

Common Ground

Digging Around



Radio Picadilly, 1978

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Common Ground is ...

Keith Rycroft	Vocals & Guitar
Dave Leach	Vocals, Guitar & Banjo
Andy Wood	Vocals

Songs written by Keith Rycroft & Dave Leach unless marked otherwise

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Not quite in "Moving Lines", 1986

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Bonsall Road, 1990

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Bonsall Road, 1992

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Some Songs

A kind of troubadour introduction; A sort of laying out the tray...
"Here you go. We hope you find something useful".

We'd like to sing some songs
For people just like you
Songs to make you laugh and cry
To raise a smile and lift you high
And sometimes bring you down to earth
For life is not all reckless mirth
We live it till we die, we do
We live it till we die

We'd like to raise a hope
Maybe a hope or two
For hope can set the soul to sing
It's not a dim or distant thing
We'll bring all Heaven before your eyes
And fill you with surprise, surprise
And time is on the wing, the wing
And time is on the wing

So now and with a good resolve
All mysteries we may not solve
We'll tell you what we've found is true
The rest is up to you, to you
The rest is up to you

When You Step In

This is the experience of “touching the spirit”. An experience of clarity which always seems to be an experience of the challenge of love.

When you step in
There is a reassurance giving me new heart
I start again from the place I stopped
It seemed so long ago
No mystic voices, visions or dreams
Just the simple truth it seems
Truth I thought was wearing thin
Foolish, oh foolish
When you step in

When you step in
Deceit becomes a carefully constructed fantasy
And now the time has come to relax
And breathe a breath of air
No guess no theory now I plead
But a holy living creed
Thoughtlessly I err and sin
Sorry yet glad
When you step in

When you step in
There is no measure to adoration's part
You cannot calculate a passionate divinity
The language is of heart and soul
And it makes up the entire whole
Thought there was no way to win
You win, you win
When you step in

Lay It On Me

A song from an early Roundabout production. It has a subtext a little like *Brave New World*.

I went down to the man at the trading store
Said to him, "Hey man, I want so much more"
He said, "Hey baby, now won't you hang round a while
You know, we can change your style"

And I'm singing,
Hey baby, baby won't you lay it on me
Hey baby, baby won't you lay it on me
Well I give my all to this wide world
And I've nothing as you can see
And I think it's time I got a slice of the industry

Well I want all that's going down, I want all I can take
Got no time for thinking I might have made a mistake
Well the man says, "Come on now we can make you smile
Well you ain't got nothing but at least you got style"

And I'm singing...

Communicate

We might learn a bit more if we listened to each other. We can read the high blown theories - experiencing them might be different. We are social animals and our spirituality is bound up with this.

Those people they seem to know just what they're talking about
Putting old ideas and myths to rout
Developing a brave new world of joy and harmony
And all you have to do is pretend
You haven't passed a GCE

Communicate, communicate
And you'll be a mate
It's not too late, it's not too late
To communicate
A professor of sociology said so therefore we must agree
But when I try to communicate nobody talks to me

Well I asked the local bin man, said, "Can I communicate with you?"
And to my shock and my surprise he turned a shade of blue
I found it very difficult to communicate with him
As a sociological exercise his knuckles met my chin

Communicate, communicate...

A universal consciousness, which we must all equate
From Seacombe to Japan the world would just be great
To come down to their level seems to be the done thing
Rub noses with the Eskimos or teach the world to sing

I'd like to teach the world to sing
In perfect harmony
I'm all for rubbing noses
It's more fun than sociology

Communicate, communicate...

Well as you might have gathered something seems to be wrong
To communicate the better well I wrote down this song
I've come to the conclusion that I'll scribble on the wall
A professor of sociology has scribbled on them all

Communicate, communicate...

The answer to this problem is so easy can't you see?
It's for me to talk with you and for you to talk with me
The answer to this problem is so easy can't you see?
It's for me to talk with you
And for you to talk with Him.

Easter Song

Very much about how Jesus is understood. I sometimes think this should be accompanied by 1 Corinthians ch. 13. A great sacrificial ethic, not simply to be a martyr but indicated life and love in the large sense sometimes will require sacrifice... scary.

When I think of it, you and I could have made it
Coming through those city gates
We could have stunned them all
You would have been king
I would have been your right hand
You had the style, we could have taken command

I didn't know that you wanted to go it alone
That the solitary martyr's stance
It was your course
We could have set the world to right
Been a great sensation overnight
A stabilised economy can set a nation right

I thought that you would be a panacea
For our present ills
I thought that you would be a champion
Of the people's cause
What you did was lunatic
So we cashed in, and we cashed in quick
This time boys we backed the wrong horse

Didn't I tell you it was all written down?
Didn't want your power
Didn't want your gold
I was seeking out the hearts of men
So my story could be told again and again
My love cannot be bought or sold

And the Devil, he showed me all those kingdoms of the world
He said, "They're yours, yours to command"
Tricks and politics to impress the land
Well now I could have turned those stones to bread
And made cakes and ale for all
But my body it was the bread instead
My blood the sweet wine for all

Borders Of Belief

It's your journey. Be brave, you are probably not alone.

