

TRACK NOTES & TRANSLATIONS FOR GUY MENDILOW: LIVE

All songs recorded live May 9th & 11th, 2004 and December 31st 2004

1. AWENDEJE (4:13)

Guy Mendilow

Guy Mendilow: vocals, berimbau, overtone singing

Andy Bergman: electric mbira

Yulia Van Doren: vocals

Before leaving for Brazil and learning Portuguese, I was fascinated by the sounds of that language. Inspired by some of the mouth music of Malcolm Dalglish, I wrote a song in utter nonsense, borrowing sounds from Portuguese, Gaelic and French. One can understand, then, why I was shocked when an audience member offered me a translation after a show. According to her, in an archaic French, the song comes close to saying “And when I say it with love, and when I do it with love, it shall be so.” Sounds good to me.

2. EXPERIMENT (2:58)

Guy Mendilow

Winner, Global Rhythm Magazine World Music Song Contest 2005

Winner, Director’s Choice Award, Mid Atlantic Song Contest, 2006

Top 20 Finalist, Unisong International Songwriting Contest 2006

Semi-Finalist, International Songwriting Competition 2006

Guy Mendilow: overtone singing, berimbau

Andy Bergman: jaw harp

This song features fast-paced overtone singing set against berimbau (a musical bow and arrow played with a stick and a stone that, in the Guy Mendilow Band, sounds like a bass drum and snare, along with its single string and caxixi — pronounced *cah-shee-shee* — shaker) and percussive jaw harp. We like to play games in the band. One of them is seeing how we can make up for the absence of the conventional drums and bass using the instruments we have. Another is seeing just how far we can push simple instruments like the ones heard on this track.

3. GESHER TSAR MEOD (3:36)

Words: Nachman of Breslov

Music: Baruch Chait, Arrangement: Guy Mendilow

Guy Mendilow: vocals, guitar

Andy Bergman: tenor sax

Rajdulari: vocals

Written in the nineteenth century, the Hebrew of this song means:

“The entire world is nothing but a narrow bridge. The important thing is to cross it without fear.”



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(For me, the words take on added meaning today, as fear is leveraged as a manipulative tool against us by elected officials –GJM)

4. DURME DURME (2:09)

Trad. Ladino, Arrangement: Guy Mendilow

Guy Mendilow: vocals, guitar

Andy Bergman: tenor sax

Yulia Van Doren: vocals

English Translation:

Sleep my beloved lady

Sleep, with neither anxiety nor pain

*I am your servant, whose sole wish is to watch over
your sleep*

with the greatest of love

*For two years my soul has suffered for you, my jewel, my
beautiful lady*

*Harken to the sounds of my guitar
Listen, beautiful lady, to my woeful song*

*Sleep my beloved lady
Sleep, with neither anxiety nor pain*

5. HINE MA TOV (4:51)

Trad. Hebrew, Arrangement: Guy Mendilow

Guy Mendilow: vocals, guitar

Andy Bergman: guiro

Daniel Gale: violin

Rajdulari: vocals

English Translation: “*What is good and beautiful is the fellowship of brothers and sisters.*”

6. WALKING AT NIGHT (4:39)

Words: Wendell Berry, Music: Malcolm Dalglish, Arrangement: Guy Mendilow

Guy Mendilow: vocals, guitar

Andy Bergman: pennywhistle

Yulia Van Doren: vocals



7, ZEMER AHAVA LA YAM (A LOVE SONG FOR THE SEA) (3:44)

Words: Rafael Eliaz, Music: Sasha Argov, Arrangement: Guy Mendilow
Guy Mendilow: vocals, guitar

English Translation:

*“If the darkness shrouds, and there is no star for me, and if the sea rages,
light me a rose of flame, mother, on the bow of my ship.*

*And if the skies pale endlessly and horizon’s thread grows thin
Reach out your warm hand, bless me, mother, and my heart will hold to yours*

A golden dome above, below me an abyss. Carry me, wave, carry me, to the country of my dreams.

Carry me with mercy and don’t ask my reason. A small bird awaits me on the horizon.

*If in her dream, my bride should sew a shirt for her beloved,
Kiss her brow quietly, mother, and tell her I’ll return.*

*And if she asks my purpose in the sea, or what I have lost
Tell her I seek wonders yet to be born.”*

8. LA AVOT SHELI (3:59)

Trad. Dagan, Arrangement: Guy Mendilow
Guy Mendilow: vocals, berimbau, overtone singing
Andy Bergman: electric mbira
Rajdulari: vocals
Daniel Gale: violin

A song for parents and grandparents adapted and translated to Hebrew from the original Dagan language from Burkina Faso, as taught by Malidoma Somé. The song acknowledges that we are what we are, for better or for worse, because of those who raised us, who are what they are because of those who raised them, and so on. The audience usually joins in on this joyful song, as on this recording.

