

## ARTS/ENTERTAINMENT

## TANGO'S BACK, ALL YOUNG AGAIN

*Forever Tango*, an "illustrated concert," has Gen X'ers taking up the dance.

By ENRIQUE FERNANDEZ  
Staff Writer

Tangomania is practically as old as the century. Born in the lowlife districts of Buenos Aires in the last decades of the 1800s, and reaching ballroom respectability and even high-society trendiness in the giddy '20s and '30s, the tango comes back again and again at the close of the 20th century.

The '80s saw a tango boom as the musical revue *Tango Argentino* succeeded on Broadway and in tours around the country and the world. Now, Luis Bravo's *Forever Tango*, which arrives at the Royal Poinciana Playhouse in Palm Beach on Tuesday, is gathering applause and raves in England, Canada and the West Coast.

Bravo is a professional musician, a cellist who once filled in with the orchestra of *Tango Argentino*. He says *Forever Tango* has a musician's approach that differentiates it from the earlier revue.

"A critic said *Forever Tango* was an illustrated concert," Bravo says in a phone interview. He adds that his show has a stronger theatricality, with more fantasy elements and varied settings.

Another difference that Bravo regards as crucial: Most of his dancers are in their 30s. *Tango Argentino* featured a number of seasoned veterans, some of advanced age.

"In Argentina it was always young people who danced the tango," Bravo says, "and most of our great composers died in their 30s, so it was a young person's genre in every sense.

"The notion that the tango is for old people is one of the great lies that *Tango Argentino* left behind," he adds

## IF YOU GO

*Forever Tango* previews Tuesday, opens Wednesday, runs through Feb. 23 at Royal Poinciana Playhouse, 70 Royal Poinciana Plaza, Palm Beach. Shows 8 p.m. Tuesday-Friday, 5 and 9 p.m. Saturday, 7 p.m. Sunday. Tickets \$29.50-\$45. Call Ticketmaster, 561-966-3309, 954-523-3309, 305-358-5885.

have succeeded. "As a result of the success of our show, there are now tango clubs in Los Angeles and San Francisco where young people go dance," he says.

Is the tango in Bravo's show the real thing? "There is no such thing as pure art," Bravo explains. "And the tango is certainly not pure. Its influences come from everywhere, from *candomble*" — a Brazilian religious tradition with African origins — "to Neapolitan song. What's important is that the tango is the testimony of a society."

In his native Argentina, the tango has gone through many phases, which are illustrated in *Forever Tango*. The show ranges from the early dances of the *compadritos* — tough, knife-carrying slum dwellers who often danced in male-only couples — to the boldly experimental tango-jazz of the great master Astor Piazzola. "And how could you say that Piazzola's compositions are not tango?" Bravo asks.

Today Argentine rockers mine the wealth of the tango for their own creations.

"Our country has been badly mistreated," Bravo says, referring to Ar-

