

## Dance: Four Premieres At Riverside Church

By ANNA KISSELGOFF

**T**HE five choreographers who spent the summer in residency with a group of dancers in the program run by The Yard in Chilmark, Martha's Vineyard, showed off the proverbial fruit of their labor Thursday night.

All four premieres presented at Riverside Church — by Mark Haim, Monica Levy, Patricia N. Nanon and the collaborative duo of Terese Freedman and Jim Coleman — suggested that The Yard can always be counted upon to sponsor professional-level and sophisticated work. But one might wonder why the pieces were so stylistically similar.

Does The Yard, as a creative center and artist's colony founded in 1973 by Miss Nanon, now have a dominant esthetic that precludes others? Or is the sense of sameness about the pieces more significant — actually representative of an emerging direction in modern dance? Except for Miss Nanon, all the choreographers here began working in the 1980's.

And except for Mr. Haim — who will have a premiere presented by the Joffrey Ballet in New York this fall — the choreographers showed less concern for fluidity and continuum in movement than for channeling energy into a dramatic, sometimes static, image.

What all did have in common were polish, structural sureness and content — no matter how abstractly stated — that delved into alienation. Emotional relationships were explored, but movement possibilities less so. The style of each piece was predictable once it began.

Nonetheless, Mr. Haim certainly comes across as highly inventive in the way he works with movement quality and patterns, while Miss Freedman and Mr. Coleman's picture of a combative couple charted the ups and downs of relationships with vigor and persuasion.

Miss Levy and Miss Nanon were less overtly narrative, but like the others, they tended to give us the equivalent of modern short stories. The dramatic premises come across

but the interpretation of the action, including the conclusion, is left up to the public.

Miss Levy's "Beside the Night," accompanied by a quote from Rilke in the program, skirted this danger. Bill Bissell, Carol Kueffer, Lisa Gillette, Karl Schaffer and Scot Willingham, dancing to Linda Hudes's original score, were cleverly but drily moved into patterns that finally left a woman in solitude. The idiom tended to have a natural movement flavored with contact improvisation and occasional bravure. Resembling figures in contemporary realistic painting, the dancers often seemed more placed into a spot than ready to move in and out of it.

Mr. Haim, trained originally as a pianist, fascinatingly followed Bach's musical structure in his own piece, "Four Chorale Preludes," as six men and women, in dark pants and white shirts, danced each section energetically and in changing patterns. Each prelude was introduced by an image of a man: solitary and "civilized" placing flowers in a vase, then discarding the flowers and stripped nearly bare, the essential and lonely self. The playful prancing in the choral dancing gave way to unison sobriety — all very well done. The performers were Mr. Haim, Homer Avila, Caroline Billings, Mr. Bissell, Ms. Gillette, Valerie Gutwirth and Ms. Kueffer.

Miss Billings and Mr. Willingham were terrific in "Past Perfect Present Tense," pulling out all the stops as the couple. The work was divided into episodes — ironically choreographed to Elvis Presley recordings by Miss Freedman and Mr. Coleman. Miss Gutwirth and Mr. Schaffer were a couple in the shadows who offered a more ideal view of a relationship.

Set to a cool classical-jazz score by Karlton Hester and played live by his musicians, Miss Nanon's "Deep Tides" was a suite for seven dancers, broken down into duets, trios and quartet. Loneliness and rivalries, adults simulating children playing ball — images came to the fore and seemed to hang in the air, never quite coming down.