

CLOUDY
WITH RAIN

WEATHER: PAGE 74

THE
OTTAWA

SUN



VOL 9 No. 146 April paid circulation 54,046

OTTAWA, FRIDAY, MAY 30, 1997

80 PAGES 50 CENTS

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15-page section

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By EVE EDMONDS
Ottawa Sun

BLACK-SEQUINED dresses, slicked-back hair and lightning fast foot work — welcome to a night of the tango.

The lusty, lively dance form is steaming up the National Arts Centre during the 12-night run of *Forever Tango*.

Granted, the idea of watching seven couples perform some two dozen versions of the Latin love dance might seem like the height of monotony, but what's surprising is just how complex and varied the tango is — at least as it's presented in this show. Some pieces are sexy and sultry, others are campy and playful, still others are bitterly poignant.

The show, created by Luis Bravo, traces the history of the tango, co-opting of the art form in a delightfully-funny work that mocks the pretensions of the upper classes.

The climax of the evening is a breathtaking performance that looks like a cross between tango and couples figure skating — the free skate variety, with the woman flying through the air, dangling by her partner's shoulders, caught at the last second. In fact, at least once she could have been caught a second earlier.

Supporting, and sometimes outshining, the dancers is an 11-piece orchestra featuring six banjo, an accordion-like instrument that gives the tango its distinctive sound. Violins, bass and piano fill out the orchestra.

exploring its richness and diversity.

The tango was born in the bordellos of Buenos Aires. To reflect those roots, Bravo has set the third work of the evening in a brothel located between the barrio and the city, where people of all classes met in the 1880s.

Through the dance, the brothel world comes to life. Prostitutes seduce their customers and men duel over the prettiest gal. In the fight scene, the men's kicks are faster than the flick of a switchblade and look just as lethal.

By the 1930s, the tango had become the dance of fashion in Paris, and re-enters the middle-class of Argentina. Bravo captures the

Like the dances, the music runs the emotional gamut from gaiety to melancholy.

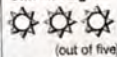
There is no story line connecting the music and dance. Rather, we are asked to watch the mind-boggling complexity of the footwork. This is not a show that challenges one's intellect in any way. It's light and sparkly and some of the theatrical antics seem a little cornball, but that's forgivable. It is what it is.

The set is simple but effective, using mainly lighting and color as opposed to props. The backdrop is lit like a starry summer night, giving the show an air of hot romance.

While there is no doubt that this is a dance filled with lust and passion, it's also one of humor, fury and nostalgia. Thanks to the quality of the dancers and musicians, Bravo is able to mine the dance form for all its emotional complexity.

Review

FOREVER TANGO
Created by Luis Bravo
Musical Director:
Lisandro Adrover
At: Nightly at 7:30 at
the NAC, until June 8
Sun Rating:



(out of five)



JEFF BASSETT/SUN

SULTRY TEMPTRESS: Miriam Larici is one of 14 dancers who bring the striking and diverse history of the Tango to the NAC stage in *Forever Tango*, which runs through June 8.

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