

# DATEBOOK

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JOHN O'HARA / The Chronicle

Carolina García and Hugo Patyn raised the level of sexual intensity in Luis Bravo's "Forever Tango," which returned to San Francisco's Theatre on the Square.

## 'Forever Tango' Forever Magical

Sensual musical has perfected the passionate power of famed dance

By Octavio Roca  
CHRONICLE DANCE CRITIC

**W**hat is it about the tango that makes it so hard to resist?

A bastard child of the sultry milonga and the older habañera raised in the brothels of Buenos Aires to seduce the whole world, this dance somehow mirrors the soul of Argentina and the desire of all humankind. Perhaps a moment among many in Luis Bravo's "Forever Tango," which returned to Theatre on the Square Tuesday night for a limited engagement, can help explain the magic.

It is the close of Act 1 and a sexy mantra is heard: "Candombe, black candombe / nostalgia of the poor." The beat is 3/2, the pulse of a racing heart. Dancers enter in what seems like a series of seductions set to music, limbs intertwined in the improbable, inevitable patterns of feverish lovemaking. A moment's rest, a teasing sigh, and the throbbing starts again, harder and faster until the climax on the stage seems one with the

### REVIEW

**FOREVER TANGO:** Dance musical, conceived and directed by Luis Bravo. (At the Theatre on the Square through January 2. Tickets \$35-\$40; New Year's Eve tickets \$50 and \$75. Call (415) 433-9500 or visit [www.theatreonthesquare.com](http://www.theatreonthesquare.com))

audience's frenzy.

This is aggressively sensual dancing. It is also extraordinarily simple: a company of 14 dancers and a dozen superb musicians, on a bare stage lit to resemble a starry summer night. Fernando Marzán's romantic piano is again a standout, as was Bravo's own cello playing on opening night. This is the fourth time that Bravo's "Forever Tango" has come to San Francisco, where its international status as one of the great dance shows was solidified in 1994. If you have not seen it, you should. If you have, chances are you already are planning to see it again. And you

are right.

New this time around are a young couple given the crucial "Tanguera" number that opens Act 2 — Hugo Patyn and Carolina García. Her figure can be called monumental, an orgy of curves resting on legs that go on forever. His is compact, mercurial in speed and irresistible. It is Patyn's gift to suggest his moves with a tilt of an eyebrow even before he begins to stalk his prey. It is García's own virtue to manage to take control after all the swagger. His gaze is intense, her abandon almost obscene as the pair dance for each other and let the audience watch. It is a guilty pleasure, like happening upon a couple making love on the beach.

Elsewhere, familiar faces and nostalgic sounds retain their power to surprise. Carlos Vera and Laura Marcarie, the show's most glamorous couple, as well as the luminous Karina Piazza and Jorge Torres give pleasure with every entrance. The veteran Carlos

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