



When the Road Bends...tales of a Gypsy Caravan

Discovery

U.S.A., 2006, 110 min, Color, 35 mm
 In English, Spanish, Romani, Hindi, Ma with English subtitles
World Premiere

Producer: Jasmine Dellal
Director/Screenwriter: Jasmine Dellal
Co-producer: Sara Nolan
Cinematography: Albert Maysles, Alain de Halleux
Sound: John Gurrin
Executive Producers: Wouter Barendrecht, San Fu Maltha, Michael J. Werner
Cast: Esmā Redzepova, Antonio El Pipa Flamenco Ensemble, Maharaja, Taraf de Haïdouks, Fanfare Ciocarlia



Red Auerbach once said: "Music washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life." Yet, the lively public lives of musicians often bear no resemblance to their private lives, and it is this very dichotomy that is chronicled in Jasmine Dellal's *When the Road Bends...tales of a Gypsy Caravan*. Shot by documentary icon Albert Maysles, this film allows us to follow five Romani (Gypsy) bands during their cross-country American tour, as they share their native music, energy, and sense of joy with audiences wherever they go. Then we follow the musicians back to their native lands, including India, Romania, Macedonia, and Spain, where we are given a fascinating lesson in Romani culture. We meet a number of members of the Romani community, many of whom have been ostracized from non-Romani society or persecuted for being "Gypsies," and we begin to understand the complex problems faced by those who are bound together by that stereotype. Stigmatized and oppressed, the Rom suffer from great poverty, yet a fierce pride propels them to continue sharing who they are and what they do. Given extraordinary access to a world known by few outsiders, Dellal takes full advantage by reaching out to the community's key players, including a violin virtuoso who also must beg for change in order to keep his family afloat. The director conveys the flavor of Romani society by filming a balance of formal ceremonies-including weddings and funerals-and everyday asides. And while we may initially be fascinated by the music itself, *When the Road Bends...tales of a Gypsy Caravan* convinces us that the story truly lies with the people who make the music.

- Steven Synder

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