

'Forever Tango' Celebrates Romance

DANCE REVIEW

Just one look at the audience for "Forever Tango" on Wednesday night at the Pasadena Civic Auditorium could tell you who craves the leg-tangling, hip-swiveling, high-flourish world of theatrical tango. It was an overwhelmingly upscale, post-boomer crowd, some as sleekly dressed as the couples onstage, and all prepared to be shown that coupling is like an incredibly complicated dance that only the experts can make look so easy.

Perhaps outside Argentina, a love for tango comes more readily to the generation raised on ballroom dance fantasies. But whatever age, no one left disappointed. The perpetually touring "Forever Tango" troupe moved expertly through interludes of music, singing (by Carlos Morel) and danced duets in several styles.

For high drama, with razor-sharp transitions, there were Guillermina and Roberto Reis; Marcella and Carlos (last names are optional in tango); Marcela Duran and Carlos Gavito; and Osvaldo Zotto and Natalia Hill. Guillermo and Cecilia excelled in smooth gliding and circling each other with the swiftest of tiny overlapping steps. A more gentle atmosphere pervaded the duets of Mayoral and Elsa Maria, whose embraces were subtle and steps light, as if they were dancing on glass.

With comic flair, Claudia and Luis pumped arms through fussy little tangos, while Miriam and Fabio had the athletic tango down—or up, really, since he bench-pressed her at one point, spun her above his head, and

dropped her into a dramatic pose on the floor.

In general, though, overwrought passion did not rule. Instead, there was a feeling of smooth synchronicity, flexible clinches and restless legs that sped through a vast array of intricate embraces without tripping each other up. This show is all about the active, complex, playful romance of heterosexual couples and in tango, as in life, timing is everything.

Vibrant tunes played by the 11-piece onstage orchestra were jaunty, soaringly romantic and plaintive by turns—or sometimes

at the same time, due to the character of the four *bandoneóns*, led by Lisandro Adrover. They have a concertina/accordion-type sound that manages to be chipper and melancholy at the same time, as if your lover had just deserted you at a Parisian cafe but, hey, at least you can still enjoy Paris. Or Pasadena, for that matter, when "Forever Tango" is in town.

■ "Forever Tango," Pasadena Civic Auditorium, 300 E. Green St., Pasadena, tonight and Saturday, 5 and 8:30 p.m., Sunday at 3 and 7 p.m. \$19-\$45. (213) 480-3232.

—JENNIFER FISHER