

# As dancer, actor, he's versatility in motion

By **JOCQUELYN BOONE**  
Special Correspondent

This summer, Aaron Nichols of Charlotte will perform with Theatre West Virginia during a season that goes through Aug. 23.

Then he'll come home for a weekend to work with Dance Central at Central Piedmont Community College before moving to New York.

Young, energetic and talented — this is Nichols, a California native who talked recently about his artistic bent as a child.

"I was by myself a lot, but I was very imaginative and inventive," says Nichols, 25, who has always had an interest in the arts. "I used to act totally ridiculous and dance around the house."

Nichols says he was the most artistic of his mother's four children and received a lot of support from his family, especially his sister.

At 16, he moved to Florida with his mother and three younger siblings to be closer to his grandmother. He took one dance class in high school, along with a few tap and jazz classes outside school. But it wasn't until he entered college that he realized he had a genuine love of dancing.

In 1991, he moved to Charlotte and enrolled at CPCC. "At first I was an art major, but then I changed to theater and dance," he said.

Within months, he started dancing with Dance Central and continued dancing with the company while he earned his degree. After he graduated, Nichols worked with Dance Central's summer productions.

It wasn't long before he realized it was time to make a move. He enjoyed the summer productions, but he knew there were other opportunities to explore. Nichols



**Aaron Nichols hopes to open his own dance company eventually. "I think one day I would like to have my own company, but for right now I want to dance while I can."**

took his audition tape to various theater and dance companies and received a positive response from Theatre West Virginia.

He signed with the 38-year-old professional theater company for its 1998 summer session. The performances began June 9.

Marina Dolinger, the company's artistic director, said Nichols will perform in several productions, including "Hatfields and McCoys," "Honey in the Rock" and "The Wizard of Oz."

"Aaron is a very talented dancer, and we are delighted to have him join us for our outdoor dramas," Dolinger said.

Nichols is gaining more than just dance exposure. "I have enjoyed working with the company," he said. "Along with the dancing experience, I am meeting new people with different interests."

The theater company has a non-competitive atmosphere, he said, because all the performers are working toward the same goal: to make the productions a success.

Nichols admits that the pace of the small West Virginia area is slower than Charlotte's, but he enjoys what he is doing.

"I am more of a big-city person, but if the opportunity came for me to do this for the next summer session, I would do it again," he said.

When the summer session ends, Nichols plans to move back to Charlotte long enough to work one weekend with the Central Dance Company's summer production.

After the weekend shows, he plans to move to New York and audition plays, as well as for dance and theater companies. "I would love to get a part in a Broadway play," he says.

Eventually, he hopes to open his own dance company. "I think one day I would like to have my own company, but for right now I want to dance while I can," he said.

"Although it's a lot of work and I have to sacrifice a lot, in the end it is very rewarding to be able to do what you always want to do."