strong woman who believes in me even at times I don’t believe in myself.”



Samantha said.

She also has the unwavering support of her sister, Lyndsey Beaulieu, with whom she shares her love of writing and producing. Lyndsey’s film and TV writing and production credits are also extensive. In a writing capacity she has worked on such series as “Treme,” “Big Love,” “The Catch” and Fox’s “9-1-1” where she currently resides as executive producer.

Samantha’s parents instilled in her the importance of education. Her father was a movie buff who often joked that everything in life and love can be learned from watching “The Godfather” and “Casablanca.”

“It’s so true. Everything about love and life is there,” Samantha said. “The most compelling storytelling is in the movies. Dad would say ‘Why spend money on classes when you can learn everything from these old black and white movies?’”

Growing up, Samantha enjoyed storytelling and her love for it carried over to her work on film, television and stage. It gives her the outlet to explore and create stories, she explained.

While attending Clark Atlanta University where she graduated with a Mass Media Arts degree, Samantha thought about a career in broadcasting and she worked at both ESPN and Disney. But her first love was acting and she pursued that career path with enthusiasm and drive.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF SAMANTHA BEAULIEU



Samantha & Lyndsey Beaulieu



Cynthia, Samantha, Lyndsey & Paul Beaulieu

## COVER STORY

How she came upon acting professionally is inspiring. Samantha was working for an entertainment company that had relocated to Burbank, California. That Christmas Lindsey gifted her a book titled "An Actors Guide to Hollywood" and she took inspiration from it.

"I said I'm going to do this. I'm going to really try to pursue this now that I'm in L.A. In L. A. everybody's an actor," she stated, Samantha started taking acting classes and attending workshops. Her teacher, Chip Fields, who is known for her work on the sitcom "Good Times," saw something in her and was the first person to encourage her to pursue acting professionally. Every Saturday Samantha could be found in classes. When she got off of work from her marketing management job, she studied scenes. She enjoyed this creative outlet so

much that she started working professionally as an actor after booking a starring role that resulted from her first film audition.

Samantha is "thrilled and overjoyed" each time she is cast in movies, television or commercials but she does note that "home is on the stage." She has performed in "A Raisin in the Sun," for which she won New Orleans Big Easy Theatre Award for Best Supporting Actress for her role as Ruth Younger. She has also performed in productions of "The Women of Brewster Place," The Negro Ensemble's "Ceremonies in Dark Old Men," "Jar the Floor" and "Our Town."

Samantha made her writing debut with "Black Girl, Magic," which won the 2018 Women in Film and Television Alice Award. The award recognizes excellence and the contributions of women in significant roles, both in front of and behind the camera.

She is looking forward to doing more directing as she continues to bring new life to scripts that she is working on. Samantha is grateful for all of life's lessons and the people who instilled those lessons along the way, citing the late Adella Gautier and the late Carol Sutton. Ron Flagge, a veteran actor and coach to Samantha, has also been instrumental in the process. The two enjoy coaching and encouraging one another in the craft.

Samantha also stays busy with her business, Tape My Audition NOLA, a professional audition taping service for working actors of all levels. At this point in her life, she has received a Master's Degree



PHOTOGRAPHY BY LAURA FLANNERY

in marketing, held a corporate six-figure job and worked for a Fortune 500 company but she knows what truly makes her happy. Happiness to Samantha Beaulieu is bringing stories to life. Happiness is hiking the beautiful Hollywood Hills, watching her garden transform with color and texture through her careful nurturing, and cherishing family and memories of family, as well as "being a student of life."

And the life she leads reminds us that, in her words, "We can be a student at any age as long as we are willing to learn, observe and listen. Walk in your truth, follow your passions and be proud to be in the game. After all, 'the world is a stage.'"



PHOTOS COURTESY OF SAMANTHA BEAULIEU

L to R: Samantha Beaulieu on set NCIS NEW ORLEANS, "Officer Sullos"; Samantha Beaulieu & Marc Roskin director of Leverage Redemption; Samantha Beaulieu & Gina Bellman (Set of Leverage Redemption)