

Ask Guy Mendilow where he's from and you're not likely to get a quick answer. A citizen of Israel, Great Britain and the United States, Mendilow spent his most formative years playing hopscotch between continents when his musician-turned-professor father was invited to a succession of teaching posts. From early childhood on, most aspects of Mendilow's life were a cultural, linguistic and musical mix. He grew up participating in late night song circles and living room concerts with local musicians in his different homes, whether in Jerusalem or Johannesburg and whether the songs were Israeli, South African, English or American. At ten, Mendilow joined the renowned American Boychoir and kept traveling, touring internationally and domestically and performing some two hundred concerts a year in venues like Carnegie Hall. Since age fifteen, Mendilow has continued to immerse himself in new cultures, seeking opportunities to learn languages and collaborate with instrument builders and performers. To date, he has lived and performed in South Africa, Israel, Taiwan, Canada, Mexico, Brazil and the United States. He sings in six tongues and is fluent in four. **“Mendilow is no dilettante,”** writes the *Boston Phoenix*. **“He learned the music of these countries by living and working there — so when he sings about a massacre by paramilitaries in Chiapas, he knows what he's talking about.”**

“The glory of what [Mendilow] does is finding a common ground among different cultures,” notes the *Jewish Advocate*. Mendilow's music offers a taste of the beauty of the places he has called home and — perhaps more importantly — of the common human threads between them. In his performances and educational programs, Mendilow uses music to foster communication, respect and tolerance. Alongside performing at festivals like **Musikfest** and the **Philadelphia Folk Festival**, theatres and cultural centers, this has led him to work closely with cutting-edge organizations such as **Seeds of Peace** which focuses primarily on peacemaking between Palestinian and Israeli youth leaders.

In “Mendilusia,” ancient Judeo-Spanish melodies meld with Brazilian bossa, South African harmonies and eastern overtone singing. Mendilow's music spins stories to which audiences can relate despite differences in culture or language. The songs range from exuberant participatory numbers to fiery tunes, bittersweet with what *TimeOFF Magazine* called “a restless yearning.” His performances feature his compelling vocals set against the **berimbau**, a home-made musical bow and arrow, struck with a stick and a stone. But Mendilow has taken his berimbau beyond the Brazilian capoeira tradition in which he got his start. He devised his own tuning and amplification technique that adds a bass drum and snare sound to the percussive drone. Mendilow is also considered “an emerging master of overtone singing,” (*Metrowest Daily News*), singing two or more notes at the same time in a technique that *Northeast Performer Magazine* calls “hauntingly beautiful.” His band adds lush vocal harmonies with singers Shannon Lambert-Ryan. Daniel Gale contributes violin and Cajun accordion, Andy Bergman rounds the sound out with woodwinds, electric mbira and his own style of jaw harp that will make any beat-boxers jaw drop and percussionist Rich Stein provides rhythmic undercurrents with cajon and frame drums.

Mendilow's richly textured and intimately engaging concerts have helped him establish a near perfect re-invitation record at the venues he plays. His recordings have likewise garnered acclaim. Among his honours are the **Director's Choice Award** in the *Mid Atlantic Song Contest* (2006), the *Global Rhythm Magazine World Music Song Contest* (2005) and being named a top-twenty finalist in the *Unisong International Songwriting Contest* (2007). In 2005 his audiences voted him and his band **Boston's Best World Music Act** in the *Boston Phoenix's Best Music Poll*, a poll in the 670,000 reader newspaper. He currently lives in Boston MA.

