

'Forever Tango' at the Warner: Hot, hot, hot!

By BETH RUBIN

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Spending an evening watching six couples fox-trot would not be my idea of a good time. But when it comes to

the tango, as passionately purveyed in "Forever Tango" at the Warner Theatre through Sunday, all I can say is *Mas, mas, mas!*

The full-length entertainment,

dedicated to the sensual dance form born in the late 1800s in the bordellos of Buenos Aires's *barrios*, was popularized in Paris in the early decades of this century. Only then was it em-

braced by polite society in Argentina, subsequently gaining respect and widespread popularity.

"Forever Tango" is a richly produced spectacle that explores the dance's many guises in a revue that sizzles like oil poured onto a hot skillet. Accompanying the razor-sharp dancers is an inspired 11-piece onstage orchestra centered around the wailing, melancholy strains of the accordionlike bandoneon. The music and dance numbers are occasionally punctuated with vocal selections by Carlos Morel, the weakest link in an otherwise top-flight show.

In less-capable hands (or feet, in this case), the stiletto-edged choreography—a blur of interlocking legs and darting feet—would have been life-threatening. But the tangoists have the gestures, steps and quick directional changes firmly in control and serve up tasty tapas that capture the many flavors of the dance form.

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While the individual personalities of the tangoists shine through, there's no denying they have much in common. Besides their charismatic wizardry on the dance floor, they are seductive, romantic and, above all, sexy. It should be noted that many of them are “of a certain age,” yet they

perform with the abandon of lovestruck teen-agers.

With intensity and a slick sensuality, the all-Argentine cast delivers the goods meticulously while infusing their performance with the fresh air of an early spring day. "Forever Tango" is hot, hot, hot—a theatrical event that will set your blood to boiling.

"Forever Tango," through Sunday at the Warner Theatre, 513 18th St. NW, Washington. Tickets: (202) 432-SEAT.

