

In kids' show

By KAREN ROBINET

The Observer

After years of learning to dance, dancing and teaching dance, Sarnia resident Rachel Cook can now be seen dancing her way across television screens.

Cook is currently appearing in the childrens' show 4 Square, Season 2 on the Treehouse Television Network (Channel 28 in Sarnia).

Cook, 25, says she noticed an audition for the show on a dance website in February, and sent in a headshot and resume.

"They called me for an audition and I went to Toronto," she told The Observer earlier this week. "Three days later they wanted me to go back for a second audition and a few weeks later they offered me the job.

"It was awesome," she said.

Cook, who was born in British Columbia, but grew up in Sarnia, said before shooting on the second season of the show had finished, she had already been invited back for season three, which will be shot in October.

The show — aimed at preschoolers — is divided into four segments; rhythm, poetry, movement and singing, and Cook is the leader of the movement segment.

Thirteen shows were produced for season two, and the first one aired Aug. 8. For the remainder of August, new episodes will run, followed by reruns until the third season is shot.

Excited about her first television role, Cook said the experience was very exciting. "Everyone was so nice to me."

Cook began dancing at age four in B.C., and after moving to Sarnia at age nine or 10, began dancing at the Gloria Bondy School of the Dance, studying under Gloria and Lisa

Bondy.

She danced tap, jazz, ballet and lyrical and became a teacher apprentice and eventually, a qualified instructor. She competed throughout Canada and the U.S., earning gold and platinum standing as a ballet soloist in regional and national competitions.

After graduating from Northern Collegiate, Cook headed to Toronto where she auditioned and was accepted to the intensive four-year Theatre Performing Arts program at Ryerson University. There, she studied ballet, modern jazz, music and theatre under acclaimed teachers such as Nadia Potts, former principal dancer with The National Ballet of Canada.

She also had the opportunity to work with choreographers and artists from Montreal, Toronto and France. Cook graduated with her Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree with a major in dance to receive the highest degree level of training for dance in Canada.

After wrapping up another year of teaching dance, Cook is now preparing to travel across the country with her boyfriend, although she'll definitely be flying back in October to shoot the next season of 4 Square.

"It's time to see some other spots," she said, adding she is very interested in pursuing a career in dance, and has had her appetite whetted for acting as well. Performing for audiences has been a lifelong dream for Cook, who says she's thrilled her dreams are being realized.

Bondy, who's equally thrilled to see one of her students doing so well, said Cook is a "wonderful dancer," and after seeing her on the television show said, "she's as cute as a button!"

4 Square airs next on Friday, Aug. 18 at 11:20 a.m. on Channel 28, The Treehouse Network.