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MOVIES

Film Reviews

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Gypsy Caravan: When The Road Bends (2007)

Reviewed by [Jamie Russell](#)

Updated 24 September 2007

Contains brief sight of a deceased person



Romani music hits the road in Gypsy Caravan, an enchanting doc about five musical troupes touring North America. Combining on-stage footage with behind the scenes antics, it offers an eye-opening glimpse of Romani culture with bands from four countries (Romania, Spain, India and Macedonia) overcoming language barriers to discover their shared musical ancestry. The result is an up-tempo medley of flamenco, Indian folk and Romanian violin that challenges "gadjo" preconceptions about gypsy music.

Filmmaker Jasmine Dellal joined the groups during their 2001 "Gypsy Caravan" across the USA. The logistics of the tour were daunting: five bands totalling thirty-five people from four countries, speaking nine languages playing wildly different styles of music. All proudly call themselves gypsies, from the Indian Mahajara troupe to the Romanian brass band Fanfare Ciocarlia and Antonio El Pipa's flamenco ensemble from Spain. Yet none of them have ever played together before. As the musicians jam and discover their shared mojo, Dellal records the vibrant, passionate rhythm of this scattered culture, as well as its eclectic history.



"A TOE-TAPPING CELEBRATION "

Gypsy Caravan's masterstroke comes as it follows the musicians back to their native countries. The poverty contrasts sharply with the excitement of the tour bus and cuts to the heart of the songs themselves, famed for their "joy and sorrow". In Macedonia, rotund gypsy diva Esmá Redzepova talks about her forty-seven adopted children and her celebrity status: "When I sing, a lot of men cry". In Romania a wizened veteran of Taraf de Haidouks explains how his music supports his village and jokes about building a swimming pool like Johnny Depp's (the actor is a fan of gypsy music and makes a brief appearance here, retelling the history of the Romanis' persecution by the Nazis). By turns moving, uplifting and invigorating, Gypsy Caravan is an infectiously lively doc and a toe-tapping celebration of Rom culture in all its diversity.

Gypsy Caravan: When The Road Bends is out in the UK on 28th Sep 2007.

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End Credits

Director: Jasmine Dellal

Genre: Documentary, Musical

Writer: Jasmine Dellal,

Length: 115 minutes

Stars: Taraf de Haidouks, Esmá Redzepova, Fanfare Ciocaria, Antonio El Pipa flamenco ensemble, Johnny Depp

Cinema: 28 September 2007

Country: USA

Film Diary



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