

The Dance: Seven Works In 'Showcase'

By JENNIFER DUNNING

THERE were a lot of ideas in operation Friday in the Choreo Showcase IV at the Theater of the Riverside Church. But the ideas found physical expression in the work of only one of the three choreographers represented in the showcase. That choreographer, Mark Haim, a recent Juilliard dance graduate, is a very promising talent, to judge from his three dances on the program.

Mr. Haim's new "Settings and Clearings," to music by himself and DeKodil, is a piece in need of editing, but one that is mad and memorable. A ritual for eight dancers, a high table and, toward the end, a birthday cake complete with lighted candles, "Settings and Clearings" moves its performers over, under and around the table in simple, abstract movement and rankings. The piece suggests everything from human table settings and the giddy pleasures of communal celebrations to the human life cycle, holocaust and resurrection.

Mr. Haim already understands the importance of clear, succinct movement and gesture. That style undoes him in "Servitude," a good-looking dance for four crumpled women in strikingly drab dress designed by Laura Colby. What seems intended as a comment on bondage was so stylish that it had the look of near-comedy. But "Fast-Forward," a dance led wittily by Miss Colby, is an effervescent statement of choreographic intent.

David Dorfman is an experienced mime, and there were moments in his new "Keeper" that were memorable. Set to percussion music by Robert Sprayberry, the solo has Mr. Dorfman moving from a bemused shuffle to sleight of hand and body and back to the shuffle as he manipulates such props as a flag, a bucket and colored cubical containers. Mr. Dorfman has more on his mind than a typical display of miming skills. But the context is unclear. His "Barkers," an imaginative look at stogwalkers, and "Drill," a minimalist workout, have a good deal more style but are disturbingly similar in conception.

The program was completed by Susan Rose's aptly named "Rocks Become Sand." Miss Rose moves deftly and her opening solo was interesting as a simple movement study. But this repetitious and academic group work ground along in spirit-crushing tedium, despite an ingratiating performance by six dancers from Miss Rose's Boston-based Danceworks company.