

Sexy, Intense 'Tango' An Alluring Performance

BY HEDY WEISS
DANCE CRITIC

The tango has been described as "the vertical expression of a horizontal desire." Certainly it is the most overtly erotic and adult dance ever invented—one that speaks not only of passion but of experience and loss. In the haunting, driving music of the tango, and in the switchblade-like moves it inspires, the persistence of desire clashes powerfully with some knowledge of the inevitable death of the heart.

Luis Bravo's sophisticated revue "Forever Tango," which opened Tuesday night at the Arie Crown Theatre, illuminates the many shapes and faces of the tango through the personalities of seven bravura couples and through the ravishing, sensual sound of an 11-piece orchestra.

The couples, who have choreographed their own dances, all employ a similar vocabulary of tango steps. But each highly individualistic partnership is a unique marriage of age, temperament and body type. And there is an almost voyeuristic pleasure in observing the dynamics and game-playing of their relationships.

The cool, almost detached demeanor of Osvaldo Zotto and Natalia Hill suggests an undercurrent of tension. It's echoed in the speed and focus of their work as he flicks her leg into place and she draws sinewy spirals. Elsa Maria, a playful redhead, is a bit taller than her partner, Mayoral, who has the stocky bearing of a corporate titan (watch his eyebrows). They dance as if they've had a long, accommodating marriage, and as if there is still heat between them—expressed in a sequence of quickly cross-hatched leg movements in one dance and a fierce bit of push-and-pull in another.

Guillermina and Roberto Reis are a stunning couple with bravura technique and a balletic style. She is small and sexy with exquisite leg



OVERNIGHT REVIEW

'Forever Tango'

- Through Sunday
- Arie Crown Theatre, 23rd and Lake Shore Dr.
- Tickets, \$19-\$45
- (312) 559-1500

THE BOTTOM LINE

Recommended

Bottom Line: A bravura showcase of the tango and the music that drives it.

extensions; he is tall and slickly handsome. Together they are precise and sinewy, often gliding as if on ice. Contrast arrives in the form of Claudia, a chic but spirited woman whose partner, Luis, has a mustache that's just a bit comical. The two dance like a pair of playful, cosmopolitan marionettes, with rapidfire interlacings of legs that seem manipulated from outside. And then there is Guillermo and his leggy, elegant blond partner, Cecilia, who have an exceptionally elegant style—affectionate but with fireworks in the form of showy, steppy footwork.

The flashiest most acrobatic duet is danced by Miriam and Fabio. The most overtly erotic partnership is between Carlos Gavito and Marcela Duran. He is the elegant older man with a restrained style; she is young and seductive, with wild, curly hair. And there is a thrill in the way their relationship builds to a just-contained frenzy.

The superb orchestra for "Forever Tango" showcases another intense relationship—the one between musicians and their instruments. Just watch musical director Lisandro Adrover embrace his bandoneon, the small accordion-like instrument essential to the tango sound. It is quite a love affair.