Don't be afraid to feel what you must feel
It's the only way to know what is real
And the loving arms around about you
And underneath
And I'll love you and I'll go with you
To the Borders of Belief

Love you and go with you
Bring you sweet relief
Yes I'll love you and I'll go with you
To the Borders of Belief

When what you are begins to appear
And your road is lonely and your only friend is fear
And the Hosts of Hell are in the sky
And the Evil One is chief
Then I'll love you and I'll go with you
To the Borders of Belief

Love you and go with you
Bring you sweet relief
Yes I'll love you and I'll go with you
To the Borders of Belief

St Francis

A story of St. Francis to illustrate the fragility of life - the eternal is always present.

There was a man called Francis Bernadone
Lived in ancient Italy
He was a soldier of the king
Fighting for the crown of Sicily
One day when he was riding out to war
A voice there seemed to be
Saying "Francis, fight no more in this mortal strife
Francis, come and fight for me"

"From the days of your early childhood
You've heard my voice and known my name
And though the world seemed larger then
Men still play at life as at a game"

Francis donned the beggar's robe
A fool to friends and family
He seemed to hear that same voice say
"Francis be a fool for me"
Went to his cave on the mountainside
In all solemnity
The morning came with brother sun
Saying, "Brother, bright as bright we'll be"

And he came out of his cave on the mountainside
Singing and dancing, standing on his head
He saw Assisi upside-down
Hanging on a single thread
He said "Lord it's gonna slip into the sky away
And where will my people be?
Lord it's gonna slip into the sky away
And that will be the reckoning day"

Poised between Heaven and Hell
He thought the world would slip away
And he prayed to the God he loved
To love him on that reckoning day
Francis tried to bring Heaven near
A Heaven that is for all
By praying for his fellows here
And loving those who never cared at all

Deep within that mountainside
The same voice did say
"Francis, show this world who I am
Show them my love will never fade away"

And he came out of his cave...

Make That Music Swing

The Spirit and passion are intertwined.

A bit of a side swipe against the sweet and low approach to praise & worship.

You can make me laugh, you can make me glum
Won't you come on everybody, come, come, come
But don't go playing that harmonium
Give me a crash of a cymbal, and that old bass drum
'Cos I want you to

Make that music swing, make that music swing
Put on your gospel shoes
And make those bells of Heaven ring
Make that music swing, make that music swing
Put on your gospel shoes
And make those bells of Heaven ring

Some say that love is calm but I say it bites
And I won't lie down, I'll shout and scream and fight
Hearts and flowers and melody strings
Well give me hard harmonies for the joy it brings
And before I go to take my rest
I want to inject a little zest
God is OK, God is king
And I want you to make that music swing

Make that music swing...

Some say the boy is cracked
Some say that boy is ill
But I can hear him laughing still
Well there's nothing so serious that it can't be fun
And we're coming to get you so you'd better run
And before I go to take my rest
I want to inject a little zest
God is OK, God is king
And I want you to make that music swing

Make that music swing...

Oh take your partner by the hand
There's a brand new craze throughout the land
Gonna make you move your feet
Hoppin' and boppin' to the gospel beat
Oh you've never heard anything
We're gonna make you dance and swing
Set the bells of Heaven to ring
We're gonna make the music swing

Make that music swing...

Slow Dance

A dark song about depression.

It uses religious imagery mixed with the idea of a dance into light.

Slow dance, oh it's a slow down slow
Go any slower and it just won't go
Go any slower and it just won't show

Oh it's a slow song, oh it's a slow down slow
Go any slower and it just won't go
Go any slower and it just won't show

I've been dancing with that man in black
And I know that he'll make my soul crack
And only God and I can get it back, get it back
And only God and I can get it back

Sweet, sweet lover of my soul, my soul
Let me build upon your rock
And we can set that sweet song sounding
And we can set those boards a-pounding
As we move towards each other and to the day

Oh it's a slow dance, oh it's a slow down slow
Go any slower and it just won't go
Go any slower and it just won't show

Oh it's a slow song, oh it's a slow down slow
Go any slower and it just won't go
Go any slower and it just won't show

I've been dancing with that man in black
And I know that he'll make my soul crack
And only God and I can get it back, get it back
And only God and I can get it back...

