

## CHAPTER 9

# The Sun and Moon Have Come Together: The Fourth Way, the Counterculture, and Capitol Records

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Formed in 1968, musical group The Fourth Way was among the first bands to merge rock, jazz, and non-Western musical approaches in a way that mirrored the mixed-race membership of the band—white New Zealander pianist Mike Nock, black American violinist Michael White, white American bassist Ron McClure, and black American drummer Eddie Marshall—a notable feature at the time. The band's eponymous debut and their second release, a live recording titled *The Sun and Moon Have Come Together*, were recorded in the fall of 1969. Their final recording, *Werewolf*, was a live recording of their appearance in the 1970 Montreux Jazz Festival in Switzerland. However, with the exception of a small number of dates clustered around the band's appearance in Montreux, The Fourth Way rarely performed outside of the San Francisco Bay Area, limiting their exposure.

My focus in this chapter is to think through the ways in which The Fourth Way, a relatively unknown band working in the same geographic area and within the same countercultural milieu as more famous bands associated with the hippie subculture such as the Grateful Dead, enacted these countercultural ideals even more forcefully than their more visible peers. I am interested especially with the ways in which the band dealt with inclusive notions of belonging and an interest in heterodox spiritual practices that were articulated through their genre mixtures that would bear fruit in the following decades in musical styles that would come to be known as fusion (jazz-rock/funk), world music, and new age.

As Theodore Roszak admits in his introduction to the 1995 edition of his seminal work on the 1960s' counterculture, *The Making of a Counter Culture*, initially published in 1968 as the events he described were unfolding, popular music played a vital role in its creation: "If there is one aspect of the period that I now wish had enjoyed more attention in these pages, it is the music. Music inspired and carried

the best insights of the counter culture—from folk protest ballads and songs of social significance at the outset to the acid rock that became the only way to reflect the surrealistic turn that America was to take at the climax of the Vietnam War.”<sup>1</sup> Roszak’s point about music is well taken. Music, particularly certain genres of popular music, played a significant role in the formation and expression of countercultural values and the musicians willingly played the part of heading the vanguard of a coming youth revolution. This was true of the San Francisco psychedelic rock scene from which a number of leading rock bands emerged, including the Grateful Dead, the Jefferson Airplane, Santana, Janis Joplin with Big Brother and the Holding Company, Country Joe and the Fish, Quicksilver Messenger Service, and Moby Grape. The Fourth Way, a jazz band interested in many of the same spiritual and political beliefs that motivated their rock contemporaries, is missing from this well-known history, as Roszak’s highlighting of folk song and acid rock attest.

By linking their interest in non-Western spirituality wed to an aesthetic merging jazz and rock while pursuing a commercial music career, The Fourth Way exemplified the types of contradictory impulses that motivated musicians aligned with the counterculture of the late 1960s between progressive idealism and pragmatic concerns.

### *The Sun and Moon Have Come Together*

This little-known band embodied the contradictions and tensions of the countercultural moment in two interrelated ways. First, their attempts to adhere to a modest spiritual program stood in marked contrast to their hopes for achieving financial success or at least economic stability as professional musicians. While not necessarily incompatible goals, in the San Francisco counterculture of 1968, for musicians to entertain any commercial interest was thought to irreparably tarnish loftier artistic and spiritual ideals. Second, at the time, jazz critics saw young jazz musicians’ merging of jazz and rock as a threat to efforts to establish jazz as an art music because of their view of rock as a benighted genre. Rock’s rise in this period in terms of both cultural and material capital within the broader culture further fueled jazz critics’ animus. And flowing beneath this discourse was a strong undercurrent concerned with racialized difference.

Historically, professional jazz musicians have often performed repertoire chosen primarily because of assumed audience expectations rather than personal taste or preference. Yet, while “Jelly Roll” Morton boasted about his familiarity with the European concert tradition in order to display the breadth of his musical knowledge, young jazz musicians in the late 1960s and 1970s were eagerly expressing their appreciation for rock, a genre that had replaced jazz as the center of popular music culture and, despite some rock musicians’ increasingly sophisticated efforts, remained a decidedly “low brow” genre in comparison to jazz. However, by the mid-1960s, as Bernard Gendron convincingly argues in *From Montmartre to the Mudd Club*, rock, rather than jazz, was steadily displacing the musical tastes of the literati and artistic avant-garde world. Jazz apologists continued to claim the high cultural road, insisting that in terms of musical competence and standards of excellence, jazz required a finer set of theoretical and technical “chops,” or skills, than rock.

