



Arts Council *of the* Morris Area

***ENRICHING AND TRANSFORMING THE LIFE OF
EVERY INDIVIDUAL THROUGH THE ARTS***

February 14, 2009

RE: Midwest Arts Conference Spotlight Showcase 2009

To whom it may concern:

As a former music professor (who taught "world music") and as Artistic Programmer for Morris County's First Night®, I have had the pleasure of knowing Guy Mendilow and his band for three years and highly recommend them for inclusion in The 2009 Midwest Arts Conference Spotlight Showcase. The group is truly a topflight "world music" group which performs on 19 instruments and in 6 languages, captivating our listeners with their exquisite soundscapes of the places Mendilow has called home - from Israel and South Africa to Mexico, Brazil and the United States. The group's unique blend of artistic depth and range delights the ear with delicate, intricate and hauntingly lovely music.

A member of Princeton's American Boychoir at age 10, Mendilow launched his solo career by age 15, traveling the world. He speaks and sings in English, Hebrew, Spanish, and Portuguese and, in his compositions and musical arrangements, he draws on Israeli, Hindustani, South African, jazz, blues, and folk influences.

His highly talented ensemble of instrumentalists and singers encompass multiple traditions of their own and, with perfect blending, create tightly woven aural tapestries ranging from the jaunty rhythms of African songs to haunting medieval Ladino melodies.

Mendilow himself is also a master of overtone singing - producing that otherworldly, exquisite, flute-like sound most closely associated with the Tuvan culture of the Siberian Steppes. It is a sound like no other and his facility with it is nothing short of astonishing.

The group performs on a wide variety of unusual instruments and Mendilow serves as a skilled guide and educator, explaining the instruments and traditions without condescension, pedantry but rather with clarity and warmth.

Voted Boston's *Best World Music Act* in a poll of the Boston Phoenix's

670,000 readers, and the winner of numerous other awards, Mendilow's band has performed at some of the nation's best established festivals such as the Philadelphia Folk Festival.

I have had the distinct pleasure of hiring his group twice for Morris County's First Night Morris, a massive New Year's Eve celebration of the arts involving approximately 300 artists featured in 92 events located in 25 venues in and around Morristown, NJ. On both occasions, the Guy Mendilow Band enthralled, educated and engaged the audiences with its artistic excellence.

I would also add that, at this past year's First Night performance, the group demonstrated truly exceptional professionalism. Despite the bitterly cold, icy weather and a van transmission that failed midway along the trip from Boston area to NJ, they kept in touch and managed to arrive, set up and perform - with distinction - for the event. After 10 hours of harrowing travel, to deliver a beautiful performance which inspired a capacity crowd of over 400 people is testament to their dedication and remarkable professionalism.

The Guy Mendilow Band would be a superlative addition to The Midwest Arts Conference Spotlight Showcase and I recommend the group very highly and without reservation.

Should you require additional information, please feel free to contact me at (973) 285-5115, ext. 10 or via email at Lsiebert@morrisarts.org.

Sincerely,

Lynn L. Siebert

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