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Gypsy Caravan: When The Road Bends [2007, Movie]

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Gypsy Caravan: When The Road Bends: Review



★★★★

Jasmine Dellal's film documents a six-week, 18-show concert tour that brought together gypsy musicians from four countries — India, Romania, Macedonia and Spain — both for performances and for an informal exchange that attempts to bridge the gap between Roma who share common roots but have grown culturally distant from their common heritage.

The tour features five acts: Esma Redzepova, from Skopje, Macedonia, was named Queen of the Gypsies in India in 1976 and proudly proclaims, "I never assimilated for anybody." She sings in the Rom language and helped popularize her ancestors' music throughout Yugoslavia in the 1960s and 1970s (Dellal includes footage of Redzepova on Yugoslavian TV, singing traditional songs in a gold lame miniskirt), but also defied tradition to marry a Macedonian. Unable to have children, they took in orphans and youngsters whose poverty-stricken parents couldn't support them, passing on gypsy traditions. Many of her children continue to perform with her. The string-based Taraf de Haidouks ("Band of Brigands") comes closest to what most people think of as traditional "Gypsy music." Led by the wizened Nicolae Neacsu and his protege, Caliu, they support their entire village — Clejani, in southern Romania — while the women and children stay home. Though their lifestyle conforms to stereotypes about patriarchal Rom society, Neacsu also says proudly that he's paying for one of the young women to study music in Bucharest because education will help her "open her mind." Johnny Depp appears briefly to praise Taraf de Haidouks: He shared a small trailer with the entire group while shooting *THE MAN WHO CRIED* (2000), in which he played a gypsy horse trainer. The group Fanfare Ciocarlia, also from Romania, is more brass-oriented and plays folk music that incorporates Turkish influences. Maharaja, a group of dancers and musicians who hail from villages and cities in India's Rajasthan region, play traditional ragas, the root of Rom music. The family-based Antonio el Pipa Flamenco Ensemble comes from Jerez de la Frontera, Spain; its key members are dancer Antonio and his aunt, singer Juana, who speaks passionately of the *duende* — the deep, heartfelt spirit — of flamenco, which transcends language and addresses the heart. Gypsy music, she says, is the music of pain, poverty and oppression, all of which she's experienced; it's their blues.

A natural follow-up to Dellal's debut, *AMERICAN GYPSY: A STRANGER IN EVERYBODY'S LAND* (1999), this exuberant film features long musical interludes that speak as vividly — if not more so — than the interviews and fly-on-the-wall footage. —*Maitland McDonagh*

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Cast & Details

Year: 2007
Rated NR
User Rating: ★★★★★ (Be the first to rate!)
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Cast

[Taraf de Haidouks](#)
[Esma Redzepova](#)
[Fanfare Ciocarlia](#)
[Maharaja](#)
[Antonio El Pipa Flamenco Ensemble](#)
[Johnny Depp](#)

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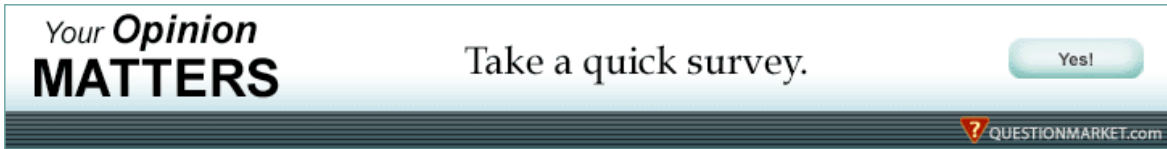
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