As rock’n’roll was transformed into rock in the mid-1960s, rock musicians such as Jimi Hendrix, Eric Clapton, Jeff Beck, Keith Moon, and Steve Winwood as well as the members of bands such as the Beatles, Pink Floyd, or Yes began claiming the

title of virtuoso even as they operated within a supposedly facile commercial style of teen-oriented pop music. Moreover, despite Chuck Berry and Jimi Hendrix's looming presences and the genre's roots in black American rhythm-and-blues, rock's racialization as a white musical idiom went hand in hand with broader changes in the aesthetic and cultural divisions of the period, including rock's increasing importance in broad cultural terms, as the expression "rock opera" indicates. However, while many rock musicians held pretenses to high art legitimization, there is yet, to be sure, a Lincoln Center Institute of Rock or Funk. Indeed, that such an institution seems ludicrous indicates the continuing discrepancy between the positions jazz and rock or funk occupy within the broader culture.

Segregating black musical traditions and musicians into subordinate markets by labeling them "rhythm-and-blues" or "jazz"—or, even earlier, "race records"—did not simply foreclose institutional legitimacy, it effectively barred those traditions and musicians from the more lucrative mainstream "rock" or "pop" markets, as well. Subordinate markets are defined by their smaller distribution networks, lessened promotional support, if any, and smaller-sized benefits of any kind, including financial ones, for performers and composers. Maureen Mahon's insightful *Right to Rock* is centrally concerned with the economic and artistic price levied on black rock musicians caught within this history, and cogently ascribes rock's dominance as a cultural form as partially rooted in its "invisible" racialization as a music genre with assumed white musicians and listeners.<sup>2</sup> Fusion musicians highlighted the fact that the question was whether your music was considered part of a "tradition" or a "market" and not, as critical and fan discourse would have it, whether it was considered, at bottom, a "jazz" or a "rock" effort.

Still, by 1968, while jazz was considered "black music" in origin and in its fundamental aesthetic thrust by both black and white jazz critics, each group understood this in two distinct ways. For many white critics, the argument that jazz should be appreciated as an art music carried the implication that jazz had evolved into a deracinated and universally accessible idiom. In other words, nonblack jazz musicians could compose and perform jazz as authentically as black jazz musicians. Importantly, much of their arguments rested on the idea that jazz had risen to art status because of the adoption of formal European art music aesthetics, methodologies, and practices. It must be noted, however, that there were many white jazz critics who bemoaned the rise of jazz as art, insisting that the loss of a vital connection to popular music and vernacular culture was detrimental to the music's vigor. Black jazz critics and musicians argued that any acknowledgment regarding the art status of jazz from "legitimate" culture should be based on a historical understanding of black aesthetics without recourse to European aesthetic standards.<sup>3</sup> Black critics held disparate views on the question of whether or not nonblack jazz musicians were capable of innovating, rather than merely mimicking or, worse, appropriating "real jazz." Overall, however, the argument for jazz's artistic legitimacy was used by both black and white critics to lobby for more equitable economic relations between black musicians and predominantly white record label owners.<sup>4</sup>

Rock, on the other hand, was seen by jazz critics, both black and white, as a thoroughly commercial genre produced, performed, and consumed by white youth. The fact that the literati and intelligentsia outside of jazz had turned to rock as a legitimate cultural form—especially after the release of the Beatles's full-length concept album,

*Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Heart Club Band* in 1967—only seemed to harden the position of jazz critics and musicians toward rock.<sup>5</sup> For their part, the rock press paid little attention to the debates in jazz or the kinds of activities in which The Fourth Way were involved.<sup>6</sup>

The racialization of these two musical genres was complicated further as mainstream jazz became increasingly aligned with white middle-class audiences in direct contrast to the various strains of black nationalism voiced by avant-garde or “free jazz” artists in the late 1960s, many of whom were motivated by a desire for greater authority within jazz discourse and institutions.<sup>7</sup> Similarly, by the time of the Beatles’s invasion of America in 1964, rock had been effectively stripped of its black American roots in rhythm-and-blues and the electric blues of musicians such as Muddy Waters. This was reflected in the nominative change from “rock’n’roll” to “rock” by writers and fans of the late 1960s, particularly as the Beatles and other rock groups began borrowing techniques from experimental art music as well as non-Western musical traditions. Part of these musicians’ inclusive even eclectic aesthetic agendas was premised on challenging normative cultural hierarchies and, by implication, the assumptions linking particular racialized bodies with specific genres.

