



Sensual healing

'Forever Tango' entwines passion, sophistication in each step

By Sid Smith
TRIBUNE ARTS CRITIC

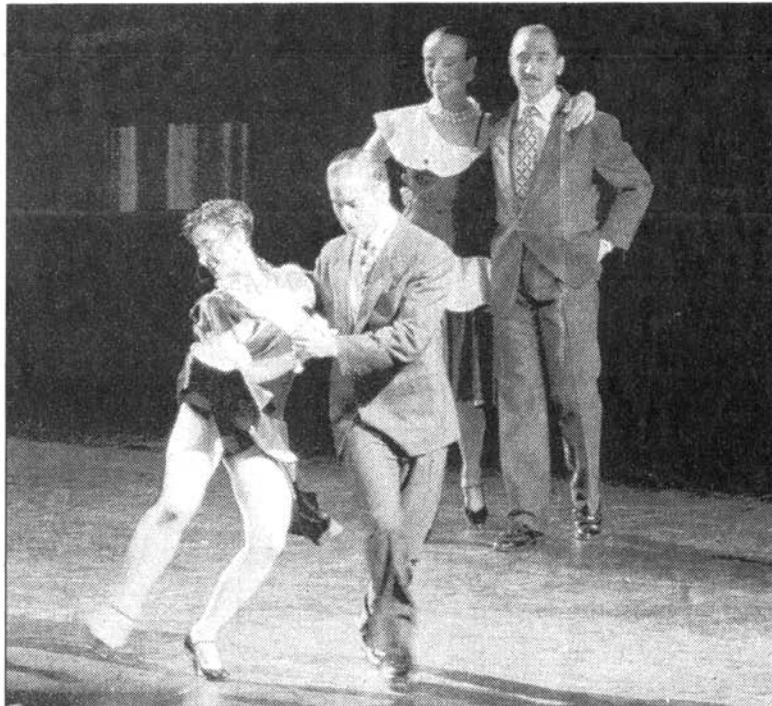
If Luis Bravo's "Forever Tango: The Eternal Dance," performing through Sunday at Arie Crown Theater doesn't make you a tango devotee, nothing will.

A slick, crisp, sophisticated variety show, "Tango" stars seven couples and a starlight orchestra distinguished by a quartet of *bandoneons*, the rare, accordion-like instrument so associated with this inimitable dance.

There is a certain sleek, high-level vaudeville to all this: A singer named Carlos Morel provides intermittent, cabaretlike crooning in a tuxedo, and the dancers—who go mostly by only their first names and who are celebrities back in Argentina—bring along their own unique choreography, as if they were individual acts inserted into separate spots on the old "Ed Sullivan Show."

And this is a program of singular attention to tango music and culture, a concert made up mostly of duos. Only a few ensemble numbers and orchestral pieces provide variation. Non-devotees might well find the whole thing a tad repetitious.

But Bravo provides all the technical fireworks and sensual passion that make the tango one of the sexiest of dances. And his production style and onstage tal-



Tribune photo by John Bartley

Luis Bravo's "Forever Tango: The Eternal Dance" at the Arie Crown Theater features mostly duos, with a few ensemble numbers.

ent gleam with true elegance and class, including pianist Fernando Marzan, whose fingers ripple up and down the keys as if he were playing a Carnegie Hall concerto.

And no criticism can be fairly leveled at these fabulous 14 dancers, seven couples who repeatedly defy reality with their footwork

and seethe with the angry passion of this earthy, rebellious dance. These are masters of their hot-blooded, quicksilver art, and each couple serves up its own defiant, eye-catching style, look and approach.

The pair named Claudia and Luis, for instance, are comic in

Dance review

**"Forever Tango:
The Eternal Dance"**

When: Through Sunday
Where: Arie Crown Theater, 23rd Street and Lake Shore Drive
Phone: 312-902-1500

tone—his bright white leg darts between hers in rapid succession in one dizzying duo in the first half. Guillermo and his blond, leggy partner, Cecilia, engage in intertwining, speedy footwork that they repeat and build to such a frenzy that their interlocking legs almost merge in a blur.

Mayoral, a slightly portly, older man with a kindly face, and auburn-haired Elsa Maria both danced with "Tango Argentino" on Broadway; their smiling, friendly grace disguises, for a time, their dazzling technique.

The most spectacular couple by far, however, saved for the end except for a brief prelude, are known as Miriam and Fabio. Dark in style, exuding an angry sexual fever, they are breathtaking acrobats, and she is spellbinding in the way she slides in and around his body and falls with death-defying suddenness to the floor. Like the rest of this program, they call to mind the great paradox of the tango: Animal lust meets ballroom refinement.