Note For Note

Arising from the feeling of spiritual tiredness. Experiencing the Spirit as a unifying force.

I've heard it said that your song can be heard
Deep down in my soul but my soul is shallow
I've been looking into this empty heart of mine
And it's lying fallow

So won't you come - won't you plant that melody
Upon this point my heart and I agree
Start up a chorus in this disjointed me
And then we will see what can be

Note for note we can get it right
Sing and dance all through the night
Sing and dance till the morning light
Sing and dance all through the night
Sing and dance, no discordant note in sight

I could give it all up
And sing in unison not harmony
But it's not my place in a one-man band
I just couldn't stand it
Can't you see?

So won't you come...

In this life we must run the course
Be careful not to mount the wrong horse
Though it seems a possibility
Don't beat yourself to the winning post
Sing up for Father, Son and Holy Ghost
And eternity

So won't you come...

Brave New World

The soul needs more than the material to thrive.
"Man cannot live by bread alone" sort of thing.

With a brand new social order
We'd see our way clear
To initiate a brave new world
And eliminate all fear
Feed the people, teach the people
Give them health and strength and everything
And you'll tell me what to do
With my church and my steeple

But let me just ask you
What are you gonna do
What are you gonna do
With all those people?

They might love you in the morning
And be your friend at noon
And when the evening comes around
They might sing a different tune
Give the people what they want
Will it help them to be what they could be?
And you'll tell me what to do
With my church and my steeple

But let me just ask you
What are you gonna do
What are you gonna do
With all those people?

Now I don't think the road
To paradise is this way
And while we are what we are
We might never see its day
We've got to look beyond ourselves
I know it's the only way

But until we do
I must be asking you
What are you gonna do
With all those people?

Can't Stop Heaven Here

Based on the events at Calvary. The tree becomes the cosmic link between earth and heaven. It prefigures the emerging of a true humanity living in peace and harmony with the earth and all its inhabitants. It cannot be reversed, although it may take some time (or even eternity).

In Calvary's garden there was planted a tree
Its roots and its branches are growing free
And you can't roll back the sky
Or stop that flowing sea
And you can't stop Heaven here
And you can't stop Heaven here

Hail to the Lord's anointed
Great David's greater son
Who in the time appointed came
And was the only one
Who could help in our time of trouble
And in our time of need
Crushed the serpent's head
Fruit of the woman's seed

In Calvary's garden...

The birds now they're nesting
In the branches of that tree
That offers its protection
To you and me
And the strong man is captive
Inside his house of clay
And the victor stands with open hands
At the ending of the day

In Calvary's garden...

In Christ There Is No East Or West

A hymn tune. This version is based on that by John Fahey.

Le Jonglier De Dieu

He (can be she?) is God's juggler, God's fool. A medieval tale of humanity and spirit criticising pious pomposity, which could still be relevant now -- Women Bishops? Gay clergy?

The abbey walls were silent
A figure stood alone
Before the altar and the sacristy light
Before his Lord in that midnight
Le Jonglier de Dieu capers before
The Madonna's picture and does implore
"I have no gift other than that you see
Can a mother's love speak for me?"
Le Jonglier de Dieu

"All the wise and shepherds came
Even the dumb beasts him did proclaim
Finally I must play my part
And play it with all my heart"
Le Jonglier de Dieu

A brother saw him there
And to the abbot he did repair
Saying "What blasphemy, what heretic, what son of Hell
Have we invited within these hallowed walls to dwell?"

The abbot was a wiser man
Saying "My son have you learned nothing in your span?
We each have a gift to give and to share
And many's the night I have watched him there
Le Jonglier de Dieu"

"This poor child gives all he can
And I pray that I may be such a man
I pray that I may be such a man"

Le Jonglier de Dieu capers before
The Madonna's picture and does implore
Her Holy Son both meek and mild
To look upon his poor child
Le Jonglier de Dieu

Easter Song

See Song number 5. This version was recorded a few years later and was considered for the album "Moving Lines". It was decided then that, for a number of reasons, it didn't fit.

The Durham Rangers

A traditional folk tune from the North East of England that's known by many names, all involving Rangers somewhere.

I've described it as a reel and been told that it's a hornpipe (which is effectively a reel with a bit of swing). Either way it's a challenging tune to play but is great fun when you get the hang of it. The TAB (and music notation if you prefer) is available from the Red Jack Music web site... for free!

Waiting For My Life

A song of searching and waiting - the forming of the spirit.

