

'Tango' troupe changes but the passion endures

BY ALICE KADERLAN
Special to the P-I

"Forever Tango" may be the best dance show of all time. After breaking box office records in San Francisco and other cities in 1996, it eventually found its way to Broadway, where it lasted more than a year.

Since then, creator Luis Bravo has kept "Forever Tango" in almost constant performance, and with good reason. Featuring a dazzling all-Argentine cast, the show traces the history of this sensuous and compelling dance from its beginnings in the seedy immigrant bars of Buenos Aires to its preeminence today as the most sophisticated of social dances.

At its core, tango is a dance of longing. In a series of vignettes, the six couples of "Forever Tango" enact the range of seductions that can occur between a man and a woman. Sometimes intense, sometimes playful, their duets suggest the cat-and-mouse game that characterizes the relationship between the sexes. With limbs intertwined in impossibly intricate patterns and rapid-fire turns and leaps, the dancers evince an emotional fire that threatens to burn down the theater.

What perhaps is most surprising and impressive about "Forever Tango" is that the power of its choreography and music outlive any particular cast. The current troupe is almost entirely different from the one that appeared here in 1997 and yet the production is as striking and as passionate as ever.

The company is, as a whole, younger than the previous one and,



Marcele Duran and Jorge Torres are touring with five other couples in the all-Argentine production "Forever Tango." In a series of vignettes, the couples enact the range of seductions that can occur between a man and a woman.

although the worldliness of some of the older dancers is absent this time around, the dancing is consistently more athletic.

That both productions work so well demonstrates how tango is, more than anything, a dance of individual style and personality. No two dancers or two couples look exactly the same even when they're doing the same steps. One dancer will lean in more deeply to her partner, another will add flamboyant flourishes and

another will crook his arm in a distinctive way. With dancers as talented as the "Forever Tango" troupe and movement that is choreographed rather than improvised, the sky is the limit as far as steps are concerned.

In some of the more high-flying moves, the dancers look as though they actually may hit the stars as they fling themselves through the air and into each other's arms. This is clearly show tango, in which the basic components of the dance are pushed to

DANCE REVIEW

FOREVER TANGO

WHEN: Through Sunday

WHERE: 5th Avenue Theatre,
1308 Fifth Ave.

TICKETS: \$20-\$65; 206-292-2787,
www.ticketmaster.com

their dramatic and physical edges.

The same is true of the music, which in tango is not a mere accompaniment to the dance but an integral part of it. The only possible criticism of this incarnation of "Forever Tango," and this is really quibbling, is that the music is somewhat overorchestrated. The lush orchestra of 11 is a bit of overkill for music that is most engrossing when it is sparse and raw.

Alice Kaderlan is a Seattle freelance dance and theater critic. She can be reached at AliceKaderlan@comcast.net.