

SEXY DANCERS CONJURE UP A STEAMY NIGHT IN A LATIN

BORDELLO

Couples are slaves to the tango beat

THIGH AND MIGHTY: Getting to grips with the tango



FOREVER TANGO
Strand Theatre, London

IT TOOK an aphoristic Irishman to define close-contact dancing as the vertical expression of a horizontal desire. And it took an entire nation to refine George Bernard Shaw's original concept — although "refine" hardly seems the right word for the primitive delights of the Argentinian tango.

Not to put too fine a point on it, Luis Bravo's San Franciscan dance hit is two hours of sex on legs with orchestral interludes. Although it begins in promisingly surreal style with a man gradually emerging out of a giant concertina, the production feels rather like a brisk flying visit to a high-class Buenos Aires bordello. Stormy-looking, strong-thighed women in spangly dresses prowl like caged panthers round the stage, stalked by what looks like the epitome of Latin-American rough trade. You will seek anything so obvious as a story in vain, but there is at least a sharp contrast of character. One memorable May-December pairing has a passionate girl languishing at the feet of a dapper little Fred Astaire type who is surely old enough to be her grandfather.

The high-speed acrobatics involved in these ritualised courtships can sometimes be enthralling, surpassing anything you might see at the ballet or even the circus.

Yet any enjoyment of the evening rather depends on your level of interest in stylised domination-submission, master-slave techniques; you may already feel that you get quite enough of that at home.

Such is the sexual ferocity generated that one pugnacious couple's routine is more like a bullfight as their limbs lunge aggressively at each other.

The songs from Carlos Gonzalez and Sandra Cabal are no worse than one might hear at a Torremolinos nitespot, with the Rs sonorously rolled till the audience's teeth rattle. When the on-stage band take their turn at performing party-pieces, however, the momentum is lost.

For it's no use pretending that one is here for anything other than two impressively choreographed hours of glamorous erotic foreplay.

Indeed, the scissor movements of the ladies' lethal legs are guaranteed to bring tears to the eyes of any man watching.



SUPPLE: Delights of Argentinian tango



CONTRAST: Ages apart but still in tune

Pictures:
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