At last I've reached the delta, been travelling so far
The labyrinth invites a choice of many avenues
I wander through this complex though I be rich or poor
And I'm waiting for your footfall at my door

Waiting, yes I'm waiting for the sun to rise
Waiting for my hopes and fears to focus into size
And though the way be light or dark with toil and daily strife
I'm waiting, waiting for my life

In the mode of Wenceslas' page I'll follow my heart
Though faith, it be removed to dumb acceptance
And the voice of the critical appear saying "Lord, Lord what's it all for?"
I'm waiting for your footfall at my door

Waiting, yes I'm waiting...

With every step it comes so clear I know less than I knew
And yet the love that I first met still draws me on
Faith and sight they would grow dim though love grows more and more
As I'm waiting for your footfall at my door

Waiting, yes I'm waiting...

Cripple Creek

A traditional American banjo tune. Don't worry... this version is on guitar.

Get Your Ticket

A fancy way of saying that all ways can lead to spiritual enlightenment.
Life's a journey without end.

If I can find me a guide, and keep my senses intact,
I'm gonna leave the old place behind.
I've got the basic essentials, my bags are all packed,
I've got a destination in mind.

There's all kinds of transport and all kinds of ways
To get you where you really want to be.
It doesn't really matter how you spend your days,
Get your ticket and you can be free.

Well, if you like, you can go for a package deal
Where everything is done for you.
Drowse away the journey, eat a simple meal,
Sit back and leave it all to the crew.

There's all kinds of transport and all kinds of ways...

Or you might like to travel on the stopping train;
You'll have a more adventurous time.
We won't be passin' this way again
So stop off before the end of the line.

There's all kinds of transport and all kinds of ways...

Well, each to his own, you know I really don't care,
As long as you're a travelling man.
I guess we'll meet some day, I don't know when or where,
But come and join me just as soon as you can.

There's all kinds of transport and all kinds of ways...

Love Is At The Heart

In the end: LOVE. (Who said that?). A similar idea to Borders of Belief.
Love will lead us to truth and is a good guide - we need to be brave.

Been around this way before
Knocking on an open door
Stopped a while to see the view
Contemplating all I knew
Shades of many yesterdays
Praying in the green byways
Singing songs of hopefulness
I could not do any less

Love is at the heart of all that's true
And love is at the heart of you

Sages contemplate the way
And I might join them all some day
To see the mystery of love
Beyond the brightest star above
To grasp the meaning of it all
However great, however small
See the perfect harmony
Standing silently

Love is at the heart of all that's true
And love is at the heart of you

A struggle for security
Is nothing but stupidity
It never, ever, ever can be
Within those loving changes

It's senseless to dissipate
Action for action's sake
Let go or we might break
Let go for love's sake
A boat can't sail upon the sand
Angels don't dance in your hand
The way of heaven is heaven's love
That touches all below, above

Love is at the heart of all that's true
And love is at the heart of you

Cruisin' An' Carousing'

A metaphor for what we're doing to Planet Earth. (Whoops, that's another 17 years gone...)

From the Captain's log, first of April ninety-one:
Don't know how long this voyage can go on.
The old ship sure is in a hell of a state,
We've gotta try to save her before it's too late.

Cruisin' an' carousin' while the ship goes down,
We ain't got a lifeboat, we're all gonna drown.
Cruisin' an' carousin', we're wastin' time -
Don't you know the ship we're on's the last of the line?

In a smokey bar on the main deck below
Everybody's dancin', don't seem to want to know.
The band is playin', C'est la vie, c'est la vie,
An' nobody's screamin' except little me.

Cruisin' an' carousin' while the ship goes down...

We're headin' for the rocks with a mutinous crew -
Somebody tell me, what are we gonna do?
We've got to pull together, that's my tip;
Sink our differences, don't sink the ship.

Cruisin' an' carousin' while the ship goes down...

She's a damn fine ship, though she's long in the tooth,
I don't wanna lose her, an' that's the truth.
I wanna tell the kids aboard the wonderful news -
This ol' ship's goin' on with the cruise.

Cruisin' an' carousin' while the ship goes down...

Over The Wall

The moment when I realised that I'd been calling into the darkness
without hearing an echo.

I thought I knew your name an' number,
I thought you were only over the wall,
But I've been lookin' over an' under,
An' I can't find you at all.

Maybe you're there, but I can't see you,
Maybe I looked when you weren't there,
But, oh, how I long to hear you say you really care,
Just to know you're there.

I thought you were the kind of neighbour
Who would lend me a helpin' hand.
I thought you were the kind of saviour
Who would always take a stand.

Maybe you're there...

They tell me you are like a mother
Who'll pick me up whenever I fall.
They say you are like a lover
Waitin' down by the garden wall.

Maybe you're there...

Can you see me, are you watchin'?
Do you hear me when I call?
Are our fingers nearly touchin'
If I reach for you over the wall?

Maybe you're there...