Yet, as Nadya Zimmerman details, despite the hippies’ stated ideals regarding equality of all kinds, “Organized protests for civil rights and racial integration were rarely staged in the Haight-Ashbury district. With the notable exception of African American activist-comedian Dick Gregory, the speakers and performers at the Human Be-In were white.”<sup>8</sup> The Diggers, a hippie collective, invoked the Black Panthers but kept their distance, viewing the Panthers more as romantic role models than as compatriots in a political battle for social justice. Zimmerman also notes, “It appears that the counterculture’s indirect negotiation of racial politics made it possible for a white, often racist, outlaw group [the motorcycle gang, the Hell’s Angels] to be a real presence on the streets, a black hyperracial outlaw group [the Black Panthers] to be lauded in imagery, and somewhere in between, a seemingly peace-loving, nonracist, non-participatory counterculture to thrive.”<sup>9</sup>

On November 10, 1968, Grace Slick appeared on *the Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour* in blackface, ending the Airplane’s performance with a raised fist salute. Slick contended at the time that “there weren’t any Negroes on the show and I thought the quota needed adjustment,” explicitly acknowledging the resonance the legacy of blackface minstrelsy continued to carry in mid-twentieth-century America. Trying to gain some distance from that history, Slick attempted to pass it off as a cosmetic choice.<sup>10</sup> As an emerging icon of the San Francisco hippie counterculture, Slick’s dismissive disregard for the racial, even racist, component to her actions appears defensive and disingenuous. But as noted above, the countercultural scene in the Haight-Ashbury was uncomfortable with the Black Power politics that was emerging just down the street in the Fillmore and across the Bay Bridge in Oakland. The easy adoption of blackness, though, as a gesture of an assumed solidarity undergird a public rhetoric of universal “peace, love, and happiness,” as a widely used phrase at the time indicated.

Moreover, the appropriation of non-Western, nonwhite cultural forms came with a disavowal of the “parent culture,” which dictated conformity to bourgeois norms. The appropriations didn’t stop with blackness. Richard Goldstein, reporting in the *Village Voice*, skeptically cast the San Francisco counterculture as besotted with “pop mysticism.”<sup>11</sup> Coupled to the exploration of non-Western spirituality was the use of instruments from, in particular, India. The sitar, popularized by Beatle George

Harrison, as well as other instruments from South Asia such as the tabla drums not only evoked an exotic aura for musicians and listeners alike but also reshaped approaches to the pop song. Similar to the role of the tamboura's drone, which anchors a raga performance, pedal points or modal approaches to rock songs became more prevalent. Groups such as the Butterfield Blues Band recorded albums such as *East-West* (Elektra, 1966) in which the title track, inspired by LSD, was based, as pianist Mark Naftalin explained, "on a drone [like Indian music]." Rock critic Dave Marsh admirably appraised the effort, stating, "With *East-West*, above any other extended piece of the mid-Sixties, a rock band finally achieved a version of the musical freedom that free jazz had found a few years earlier."<sup>12</sup> Again, the seemingly effortless use of non-Western, non-rock music played into countercultural ideas regarding the complicated weave of exoticist appropriation, sincere searches for meaning outside of the consumerist culture driven by corporate interests, and a quietist political stance.

There were, in fact, vital links between the San Francisco Bay Area counterculture and various Asian spiritual practices and belief systems. A 1967 concert, for example, featuring local San Francisco-based bands the Grateful Dead, Moby Grape, and Big Brother and the Holding Company as musical acts supporting the poet Allen Ginsberg and Swami Bhaktivedanta was titled "Krishna Consciousness Comes West." This was not an isolated event. Indeed, the prototype for the rock festival, 1967's Monterey Pop Festival, held at a location a little over a hundred miles south of San Francisco, not only provided a prototype for subsequent mass audience rock festivals such as Woodstock (as well as the arena rock tour), but is also notable for having every musical act agree to perform for free so that all revenues could be donated to charities.<sup>13</sup>

Studies such as Robert Ellwood's *The Sixties Spiritual Awakening* challenge the assumption that the entire decade was a deeply secularist time in North America, overly impressed by politicized students and social activists who were antagonistic to spiritual and/or religious inclinations. Ellwood argues persuasively that an important corollary to the political protests of the late 1960s was a social milieu in which traditional as well as "new" religious expression was partly constitutive. In particular, the interest in non-Christian spirituality not only indicated fissures within the counterculture but also mirrored the tensions and contradictions of predominantly secularist political activities undertaken in an increasingly spiritual moment within countercultural circles in the San Francisco Bay Area.<sup>14</sup>

