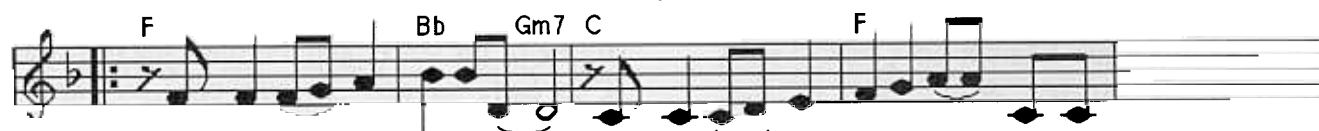


## We're in the Same Boat Now

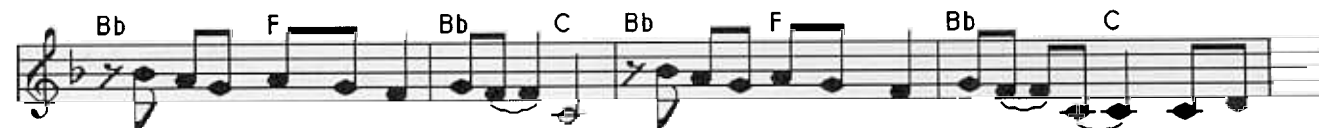
Words and Music © Bob Rae



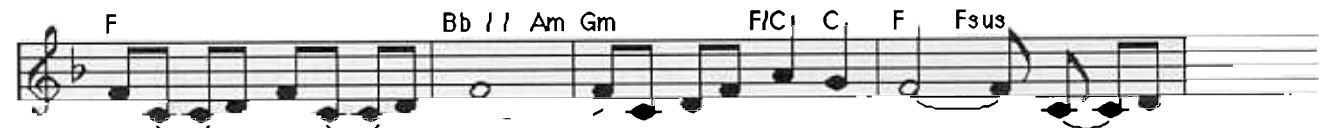
(verse) Some folks come here yes-ter-day, Some folks come from far a-way, Whe-ther



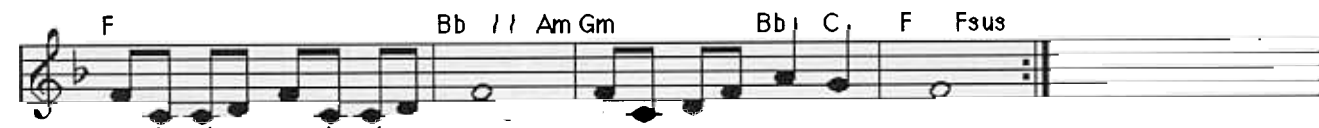
yes-ter-day or far a-way, We're in the same boat now.



(chorus) Go to the school-yard and look a-round: fa-ces are yel-low, black, white and brown, Come by



car, come by train, come by plane: We're in the same boat now, Come by



car, come by train, come by plane We're in the same boat

Some folks come here yesterday,  
Some folks come from far away,  
Whether yesterday or far away,  
We're in the same boat now.

We're workin' in farms and in factories,  
We're keepin' faith with our history,  
Try to make a world where everyone is free,  
We're in the same boat now.

### Chorus:

Go to the schoolyard and look around,  
Faces are yellow, black, white and brown,

There's no denying the truth we know:  
All people, all colours make the best rainbow,  
It'll take all our love to make it grow,  
We're in the same boat now.

We share the earth reaching to the sky,  
The fish that swim and the birds that fly,  
Rivers and trees and the air up high,  
We're in the same boat now.

Come by car, come by train, come by plane,  
We're in the same boat now.

*Arabic chorus: Friendship's Way, December 1993*  
(transliteration: George Sawa)

Mā bene'dar nensa el-hayāt illī nerafhā  
koll ennās, koll el-alwān, ajmal min koll aqwās,  
matlū minna 'lhob, 'ashan yekbar  
ihnā bizāt es-safina.

(a little adjustment is needed to get the words to fit  
the tune)

*Spanish chorus:*  
(J. Cohen and Pilar Caliz, July 1994)

Ven al colegio y tu verrás  
el arco irís en nuestras caras está  
ven en coche, en avión, u en tren,  
es el mismo barco ya.

Hebrew chorus: Friendship's Way, December 1993

Anu ovdim ba'ir ubakfar,  
anu notzrim emunat la'avar,  
anu bonim olam hofshi l'kulam,  
anu bes'fina yakhdav.



Bob and Arlene Rae and their three daughters with the children at Friendship's Way, December 1993.

## A Rae-Day in Jaffa, or Bob Rae's Song Travels to Jaffa

Some of you may have heard Ontario Premier Bob Rae's song, "We're in the Same Boat Now" in one sung version or another. I learned it a few years ago with a group of Mariposa in the Schools artists, when we recorded it for our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary album *Circle of Friends*, with Ken Whiteley (who produced the album) singing the lead vocals and all of us on the chorus.

In December 1993 (as some of you know from a previous *EthnoFolk Letters* column), I spent a month as a visiting lecturer in Jerusalem, and it happened to be the same month Bob Rae and his family were visiting Israel. I mentioned the song to Mara Messenger at the Canadian Embassy one day, and she exclaimed, "Oh, did Bob Rae write that? I always thought it was Eric Nagler!" We talked about playing it for him at a reception, and I gave her a copy of the MITS recording. A short time later, the Raes were invited to *Friendship's Way*, the *Jewish-Arab Association for the Child and Family*, in Jaffa (Yafo, the Yafo part of Tel Aviv-Yafo).

Friendship's Way is a unique organization. Its activities are too wide and complex to describe here, but here is a sentence from their information flyer: "Friendship's Way uses education as a means to promote equality and to build

positive, lasting relationships between Arabs and Jews." It is a programme which combines the practical with the philosophical.

So, what's the connection? Well, Mara contacted Beth Martin at FW, and when the Raes arrived at the centre, they were greeted by Arab and Jewish children singing "We're in the Same Boat Now"—in English, with choruses adapted into both Hebrew and Arabic especially for the occasion. When I saw the Raes a few hours later at the reception in Jerusalem, they were extremely moved and excited at the song's having shown up in such unexpected circumstances!

I include it here partly because it's a good story, but more because it's a good song. Now that it has a chorus in Hebrew and Arabic, as well as one in Spanish, which I wrote with a friend this summer for a children's concert in Spain, perhaps readers can come up with a few more—French? Ojibwé? Perhaps the thought of Arab and Jewish children singing together that they're "in the same boat now" seems especially poignant—but just think of all the other groups one can imagine learning not only to sing it, but to navigate a safe passage for all of us.

—Judith Cohen

Thanks to Bob and Arlene Rae for permission to use the score, to Vered Peer and Isranet for the photo and permission to use it, to Peter Mosher for a copy of the tape of the Yafo performance, to Beth Martin for the Hebrew and Arabic words, to George Sawa for transliterating the Arabic. to MITS for sending me the score and providing the starting point for this story.