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Movie review: 'Gypsy Caravan'

By **Michael Phillips**
 August 23, 2007

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2½ stars (out of four)

So much good and soulful music courses through "Gypsy Caravan," writer-director Jasmine Dellal's documentary about a four-nation, five-band, six-week crew of artists on a World Music Institute-sponsored U.S. tour, you can barely keep track of the Romanis without a scorecard. The Gypsy bands we see on- and off-stage span the globe. From Macedonia, Esmá Redžepova acts as de facto hostess of this rolling caravan. From Romania, the brass band Fanfare Ciocărlia mixes it up with another Romanian act, the violinists Taraf de Haidouks. Offering an entirely different sound, the Indian troupe Maharaja complements Antonio el Pipa Flamenco Ensemble from Andalucía.

The Romani people originated in India, but the tree's roots spread far and wide. An earlier feature by Dellal, "American Gypsy: A Stranger in Everybody's Land," relates to "Gypsy Caravan" in that central notion of homelessness. If music were all, "Gypsy Caravan" would be amazing. As is, it's worth seeing, but you may get frustrated at the way Dellal raises provocative questions about ancestry and prejudice, only to lose them in the shuffle of so many mini-portraits of musicians, getting to know each other and each other's foreign yet familiar musical language, on a long 16-city tour.

'Gypsy Caravan'

Running time: 1:51. Opens Friday at the Music Box Theatre, 3733 N. Southport Ave. **No MPAA rating (fine for all ages).**



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