

Harp player Samantha Wittchen, a Liberty High School grad, played harp in the final scene of 'Law Abiding Citizen,' part of a school recital scene with actor Emerald-Angel Young, who played Jamie Foxx's daughter.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



## THE LOCAL CONNECTION

# Liberty grad plays harp in 'Law Abiding Citizen'

By Amy Longsdorf

SPECIAL TO THE MORNING CALL

Versatility is the name of the game for **Samantha Wittchen**. The 1996 Liberty High School grad freelances as a graphic designer. She's a member of the family group, The Wittchen Initiative. She teaches harp at the University of Pennsylvania. And she runs a consulting business called iSpring with her mother, Bethlehem's Andrea Wittchen.

Now, Samantha can add yet another skill to her resume: movie extra.

On a whim, Wittchen tried out for the role of a harpist in "Law Abiding Citizen," the action thriller co-starring Jamie Foxx and Gerard Butler that's wrapping up its run in area theaters. After sending in her resume and headshot, Wittchen was informed she'd been chosen to accompany Emerald-Angel Young, the actor playing Foxx's daughter, in the movie's final scene, set at a school recital.

Following a two-hour rehearsal on a Sunday — "I think it was mostly so they could see that I didn't have a third eye" — Wittchen reported to the film's South Philly set on a Monday morning for what turned out to be a nine-hour day of playing the harp.

"It was a little tiring," she says. "The other extras who were playing members of the audience were tired, too." That's when Foxx sprung into action and performed impromptu bits from his stand-up act. "He was cool," says Wittchen, 30. "He got up and did his comedy and people were engaged again. He didn't have to do that."

For her stint on the movie, Wittchen

earned \$325, which is more than most extras receive because she had a special skill. She also received "smoke pay," which is handed out to anyone in a scene in which smoke is deployed.

At the moment, Samantha is busy promoting The Wittchen's Initiative's first self-titled CD, which includes unique interpretations of "Folsom Prison Blues," "God Only Knows" and "Mack the Knife," among other tunes. For more on the group: [www.thewittcheninitiative.com](http://www.thewittcheninitiative.com).

## HOWLING SUCCESS

"The Twilight Saga: New Moon's" rising star **Taylor Lautner** has a couple of ties to Pennsylvania. He's not only dating Bucks County native — and country music superstar — Taylor Swift but he's starring alongside Swift in "Valentine's Day," which features costumes designed by Bethlehem's Gary Jones.

Co-starring Julia Roberts, Jessica Alba, Jessica Biel, Bradley Cooper and Shirley MacLaine, "Valentine's Day" marks the 19-year-old Swift's film debut (not counting "Hannah Montana: The Movie"). It's the only movie Lautner, 17, shot between his stints in "New Moon" and the 2010 threequel "Eclipse."

"It's gonna be fun to see 'Valentine's Day' because there was a lot of fantastic actors in it," says Lautner. "And Taylor is great in it, as well."

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