

V/A – PRINCES AMONGST MEN (ASPHELT TANGO)

A belated soundtrack to Garth Cartwright's book of the same name (an excellent musical travelogue chronicling the author's journey into the heart of Balkan Gypsy culture), this impressively packaged and programmed 18-track collection features many of those profiled in the book and serves as perfect primer to Eastern European Roma music.

Big name brass blowers such as Romania's Fanfare Ciocarlia and Macedonia's Kocani Orkestar are represented with well-chosen examples of their work and there's a strong emphasis on powerhouse vocalists, with the bluesy tones of Bulgaria's Jony Iliev and the recently departed Serbian legend Saban Bajramovic plus soul-drenched performances from Sofi Marinova and Dzansever.

Buy the CD, read the book and open yourself up to a whole new world of passionate, virtuoso music. (Jamie Renton)

