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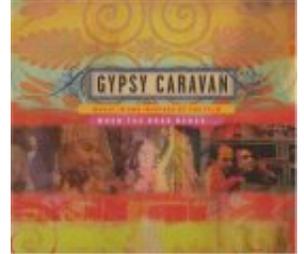
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REVIEW

Movie Review: *Gypsy Caravan*

Written by [El Bicho](#)
Published June 19, 2007

Written by Caballero Oscuro



Gypsies. Just the mention of the word conjures images of mystery and danger, but how much do you really know about them? Sure, most people immediately picture a nomadic, hobbled old woman wearing a head scarf and one large hoop earring who might glance at you with a piercing evil eye as she tries to steal your money or your baby. However, as Johnny Depp points out in this film during a brief interview, "what you've believed about these people has been a lie your entire life." The truth about gypsies is far less threatening, and as it turns out, quite enlightening.

As conveyed in this riveting new documentary from filmmaker Jasmine Dellal, gypsies are more correctly identified as the Romani people, an ethnic group scattered across the globe. They are not wandering nomads, but instead have forged vibrant communities in their respective lands. They mostly share a common language and traditions, but have also integrated into their home countries to the point where there is not much that ties them together. This is evident in the range of music styles chosen for inclusion on last year's six-week concert tour across North America that serves as the basis for this film.

The Gypsy Caravan 2006 tour united five gypsy bands from four countries, and the film follows the tour on the road as well as on location in their homelands. Their musical styles incorporate diverse but related elements like flamenco and brass band, folk music from India, and violin music from Romania. As one performer notes in the film, two of the only things the Roma have in common are their language and their heart, or passion, about their music. The film expertly captures this passion live on stage, but also shows glimpses of their daily lives on tour and back home. While the music might not be everyone's cup of tea, the film shines by examining the Roma passion and sense of community in spite of their different countries of origin.

As we get to know the performers, we see glimpses of their homes and families in Spain, Macedonia, Romania, and India. These interludes between performances give the film its weight, as we learn to accept and care about these people rather than just enjoy their musical compositions. From the old man who worries about the future of his family when he's no longer around to support them through his performances, to the "Queen of Gypsies" who describes her life experiences raising 47 adopted children, we see how fascinating their backstories are while concurrently enjoying their vibrant music.

Gypsy Caravan is now playing in New York and opens in Los Angeles on June 29. For additional information, please visit the [website](#).

This writer is a member of [The Masked Movie Snobs](#), a collective that fights a never-ending battle against bad entertainment. El Bicho is an editor for BC Magazine and FilmRadar.com.

Comments

#1 – June 19, 2007 @ 07:36AM – MAS

My great-grandparents were gypsies. I can't help but wonder what Mr. Depp believed that's not true. In these days of enlightenment, why would anyone believe stereotypes about ANY group?

#2 – June 19, 2007 @ 11:12AM – Crystal

Response to comment #1 -- June 19, 2007 @ 07:36AM --MAS: Johnny Depp is a fan and friend of the Romanian string band, Taraf de Haïdouks, featured in the film. Unfortunately, even in this "day of enlightenment" many people still hold on to old stereotypes and he is talking about those that so many older Hollywood films show of gypsies as dangerous, as thieves, and the like. Johnny is trying to make a point and further enlighten those people who would still have such views, and I am sure that is why he appeared in the film...

#3 – June 19, 2007 @ 11:24AM – Lisa McKay [[URL](#)]

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#4 – June 19, 2007 @ 21:42PM – Merguen

Unfortunately, I have had experience first hand with the "Gypsy" culture here in the USA. And those experiences have not been positive. I have thought of them in the past in a more "romantic" view, until I came face to face with them. There was no misunderstanding. Perhaps those in the USA do not follow the same ethics as those in other countries. However, the music I have heard from this is very haunting.

