



— Greig Reekie, SUN

DANCE SENSATION ... Cecilia Saia and Guillermo Merlo demonstrate the captivating rhythms of the tango in *Forever Tango*, a celebration of the sultry dance featuring an all-Argentinian cast of dancers and musicians. The show is on at the Winter Garden Theatre until Nov. 24.

Forever Tango bound for Broadway

It's passion on the dance floor

Before sex can be completely dismissed as a spectator sport, we must first consider the tango.

Born in the brothels and bordellos of Buenos Aires, this dance — with action perpendicularly opposed to desire — remains Argentina's best known export, despite the best efforts of Andrew Lloyd Webber and Madonna.

A simmering, smouldering, sensuous duet — a love story told in three minutes, we are told — the tango is long on posturing and stops only short of coitus. The tango renders passion breathtakingly beautiful by showing your mind more than it shows your eyes.

Small wonder then that a little show titled *Forever Tango* has been taking theatres by storm as it makes its way to Broadway, charming audiences from Los Angeles to London with its distinctive blend of high camp and the base passions.

Last night, Toronto got a glimpse of Argentina, sex and *Forever Tango* — and an opening night audience at the Winter Garden Theatre ate it up.

Sex may not be much of a spectator sport but with a tango, at least you can clap along.

Created, directed and choreographed by Luis Bravo, and featuring a cast of 14 Argentine dancers, 11 musicians and a single vocalist, *FT* is two solid hours of tango — its moves, moods, music and songs.

It's also a bit of a history lesson, tracing



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the dance's evolution from macho roots with sub-themes of subjugation, through simple seduction to a salacious celebration for two willing partners.

Two by two, the dancers lead their audience through every possible sexual attitude with a mixture of astonishing physical dexterity and single-minded attitude.

Like double-jointed switchblades, four legs duel across the stage in a breathtaking ritual orgy of movement, while four smouldering eyes remain locked.

This stuff is timeless.

Interspersed among the dance numbers, Bravo, himself a musician, has tucked showpieces for his orchestra, and for his singer, Carlos Morel (think of an Argentine crooner, somewhere between Tom Jones and Tony Bennett).

Ultimately, the tango is more than movement, and the only way to appreciate that is to clear the stage of dancers and let the musicians — particularly the four masters of the bandoneons — work their magic without interference. Like old men in the pub,

they use their music to gossip, brag and occasionally bicker.

This is a show from the heart — with a heart big enough that it can even stop now and again to poke fun at itself. In its present state, with rough edges still exposed, it's hard to imagine it taking Broadway by storm.

And that's one of its greatest charms.

SUN rating (OUT OF 5)



FOREVER TANGO

Winter Garden Theatre