Music historian Zimmerman notes, "The exotically tinged flavor of the Haight exemplified [...] everything that a Judeo-Christian-based technocracy was not. From 'ancient' astrology charts to Indian textiles, hash pipes to Celtic jewelry, Native American attire to Kamasutra-inspired sex [...] Everyday activities, such as drug-taking, listening to music, dancing, and sex, were transformed into 'mystical' quests, secular experiences into sacred adventures. This druggy, exotic sacralization of the secular was integral to the development of the San Francisco counterculture from its early days following the summer at the Red Dog Saloon in 1965."<sup>15</sup> Additionally, the Beatles's *Sgt. Pepper's* included George Harrison's Indian music- and mysticism-influenced "Within You Without You," indicating the mainstreaming of non-Western musical and spiritual practices in the popular music culture of 1968. The Fourth Way, a relatively unknown band, provided another musical sounding out of those same interests, indicating that conventional ideas about jazz and rock, cultural and musical hierarchies, and the relationship between pop music,

and by extension popular culture, and spiritual practices and ideologies were undergoing radical transformations.

### *Blues My Mind*

Boasting a legacy of nonconformity exemplified by homegrown eccentrics such as the self-proclaimed Imperial Majesty Emperor Norton I (*mé* Joshua Abraham Norton) in the nineteenth century to the bohemian culture of the Beats in the mid-twentieth century, San Francisco beckoned to the young people who flocked to the city's Haight-Ashbury district in the mid-1960s. A strong component of the hippie counterculture was a rhetorical openness to all the arts with a strong ecumenical and nonhierarchical vision that could enfold macramé alongside fine art sculpture, which sprang from a vision of egalitarianism and social norms that privileged collectivism rather than individualism.

While the hippies were largely apolitical and saw transcendence rather than engagement as a productive political methodology to enact a progressive transformation of society, activist Leftist politics was moving in another direction. Still, hippies staged protests, including stopping traffic on Haight Street to protest the tourist buses that began including a visit to "Hippie Town," and clashing with police throughout 1967. By 1968, many of the original Haight-Ashbury hippies had moved to communes throughout Northern California, the Northwest and Hawai'i, largely abandoning San Francisco.<sup>16</sup>

But the impact of the flower children's ideas about the ways in which inner, personal transformation, especially through spiritual practices of various kinds, would recalibrate mainstream politics and social convention toward progressive ends resonated beyond the Golden Gate to the rest of the world. For example, while each of the individual band members came to the band from professional jazz backgrounds, The Fourth Way's popularity would be drawn primarily from young rock audiences, which enjoyed eclectic tastes in music, thanks, in part, to the so-called free-form or progressive FM radio DJs.<sup>17</sup> The "mixed genre" lineups common to rock concerts at the time reflected this relative openness to genre mixing and eclectic music programming that cohered nicely with the inclusive ideology of the hippie counterculture. Nock remembers, "You were liable to hear bands like Cream with the [jazz vibraphonist] Gary Burton Quartet, [jazz bandleader] Sun Ra and the Grateful Dead, or The Fourth Way. There was a promoter back then called Bill Graham and he was wonderful. It was a terrifically open period."<sup>18</sup>

The Fourth Way performed in both jazz and rock venues though the majority of the band's gigs were at rock events or opening for rock acts. In fact, the band members envisioned their efforts as jazz musicians with an appreciation for rock music. However, the band did not have a vocalist, a condition that usually makes it more difficult for a band to achieve mainstream success. While Capitol Records may have been interested in exploiting interest in psychedelic bands from San Francisco in 1968—the home of the highly successful Jefferson Airplane, Santana, and the Grateful Dead, as well as critically acclaimed rock groups such as Hot Tuna, Moby Grape, and Quicksilver Messenger Service—the record label was taking some risk in signing an all-instrumental band.



