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## Fiery 'Forever Tango'

Sexy troupe dramatizes sultry Argentine dance craze

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Chronicle Dance Critic

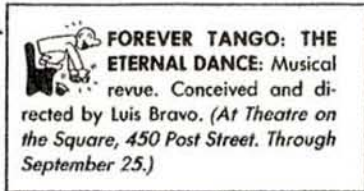
**T**easing, violent and more than a little hot, "Forever Tango: The Eternal Dance" is on a mission. The show, which opened Wednesday night, brings tango back in style.

Bumped from the limelight by jazz in the 1940s and later by rock and roll, Argentina's soulful beat is again ready to conquer the world. At Theatre in the Square, at least, this most uninhibited of rhythms drove the opening-night audience to a cheering frenzy.

The first scene opened in darkness, broken by a solitary dancer's line. A man popped out of a giant bandoneon and seemed to dance with night herself, personified by a woman who appeared as if from thin air. Their meeting began with little kicks, the grace notes of this often languid dance that can turn violent with a glance. The sexy swagger of the men, the women's sultry lines surrounded each melody as the dancers wrapped their legs around each other. Passion was not merely suggested.

### Looked Dangerous

Much of it looked dangerous, from swivel turns at varying speeds to daring lifts that made



one gasp. The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse themselves might have found the tango scary. And irresistible. Like choreographic foreplay, each number in "Forever Tango" took its time to seduce the audience, then sped up in total abandon to some very torrid climaxes.

Other choreographers have taken to tango recently, from Roland Petit's dark "Le diable amoureux" set to a Gabriel Yared score to several modern dances inspired by the late Astor Piazzolla. Piazzolla, in fact, provides some of the best music in Act 2 of "Forever Tango." He is well served. Few recent musicals or ballets have matched the unassuming sexiness or the ineffable longing that Luis Bravo's dancers exude.

The sex is also in the music, of course, from the contrabass' guttural cries to the wail of the bandoneon, the accordion's sultry cousin with the rummy, raspy voice.

A curious thing happened to orchestras at the turn of the centu-

ry. Until then, the difference between the forces needed for Schubert and for pop was one of size and intention. Then from the New World came revolt.

In the United States, strings gave way to saxophones and trombones, and the big band sound was born. Cuba kept the strings but surrounded them with a battery of claves, congas and bongos that changed their sound forever. Brazil followed suit with a vengeance, but when change came to Argentina its variation was the bandoneon.

### An Urban Mating Song

Nothing else sounds quite like this, certainly not the German accordion that spawned it nor the French one of apache dance. Tango on the bandoneon is a mating song in the urban wilderness, the longing noise of outcasts meeting and finding impossible happiness in a moment of passion. That the bandoneon's sound is so ineffably sad makes the sheer exuberance of its impact that much more of a surprise. And, make no mistake, exuberance is the key to "Forever Tango."

Lisandro Andover led the orchestra on Wednesday with wit and ease; his own bandoneon play-  
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