

Choreo Showcase IV
Theatre of the Riverside Church
May 29, 31, June 2, 1985

I went to Choreo Showcase IV to see David Dorfman, a showcase veteran, again, but it was young Mark Haim who knocked my socks off—and everyone else's, too. Even the partisans who came to see Dorfman's or Susan Rose's work got carried away at the end of Haim's new *Settings and Clearings*, the last of seven dances on the program—one of them by Rose, three apiece by each of the men.

Haim's three dances showed a nice development. The 1981 *Servitude* (to Bach) was a neatly crafted, woeful sisterhood number out of Sokolow (and Holm and Humphrey), complete with anguish and shawls. By 1982, Haim was showing off blonde, curvaceous Leura Colby (with four backup boys) in a witty balletic lark called *Fast-Forward* and set to Handel.

Now he has made *Settings and Clearings*, which makes eight dancers look like a big company. The dance is ritualistic, powerful, even apocalyptic, surprisingly complex. The dancers—whose impulses are very clean and travel *through* the bodies—scrabble, scramble, twitch, ooze, climb, collapse, drape, leap, and travel on, under, across, and around a chest-high table, to an insistent drumming and ticking score by Haim and DeKodil. The air seethes. By the time Haim swoops from high off the tabletop and down onto his dancers, he is launching not only his person but, it seems, his career.

In *Rocks Become Sand*, Bostonite Rose pallidly and ineffectually ditzed around to Bach—to *Bach!*—along with six dancers who gave no indication of having any more rhythmic impulse or sense of pacing than she did. In contrast, Dorfman had propulsion to spare, but was hung up on gimmicks—movement gimmicks (no arms), character gimmicks (carnival barkers), and prop gimmicks (nested plastic boxes). At least his two duets (one with Don Borsh, one with Mickey McLaughlin) were combative, complicitous, and narrowly ingenious.

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