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Torrid 'Forever Tango' may be just too hot for Pops

**Seductive dance show
burned up Broadway, set
audiences gasping**

The woman is barely 20. Her legs are long, her dress is short. The elegant curves of her body undulate as she dances. Her hair is brown and long and luxuriant. Her face is a Latina ideal — high cheekbones, lush lips, large, dark, smoldering eyes. She pursues her partner with the supple passion of a panther in heat.

The man is perhaps 60. His heavy-lidded eyes are half-closed, indifferent; he has had this woman, and without the challenge of seduction to spark him, he has recoiled into his characteristic and impenetrable loneliness. She thrusts toward him with her long body and extended, pleading arms; he parries deftly, taking her hand and converting the thrust into a turn that spins her away. She drapes herself upon him, full-length; he sidesteps with the nonchalant grace of a bullfighter, turns slightly, and sheds her. She slides to the floor in utter despair.

She was Marcela Duran, he was Carlos Gavito. "A Evaristo Carriego," their number in Luis Bravo's "Forever Tango," is the sexiest, steamiest dance I have ever witnessed. I saw it in New York last summer, amid a packed house at the Walter Kerr Theater on Broadway. The audience was dead-quiet through this number, and let out a collective gasp at the end.

Maybe, just maybe, a small portion of the provocative mix of sensuality and existential despair at the heart of this show — indeed, at the heart of the tango — will come through when the cast visits "Evening at Pops" Monday night on PBS. (In Milwaukee, the 60-minute program will air at 7 and 11 p.m. on Channel 10.)

But the bright and wholesome Boston Pops and the dark and fleshy "Forever Tango" don't seem like a natural match, and not just for temperament.

The Pops will be replacing "Forever Tango's" own orchestra, a band of tango veterans. The tango orchestra leader, Lisandro Adrover, does not play the piano, but the bandoneon, the howling Argentine cousin of the accordion. Four bandoneons front the 11-piece "Forever Tango" orchestra. When that intense band plays the music of Astor Piazzolla and Carlos Gardel, you believe every note. With all due respect to the Boston Pops and music director Keith Lockhart, nothing they could possibly do could approximate that raw-nerve tango sound.



MARTY SOHL PHOTO

Nora Robles and Pedro Calveyra strike a stunning pose in a movement from the sensual, steamy "Forever Tango."

Music & Dance



TOM STRINI

Still, this should be worth watching. All nine couples in the show, a sort of dance revue, are fabulous and charismatic dancers, and all of them grew up steeped in tango culture.

Their sex appeal will no doubt be damped in an "Evening at Pops" setting, but their steps appeal is sure to be intact.

The New York show closed Saturday after a 14-month Broadway run; it was originally scheduled for six weeks, but was held over again and again to meet popular demand. But you still have a chance to see the show live and feel its full impact; a touring cast is crisscrossing the country.

The nearest performances currently scheduled are at the Weidner Center at the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay, at 7:30 p.m. Sept. 29 and 30. Tickets are \$14 to \$32 at the Weidner box office, (920) 465-2217 or (800) 328-8587.

See it with someone you love desperately.