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Arts & Entertainment

'When the Road Bends ... Tales of a Gypsy Caravan'

Documentary follows a diverse group of Romani musicians

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By Nate Guidry, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette



Fanfare Ciocarlia is among the music groups featured in "When the Road Bends ... Tales of a Gypsy Caravan."

"When the Road Bends ... Tales of a Gypsy Caravan" not only provides insight into the music of the Romani people, it also helps to dispel many misconceptions and prejudices they have endured for centuries.

"It would be great if by experiencing the Romani people and their music, people can learn more about them and understand that what you've believed about these people has been a lie your entire life," said Johnny Depp, who made a cameo appearance in the film. Depp got to know some of the musicians after they wrote the score to his film, "The Man Who Cried."

Written, produced and directed by Jasmine Dellal, the documentary begins in northern India before taking us on a World

'When the Road Bends ... Tales of a Gypsy Caravan'



- **Director:** Jasmine Dellal.

Music Institute tour of North America with five bands from Macedonia, India, Romania and Spain.

Rating: Not rated.

• **Web site:**

gypsyncaravanmovie.com

The film is filled with poignant and funny moments. Sometimes you'll want to cry or burst with laughter.

Typical Gypsy music is pure, decontaminated of any forms of assimilation.

Throughout the film you'll hear music ranging from flamenco to funky brass band, Romanian violin, Indian folk and raga.

The director skillfully weaves behind-the-scene stories with live concerts. The film highlights performances by Macedonian vocalist and "Queen of the Gypsies" Esma Redzepova; traditional Indian folk troupe Maharaja; Romanian brass band Fanfare Ciocarlia; Romanian violin group Taraf de Haidouks; and the Antonio el Pipa Flamenco Ensemble from Spain.

We get to know the musicians on planes, buses and backstage before and after concerts. We also get to travel with them to their countries, visiting their homes and meeting their families and friends. The film also helps us to discover what music brings to their lives and communities.

From Spain, we get to see Antonio's new flamenco school while his aunt Juana (a raspy voiced vocalist) talks about her poverty-stricken childhood and her husband and son's addiction to drugs.

From Romania, we meet Nicolae, a member of Taraf de Haidouks. Nicolae was a proud and respected musician. What's more, he was even happier to be able to support his family and the community with the earnings of his violin and voice.

From India, there's Harish, a young man who turned to dance to feed his family after the death of his parents. He's a spectacular dancer and his demonstration of Rajasthani knee dance is something to behold.

"Gypsy Caravan" is a journey into the world, language, tradition and music of the Romani people, and well worth the trip.

It opens Friday at the Regent Square Theater.

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