9. SIMPLE GIFTS (1:57)

Trad. Shaker, Arrangement: Guy Mendilow
Guy Mendilow: overtone singing, guitar



An overtone singing solo.

NOTES ABOUT SOME OF THE INSTRUMENTS



VOCALS & OVERTONE SINGING (GUY MENDILOW): Overtone singing permits one singer to produce two or more voices at the same time. There are various techniques of overtone singing found in different parts of the world, some of the most prominent including the Tuvan throat singing styles collectively called *Khoomei* and Tibetan monastic chanting. Unlike these styles, the overtone singing Guy practices is not intrinsically linked to any one culture and is found in Mongolia, Europe and even the 1920's cowboy songs of the American Arthur Miles. To distinguish it from other overtone singing styles, it has sometimes been called Western Overtone Singing. Western Overtone Singing also differs technically: Whereas the Tuvan and Tibetan styles rely on false vocal folds in the throat, Western

Overtone Singing is produced with the oral cavity and breath. When done correctly, the lower voice sings a drone or bass line, and a seemingly independent whistle-like voice sings melodies above.



BERIMBAU (GUY MENDILOW): *Berimbau da Barriga* (jaw harp of the stomach) was the Portuguese name given to this musical bow brought to Brazil by African slaves and found in indigenous communities already in the land. It is one in a long list of names. Nearly all cultures that have used bows and arrows have also adapted them for musical purposes, and musical bows are found worldwide, from Mexico and Patagonia to South Africa, Angola and Camaroon, from India and Nepal to Japan and Greece. The Brazilian 'bow' is made from Biriba wood. "The string comes from the inside of a car tire. A dried and cleaned out gourd is tied

around the string and bow to amplify the sound. The right hand strikes the string with a stick while simultaneously playing a shaker called *caxixi*. The left hand presses a coin or stone against the string to change the pitch." (N. Scott Robinson) Guy's berimbau sounds quite different from typical berimbaus because of several modifications including alternate tuning and amplification techniques that permit the sounds of a full percussion kit including snare, high hat and "bass drum."

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ELECTRIC MBIRA (ANDY BERGMAN): The traditional Mbira is an African "thumb piano" strongly rooted with the Shona people of Zimbabwe. There are also many similar instruments throughout Africa (e.g. sanzhi, likembe, and kalimba). The instrument is typically made from a flat piece of wood with hammered nails for tongs and a resonator often made of a gourd. For amplification, this electric version forgoes the traditional resonating body for an electric pickup, much like an electric guitar.



JAW HARP (ANDY BERGMAN): The Jaw harp is an ancient instrument type found in over one hundred cultures worldwide. It has at as many names including the Jew's Harp, Trump (Scotland), Kha-rnga (Tibet), Vargan (Russia) and Munnharpa (Norway). The jaw harp has a rich history in both religious and secular music and is typically constructed with metals or bamboo.

ABOUT GUY MENDILOW

- Voted Boston's Best World Music Act — *Boston Phoenix* Best Music Poll 2005
 - Winner, World Music Song Contest 2005 — *Global Rhythm Magazine*.
- Nominated Boston's Best World Music Act — *Boston Phoenix* Best Music Poll 2006
 - Semi-Finalist, International Songwriting Competition 2006
 - Top 20 Finalist, Unisong International Songwriting Contest 2006
 - Winner, Director's Choice Award — Mid Atlantic Song Contest 2006

"Mendilow is no dilettante - 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."
— *Boston Phoenix*

"The glory of what [Mendilow] does is finding a common ground among different cultures. And that's what makes his music so exciting."
— *Jewish Advocate*

"This is, to folk, what Bela Fleck is to Foggy Mountain Breakdown. This is unusual and exciting."
— *Philadelphia Folk Song Society*



Photo by Lisa Schaffer

Guy Mendilow is a rarity, even in the diverse world of international music. His music offers audiences a taste of the beauty of the places he's called home — from Israel and South Africa to Mexico, Brazil and the United States. Perhaps more importantly, listeners quickly connect with the common human and musical sentiments on which his songs focus, guided by his commitment to using music as a tool for communication and tolerance.

Mendilow's timely message is coming through loud and clear. He was voted **Boston's Best World Music Act** in Boston's leading entertainment magazine, the *Boston Phoenix*, and performs at some of the nation's best established festivals like the **Philadelphia Folk Festival**. His bridge-building work also allows him to collaborate with cutting-edge organizations like **Seeds of Peace** which focuses on peacemaking between Palestinian and Israeli youth leaders, and to present at conferences across the country.

In "Mendilusia," ancient Judeo-Spanish melodies meld with Brazilian bossa, lush vocal harmonies and Mendilow's award-winning overtone singing. The Guy Mendilow Band performs on some sixteen instruments including a musical bow-and-arrow and electric mbaira, alongside violin, woodwinds and jaw harps.