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SAVE GAS! • SAVE TIME!

'Gypsy Caravan' dispels many myths and celebrates music

By Lana Mini Film Critic

out of five



Gypsy Caravan is a documentary that highlights the journey of the world's top gypsy musicians and dancers.

'Gypsy Caravan'

When: Opens Aug. 31 at the Maple Art Theatre, 4135 W. Maple Rd., Bloomfield Hills, www.landmarktheatres.com
 What: The musical world of gypsies. Captures the lives of prominent gypsy musicians and their real lives in Macedonia, Romania, India and Spain.
 Musicians: Featured musicians include Esma Redzepova, known as the "queen of the gypsies;" Maharaja, an Indian folk troupe, and others.
 Sidenote: Johnny Depp is also in the film as a fan of the music and its people.
 Created by: Documentary icon Albert Maysles ("Gimme Shelter," "Pretty Things"), Jasmine Dellal ("American Gypsy: A Stranger in Everybody's Land")
 Rated: Not rated.
 View trailer: www.gypsycaravanmovie.com

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Gypsy Caravan, which opens at the Maple Aug. 31, is a rare movie that makes film reviewers love their jobs - a time when we want to shout from our rooftops: go see it.

Gypsy Caravan is a stunning documentary about the musical world of Roma (otherwise known here as gypsies) and the very real and surprising world they live in.

Forget everything you think you know about gypsies, but enough with the stereotypes, please.

Gypsies are a people so "forgotten" that most of us still don't realize that an estimated 250,000 to 500,000 were murdered during the Holocaust - and were slaves in Romania until 1864. And they still are victims of hate crimes today.

Gypsy Caravan touches upon that. Johnny Depp explains his love for Roma and their music, and how he bonded with them first during his film The Man Who Cried.

Gypsy Caravan focuses on luscious music of top international gypsy performers - like Romanian superstar violinist Taraf de Haidouks - on the World Music Institute's Gypsy Caravan tour throughout Europe and the U.S.

Five gypsy bands from four countries (Romania, Macedonia, India and Spain) meet for a six-week concert, astounding audiences even as critical as New York.

The musical styles include flamenco, brass band, Romanian violin, Indian folk, Raga and jazz. It also includes dance.

And the music.

Oh, the music. Songs are performed in the Romani language and describe the despair of the people, freedom and the beauty of life.

Who says music can't change the world?

One of the musicians actually bought electricity for his village from money he earned from sales of one of the CDs. Electricity installed because of music - that's the most tangible statement about music I've ever heard.

Also astounding was the resilience and happiness of the Roma. Macadonian diva and singer Esmá Redžepova, known as Queen of the Gypsies, who "adopted" and raised 47 children in her lifetime with smiles and shrugs of "what can you do?" even when money isn't there.

Gypsy Caravan is film about a misunderstood people and their greatest passions: family, freedom and song.

STORYCHAT 

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