

## Roundabout (1971)

Yes

### LISTEN FOR

- AABA form, each part of which is multi-sectional
- Each section given its own style/sound
- Use of synthesizer, electronic organ
- Influence of minimalism
- Extended instrumental solos

### CREATION

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*Songwriters* Jon Anderson, Steve Howe

*Album* *Fragile*

*Label* Atlantic 2854

*Musicians* Jon Anderson (vocals), Chris Squire (bass guitar, electric guitar, vocals), Steve Howe (acoustic & electric guitars, vocals), Rick Wakeman (keyboards), Bill Bruford (drums, percussion)

*Producer* Eddie Offord, Yes

*Recording* Advision Studios (London); January 1972; stereo

*Charts* Pop 13

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### MUSIC

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*Genre* Progressive rock

*Form* Compound AABA (A = verse and bridge; B = middle section, reprise of intro, bridge)

*Key* E minor

*Meter* 4/4 with occasional 2/4 and 3/4

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## LISTENING GUIDE

Time	Form	Lyric Cue	Listen For
0:00	<b>Intro</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rubato, acoustic guitar free rhythm, classically influenced.</li> <li>• Punctuated by tape effect: tape-recorded bass notes of piano backward, creating crescendo that dissolves into ringing guitar harmonics (0:00, 0:22).</li> </ul>
0:44	<b>A Verse 1 (8+8+4)</b>	"I'll be the roundabout"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Entire band plays 8 bars to prepare entrance of lead vocals (layered riffs: active one in bass riff, melodic one in guitars).</li> <li>• 8-bar verse, with two dropped beats in bar 6.</li> <li>• Followed by 4-bar tag, with two dropped beats in bar 2.</li> </ul>
1:18	Verse 2 (4+8+4)	"The music dance"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As before, but with band playing only four bars to prepare return of vocals.</li> <li>• Backup vocals added.</li> </ul>
1:45	Bridge (18)	"In and around the lake"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Starts with guitar riff, high hat, and vocals only, then organ and bass enter.</li> <li>• Many two-beat bars throughout.</li> </ul>
2:15	<b>A Verse 3 (8+8+4)</b>	"I will remember"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As in Verse 1, with alterations to instrumentation, including the addition of filler in synthesizer and new melodic idea in electronic organ (2:26).</li> </ul>
2:49	Bridge (21)	"In and around the lake"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As before, without staggered entrance in bass and drums, but with new backup vocals.</li> <li>• Fast melodic figure returns (3:21) to create transition to middle section.</li> </ul>
3:25	<b>B Middle (50)</b>	"Along the drifting cloud"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Twelve times through a 4-bar phrase based on new riff in the bass and guitar.</li> <li>• Choral vocals present melody, with some instrumental interludes along the way.</li> <li>• Rapidly circling organ pattern, strongly reminiscent of minimalist composer Philip Glass, emerges (4:52).</li> </ul>
4:57	Intro, bridge	"In and around the lake"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Repetitious organ pattern continues as introduction and a new version of the bridge return.</li> </ul>

Time	Form	Lyric Cue	Listen For
5:50	Instr. solos (45)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The organ and guitar alternate solos based on music drawn from bridge. An ascending scale passage creates a transition to the return of the verse.</li> </ul>
7:05	<b>A</b> Verse 4 (12)	"I'll be the roundabout"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The verse returns varied somewhat, but using the lyrics of verse 1.</li> </ul>
7:26	Bridge (17)	"In and around the lake"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The fullest presentation of the bridge so far, leading directly to the coda.</li> </ul>
7:53	<b>Coda</b> (20)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Layered harmony vocals over a strummed acoustic guitar, as the song ends with a guitar phrase drawn from the end of the introduction.</li> </ul>

## LYRICS

I'll be the roundabout  
The words will make you out 'n' out  
I spend the day your way  
Call it morning driving thru the sound and in and  
out the valley

The music dance and sing  
They make the children really ring  
I spend the day your way  
Call it morning driving thru the sound and in and  
out the valley

In and around the lake  
Mountains come out of the sky and they stand  
there  
One mile over we'll be there and we'll see you  
Ten true summers we'll be there and laughing too  
Twenty four before my love you'll see I'll be there  
with you

I will remember you  
Your silhouette will charge the view  
Of distance atmosphere  
Call it morning driving thru the sound and even in  
the valley

In and around the lake  
Mountains come out of the sky and they stand  
there  
One mile over we'll be there and we'll see you  
Ten true summers we'll be there and laughing too  
Twenty four before my love you'll see I'll be there  
with you

Along the drifting cloud the eagle searching down  
on the land

Catching the swirling wind the sailor sees the rim  
of the land  
The eagle's dancing wings create as weather spins  
out of hand

Go closer hold the land feel partly no more than  
grains of sand  
We stand to lose all time a thousand answers by in  
our hand  
Next to your deeper fears we stand surrounded by  
a million years

I'll be the roundabout  
The words will make you out 'n' out  
I'll be the roundabout  
The words will make you out 'n' out

In and around the lake  
Mountains come out of the sky and they stand  
there  
Twenty four before my love and I'll be there

I'll be the roundabout  
The words will make you out 'n' out  
You spend the day your way  
Call it morning driving thru the sound and in and  
out the valley

In and around the lake  
Mountains come out of the sky and they stand  
there  
One mile over we'll be there and we'll see you  
Ten true summers we'll be there and laughing too  
Twenty four before my love you'll see I'll be there  
with you

## SOURCES

- Katherine Charlton, *Rock Music Styles: A History*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York: McGraw Hill, 2011), 207.
- John Covach and Andrew Flory, *What's That Sound*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 2015), 311.
- Roberta Freund Schwartz, Course Notes for MUSC-309 at the University of Kansas.