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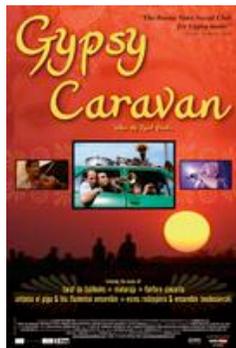
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Gypsies on the road

by Peter Margasak on August 22nd - 5:01 p.m.

Tags: [Fanfare Ciocarlia](#), [Esma Redzepova](#), [Romani music](#), [Gypsy Caravan](#), [Tara de Haidouks](#), [Maharaja](#)

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On Friday the concert film [Gypsy Caravan](#), which documents a six-week long package tour of the same name in 2001, opens at the [Music Box](#). The tour featured some of Europe's most important Romany artists and traveled across North America, though no promoter in Chicago bothered to book it. By bringing together artists from India, Macedonia, Romania, and Spain the Gypsy Caravan tour sought to underline the differences and similarities of the various cultures. Naturally, the film climaxes with the various musicians drawing closer and closer, both socially and musically, with live collaborations increasing as the tour progressed. Directed by Jasmine Dellal and shot in part by [Albert Maysles](#), it recalls the great [Tony Gatlif](#) film *Latcho Drom*, a kind of musical-

documentary that traced the thousand-year migration of the Roms from Rajasthan in northern India up through Egypt, Eastern Europe, and countries like France and Spain, capturing the radical changes the music experienced in each new location.

It's hard to screw up a concert film starring the string band [Tara de Haidouks](#), the brass band [Fanfare Ciocarlia](#), powerhouse vocalist [Esma Redzepova](#), and India's [Maharaja](#), but Dellal doesn't do her film any favors by cutting off their performances with interview clips. The best part of *Gypsy Caravan* might be the extensive footage shot in the hometowns of the various artists, where the radical differences in lifestyle couldn't be more explicit. The film doesn't give a Romany history lesson, but the subjects make clear their persecuted status, for which music has always been a crucial balm. If you're familiar with any of these groups the film will probably be hard to resist, but it also works well as a kind of thumbnail of Rom music and culture. In one of the most stirring sections, Dellal returns to Clejani, the tiny Romanian village where Tara de Haidouks live, to capture the funeral of its senior violinist Nicolae Neascu, an inspiring 78-year-old life force during the tour.

Earlier this summer World Village Records released a soundtrack to the film, which functions as a nice introduction to the music even if it isn't terribly special as a soundtrack: nearly all the music is from previously issued studio recordings.

Today's playlist:

Mats Eilertsen, *Flux* (AIM)
Akos Rosman, *Images of the Dream and Death* (Phono Suecia)
Bebo Valdes, *Bebo* (Mojito/Calle 54)
Bunny Wailer, *Blackheart Man* (Island)
Andrew D'Angelo Trio Morthana, *With Pride!* (Doubt Music)

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Images:



Comments

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Carter

August 23rd - 3:51 p.m.

Peter, you might like Steve Gibons' Gypsy Rhythm Project, he's fantastic:

<http://www.stevegibons.com/grp/>

There's much to be said for playing old music from far away places: Like that feeling it creates of being on the road, and the images it evokes. While only a few feet from traffic on Chicago streets we can be riding in a hay cart down a country road in northeastern Moldavia, or dancing in front of a bonfire in a Dobrogean meadow.

Violinist Steve Gibons and Gypsy Cymbalom maestro Nicolae Feraru produce this image-rich music from Romania, the Balkans and the oriental Gypsy world, and, in assimilating the creativity of musicians like Mike Allemana, Dan Delorenzo, and Tim Mulvenna, they bring elements of modern composition and jazz improvisation to the sound of this old southeastern European Gypsy and folk music. With the recent addition of Accordion great Juliano Milo, the group takes this wild concoction of modern jazz, traditional ballads, dances and Gypsy music to a new level of virtuosity.

J.W.

August 25th - 10:33 a.m.

for what its worth,
the avashai cohen link
in your critic's choice
is for the bassist not
the trumpeter.

Joe

August 26th - 8:21 a.m.

Steve Gibons is among a higher than usual number of "gypsy" groups scheduled for next month's World Music Festival. (A total of six, I think)

<http://www.cityofchicago.org/WorldMusic/>

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