

Joffrey II Dancers bring spring to life

FEB 21 1988

By Lela Davis
Arts/entertainment editor

Ballet review

The Joffrey II Dancers were as fresh and delightful as spring Saturday night when they were presented in Julie Rogers Theatre as part of the Beaumont Civic Ballet season.

Theirs was not perfection in dance, but rather a creation of mood and attitude, strong technique and youthful innovation. Their program was as youthfully diverse as the company.

Beaumont Jennifer Mattingly was one of four dancers — three female and one male — who performed in "Time Past," choreographed by the company's artistic director Richard Englund. Erik Chechak was the elegant dancer about whom the three danced, vying for his attention. It was as if they moved in a remote ballroom suspended in times past — their moves and turns had a dreamy feeling. The piece was set to music by Sir Arnold Bax. And Mattingly was marvelous.

The large crowd recognized her with immediate applause. But there was almost continuous applause for most of the program. It was an appreciative audience, unusually knowledgeable about ballet.

The most outstanding work of the evening was the Grand

Pas: Raymonda, a selection of dances from Act III of the full-length ballet "Raymonda." Mattingly also performed with recognition in this classical number which featured conventional costumes in red velvet and tulle. A single chandelier hung from center stage.

Lissette Salgado and Adam Sklute were well paired as they put Hungarian folk dance and courtly elegance together with the eight other dancers — each with an important solo.

The 16-member company opened with "The Gardens of Boboli," a contemporary work choreographed by Mark Haim, followed by "Trysts," playfully danced to music by Sergei Prokofiev. For these innovative ballets, the stage was entirely dark — effective, sensual lighting playing over the pastel-covered bodies.

"Gardens" was a nice ensemble work, danced broadly on the stage, but it was not my favorite. At certain points, there seemed to be an almost awkward attempt to keep the flow.

It showed, however, the extent of expertise in some of the dancers, and the diversity of the company.