

GUY MENDILOW ENSEMBLE

POST-SHOW MODERATED CONVERSATIONS

THE FORGOTTEN KINGDOM

Thank you for your interest in a post-show moderated conversation with Guy Mendilow Ensemble. Your audience's performance experience will resonate more deeply and personally through this opportunity to gain broader perspective on the show's cultural and historical background. A memorable element for audiences is often also the personal connections these conversations enable.

We find the following to be the most effective format. We offer it to you so that we may give you our best. We are also flexible to tailor this segment to best suite the interests/needs of your community. Please let us know if you'd like to talk!

TIMEFRAME

Generally maximum twenty minutes. It is best for the audience to leave wanting more (this keeps them returning). It is fine to invite the conversation to continue with GME artists in the lobby.

MODERATOR

We encourage you to think of the moderator as a bridge between your community and the themes/artists in this performance. Please consider: Who in your community might best serve this role? Is there someone with relevant expertise? Or someone who has their finger on the community's pulse that can ask questions that will be relevant to others in the audience?

MODERATOR'S ROLE

Pre-show:

- Can be handled by host/MC if other than moderator:
Ensure audience knows that there will be an opportunity to participate in an intimate, candid conversation with the artists immediately after the performance.

Post-show:

- Can also be handled by host/MC if other than moderator:
Immediately after the performance, invite audience to remain in their seats and to join the artists for an intimate conversation
- Set the tone of the conversation, and ensure timely start, with a first question (see suggested questions below)
- Equitably select questions from the audience
- Where needed, summarize/repeat the audience question into the microphone so that the rest of the audience hears
- Ensure that all voices onstage are heard (see below)
- Act as time-keeper. Announce "We'll take two more questions," "This will be our final question, but you are welcome to continue the conversation with GME artists in the lobby," etc.



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ENSURING ALL VOICES ON-STAGE ARE HEARD

Guy's research and writing makes it natural for him to address cultural/historical questions.

Other GME artists will be able to address questions about their expertise, their instruments, and their personal connections with the show.

To ensure that the audience is best served, it is important to hear from every artist present for the conversation. If the audience does not organically ask questions answerable by GME artists other than Guy, please ask one of the following two questions:

1. In what ways does your expertise allow you to bring this music to life in the ways that you do?
On what do you draw to make your expression of this music unique?
2. What does "The Forgotten Kingdom" mean to you?

MUSIC IN THE CONVERSATION

It's fine to include field recordings and performance examples in the conversation.

It's fine to ask GME to play a final number.

This is up to you, and what you feel will best serve your audience.

Where possible, let GME know in advance. However, we also welcome surprises.

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS

It is best for the moderator to ask the first question, and then turn it over to the audience. Where needed, the moderator should summarize/repeat the audience members' questions so they are heard by all.

1. It is also best for the moderator to be ready to jump in to
Ensure that all artist voices are heard; and/or
2. Ask other questions to keep the conversation moving as the moderator sees fit.

Please feel free to draw on the questions below, or make up your own!

- What is Ladino, the language you sing in – and is it a viable language?
- How would these songs have traditionally been performed?
- What does it mean to take women's songs from such a different time and place and perform them this way? What is gained? What is lost? What are responsibilities?
- About the theme of memory: One of the themes of *The Forgotten Kingdom* is memory, and the stories we choose to tell ourselves about ourselves and the lives we know, or perhaps knew. In what ways do you feel this theme plays out in your own lives? How does it play out all around us today?



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- About the theme of being on the cusp of change: One of the themes of *The Forgotten Kingdom* is being on the cusp of great change — being world straddlers, with one foot in older values and the other in something new. What does this mean given the history of this music? How might this relate to what we know today what we experience around us?

The following questions are from Jeffrey Pierce, of Bravo Magazine in Elgin IL. We loved his questions so much we kept them verbatim.

- About creative material: *The Forgotten Kingdom* uses historical source material and song lyrics in an endangered language, yet your talking points imply that the story may evoke feelings about hope and change. Is TFK concerned more with preservation or progress? Is it suggesting that history repeats itself, or that it doesn't? Is it suggesting that human experience may have universal themes?
- About storytelling: The context of *The Forgotten Kingdom* is the historic loss of eastern Sephardic cultures as a consequence of two world wars. In the talking points that touch upon our "textbook hindsight" you suggest that *The Forgotten Kingdom* offers "a glimpse of other sides of the story." Has storytelling become a privilege of the powerful elite in our modern media age? Can multiple versions of a story exist without social polarization? If not, then isn't the insistent telling of one side of a story an inherently fascist practice?
- About performance: A dance educator I recently interviewed told me that audiences can connect to dance performance by seeing bodies in motion, and they can understand and relate that movement to the knowledge of their own bodies. How important is it that an audience experience *The Forgotten Kingdom* LIVE? Could this witness of physical movement in the production of musical sound and storytelling explain why live performance is so powerful, compared to the playback of a recording? In the context of Dalcroze theory, is it possible that even non-musicians experience something deeper when witnessing live physical performance compared to a transcript or recording?
- About cultural identity: One consequence of multiculturalism in American society is now being called out as "cultural theft." How can we honor, celebrate and embrace other cultures -- like the Sephardim -- without being accused of profiting from using their culture as subject matter for "show business"?
- About the music: I read that the Sephardic women's songs that are the core of *The Forgotten Kingdom* were typically heard as an unaccompanied solo voice, to which you've added instrumentation and arranged the songs in a new way. Several of the GME musicians are also composers. Where does arranging end, and composing begin? Is this distinction important when we question whether our use of the original music is more like stealing, borrowing, repackaging or just enlightened observation?



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MATERIALS

GME will be glad to make available to you written materials about the historical/cultural background of *The Forgotten Kingdom*. Please let us know what will be most useful to you.



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