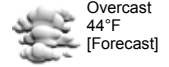




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Gypsy Caravan

By Harper Barnes

SPECIAL TO THE POST-DISPATCH
09/14/2007

The engaging musical documentary "Gypsy Caravan" opens by quoting a Gypsy saying: "You cannot walk straight when the road bends."

Appropriately, filmmaker Jasmine Dellal ("American Gypsy") does not hesitate to follow some rather abrupt bends in the road of narrative as she tells the story of Gypsy music.

The central focus of "Gypsy Caravan," originally titled "When the Road Bends," is a 2001 tour of North America by five Gypsy bands from India, Macedonia, Romania and Spain. Dellal follows the tour from the Atlantic to the Pacific, interlacing performances with scenes filmed backstage and on the road, but she often interrupts the tour coverage to visit the home villages of the performers.

At times, she briefly loses us in the transition, but the passionate music brings us back to the soul of the movie.

The music in "Gypsy Caravan" is surprisingly varied, ranging from the ragalike progressions of a band from India to the almost jazzlike jamming of a string band from Romania; it seems appropriate that the legendary jazz guitarist Django Reinhardt was a Gypsy.

We also are given traditional and contemporary versions of flamenco.

The documentary, although not as rousing as "Latcho Drom," an irresistible 1993 film about Gypsies and their music, is well worth seeing and hearing.

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'Gypsy Caravan'

B

Not rated; 1:51

Bottom line: A soulful musical journey with Gypsies.

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