

## KAL

*Kal*

Asphalt Tango 0906

During a recent interview with Kal founder, Dragan Ristic, the outspoken front man lashed out against the term “gypsy,” pointing toward its inherent bias to Rom culture. He referred to various organizations and committees dedicated to preserving and – as his band is doing – evolving the flexible nature of Roma people. Snippets of bhangra, tango, blues, flamenco, Arabian rhythms and hip-hop mingle inside *Kal*’s dozen tracks. Showing the adaptability of Romani culture is not only a musical realization for this crew, but a social mission. Just as the Rom traveled from India and re-rooted themselves in numerous lands, picking up and transforming various folk musics along the way, the Serbian Ristic uses jet planes to transport his style to the planet. Light use of electronics, guitar and fiddle virtuosity fuel this animated fire. The opening “Duj Duj” is prime for dance floors, featuring blaring, shiny guitars, Turkish percussion and crucial horn lines reminiscent of Balkan brass. “Dvojka” continues an upbeat escalate with a drum ‘n bass backdrop laden with stellar violin strains. But Ristic does not keep it hyped: “Lili” and “Djelem, Djelem” represent the restive states of Romani song. The marching band sound on “Boro Boro” adds a large feel to the record; the epic clarinet and female vocals add an intense charm. The finger-picking, violin/accordion play on “Mozzarella” – complete with the necessary good-time whistling – brings the record back to the Hungarian *tanchez* vibe. Ristic goes to tremendous lengths to

include all his influences on *Kal*. No matter which direction you turn, he’s there with a bottle of vodka and a smile, waiting for you to join the dance. — DB