

Gypsy Caravan – When the Road Bends



Dir Jasmine Dellal US/Neth (nc)
110 mins, ICA

Jasmine Dellal's documentary of the 2001 sell-out tour of the US undertaken by a specially convoked five-nation group of Gypsy musicians offers some individually vibrant performances and interesting 'back-home' interview footage but is somewhat let down by a lack of directorial intuition and dull or clumsy editing. The great Albert Maysles is credited among 11 cinematographers, a plenitude that may help explain the film's lack of visual coherence, rhythm and proper colour balance. Likewise, its insights into the history of the Romany diaspora, however sympathetic, seem cursory. Still, you can't keep a good band down, and famous names such as Romania's Taraf de Haïdouks, Macedonia's 'official queen of the Gypsies' Esmā Redzepova, Andalusia's Antonio El Pipa and Rajasthan's Maharaja not only blow up a storm or cry a river but give foot-stomping evidence of the diversity and connectedness of the vital Roma musical tradition. *Wally Hammond*