

Ballet 'Showcase' gives new talent a chance to show off

***Reprinted from yesterday's
late edition***

**By ELIZABETH VARADY
Contributing Dance Critic**

The Boston Ballet opened its fourth year of experimental dance mini-seasons, namely the Choreographers' Showcase, Wednesday night by showing five new works at John Hancock Hall. The Showcase, which continues through Sunday, began as a proving ground for young choreographers, an opportunity for promising neophytes to work with professional dancers.

It was an admirable idea, but one which was promptly abandoned. This year, half as many choreographers were invited to create new pieces for the Showcase than were asked for the initial attempt in 1974, and four of those five dance-makers are already well-known to the ballet audience.

In four years of the Showcase, in part because the deck of choreographers has scarcely been shuffled, only a few really fine works have been sifted out of the annual batch of experiments.

Ze'Eva Cohen's "Goat Dance" is one of them, and "Rainwood", which had its premiere Wednesday, is another. As organic as its title indicates, "Rainwood" begins with a score of environmental sounds (bird-songs and the dull croak of a frog, I believe) and combines dense, unison movement for six or seven women, movement which splits from its tempered, calm flow into independent dance songs by each. When they slip away from the flock, the women's movement becomes more primitive, their heads or limbs jerk, then freeze in place — like frightened animals — and the variety of these movements from the lower beasts creates quite a fascinating zoo in Cohen's splendid dance.