

By Brian Baker



# UMM SPOTLIGHT JULIA BENSON

**Photo:** Karolina Turek  
**Photography**  
**Hair & Makeup:** Andrea Tiller for  
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Julia Benson is one tough customer in outer space. The Vancouver actor is making sonic waves as 2nd Lieutenant Vanessa James on

SGU: Stargate Universe, netting her a best supporting performance by a female in a dramatic series nod at the Leo Awards. With the attention, she wants fanboys out there to know even though she didn't grow up a Trekkie or Jedi, she's warping into the Sci-Fi genre. "Obviously since I've been cast I'm just getting into the world," she

said. "But I do love it. I love the imagination of it and the fact that anything's possible."

Already a fan of the series *Firefly*, Benson said *Battlestar Gallactica* is next on her list, but for the time being she's having fun with her character. "The writers have done a really good job trying to

flush out all the characters and for me it's just really important to always try to find the arcs in the scenes and try to find moments where you can have humour and a sense of play."

But preparing for her award-winning role has Benson focusing on her inner space. "It's just



something you're always looking at as an actor," she said. "How do you constantly, even with a couple of lines, add some depth to things?" Having an iPod in the back pocket helps in sticky situations, but when all else fails, laughter is the best shot of adrenaline. "I often find music helps. I try to do a lot of work at home beforehand and

just try to stay loose, and just trust yourself," she said. "If the scene is incredibly intense and I need to be going through something really, really tough then yes, I will remove myself and take my time. It's just important to keep developing that as you go on and to make sure you are prepared," she

added. "The best place to be is laughing and having fun and really just staying loose".

Next on her lieutenant's log: a comedy series she's producing with husband Peter Benson and friend Aubrey Arnason for City TV. After that it's back to the galaxy in the Syfy Network's

movie *Earth's Final Hours*. Humour, thrill-seeking and femme fatales are all part of the depth Benson pursues for her résumé. "I really find I like to play a role that was the opposite of what I was just playing, so it's nice to get the opportunity. I'm just excited about what lies ahead."