But what about the glaring contradiction between stated ideals about spiritual growth, the rejection of mainstream consumerist culture, and the pursuit of major label record deals and mass audience appeal? In 1968, a telling sign appeared that Mammon was indeed encroaching on the ideals of this burgeoning youth culture. The Jefferson Airplane, one of San Francisco's most successful acid rock bands with a long history of involvement with the local hippie scene, were briefly cast as apostates when they recorded a number of radio commercials for Levi's, the denim jeans company. They weren't alone. British psychedelic band, Cream, which featured guitarist Eric Clapton, bassist Jack Bruce, and drummer Ginger Baker, recorded an advertisement for Falstaff Beer, sounding eerily like their hit, "Sunshine of Your Love."<sup>19</sup> It is no secret that the Jefferson Airplane was one of the first psychedelic bands signed to a lucrative deal with major label RCA, initiating a flood of major labels scouring the Haight in a search for other acid rock bands and motivated Capitol's signing of The Fourth Way. But it is an indication of the strange bedfellows hippie bands and corporate executives made when on the Airplane's 1969 recording, *Volunteers*, vocalist Grace Slick sang pointedly to capitalist interests, "Up against the wall, motherfuckers!" in the song, "We Can Be Together." Yet the contradiction between the stated ideals of the hippie counterculture and a leading acid rock band's calculatedly economic decision to remain aligned with the a major record label signaled the depth of the internal contradictions caught within the nexus of the counterculture and consumerism operating in the hippie subculture.<sup>20</sup>

Abbie Hoffman, writing in a letter to the *Village Voice*, saw right through the hippies' contradictions: "It summarized for me all the doubts I have about the hippie philosophy. I realize they are just doing their 'thing' but while Jefferson Airplane grooves with its thing, over one hundred workers in the Levi Strauss plant on the Tennessee-Georgia border are doing their thing, which consists of being on strike to protest deplorable working conditions."<sup>21</sup> To be fair, once Jefferson Airplane learned of the strike, they opted out of their contract and never produced another commercial again.

The Fourth Way did not enjoy the benefits of hit singles, however. How can a jazz band "sell out" if they are barely selling? On the one hand, as Nock points out, the appeal at the time for creating this electric jazz-rock-soul music blend was both individual expression and communal embrace: "I've always seen myself as a populist. Not to the extent of selling out the music, but I am very interested in sharing the music with a range of people. I think a lot of musicians, especially jazz musicians, don't even consider that. Many just want to play their music without any consideration that there might be an audience listening. To me, the audience is very much a part of it. Sure, I have my standards and what I want to get across, but there's a balance. There's nothing wrong with being populist and many great jazz players have been populists: Louis Armstrong, Miles Davis. Miles didn't do all that stuff for himself; he did it with an eye to the fact that he had an audience."<sup>22</sup>

On the other hand, there were more material concerns at play. Nock admits, "The decision to go electric was purely a pragmatic one. There were no gigs—jazz was dead—but the rock and roll clubs were springing up in the [San Francisco] Bay Area and they were hosting all kinds of music: folk, pop, rock, and even some jazz from time to time. These rooms didn't have pianos, and so you had to take your own piano. Fortunately the [Fender] Rhodes [electric piano] was being developed at the

time.”<sup>23</sup> The opportunity afforded by audiences who were more open-minded and eclectic in their tastes or by club policies dictated by market realities—it is difficult for *any* venue to stay open solely as a folk or jazz club—allowed The Fourth Way to develop a loyal audience. It was their misfortune that they weren’t able to explore the possibilities beyond the San Francisco Bay Area for the most part and for the failure by Capitol to promote them aggressively beyond their local fan base.

### *The Fourth Way*

Mike Nock, cofounder of The Fourth Way, arrived in San Francisco by way of a long stint in New York City. Like many jazz aspirants from outside of the United States at the time, Nock arrived in the United States by way of a scholarship from the Berklee School of Music in Boston. Rather than devoting itself to the Western concert music tradition, Berklee was one of the first music conservatories dedicated to jazz and other popular music styles. Though Nock left Berklee after a year, he had formed connections that would prove consequential. Through Margaret Chaloff, a renowned piano teacher, whose students included Red Garland, Keith Jarrett, and Steve Kuhn, Nock was introduced to a small group of avant-garde jazz musicians who were interested in experimental music including saxophonist Sam Rivers and drummer Tony Williams.

Their discussions and sessions with the Boston Improvisational Ensemble, a “new music” avant-garde art music group, familiarized Nock with many of the current experimental concepts being shaped in and out of jazz at the time and would influence the direction of his playing. While he padded out his resume with straight-ahead jazz gigs, Nock maintained that the exploratory sessions with Rivers and Williams “really influenced me . . . Conceptually, it was definitely way ahead of most of the music I came across later . . . when I played with other people I was pretty blasé about it; they were gigs, it was fun to play, but it wasn’t the same thing as what I had been experiencing playing with [Rivers and Williams], where it was: ‘Get into it! Explore!’”<sup>24</sup>

Eventually, Nock would work in a variety of bands, including under the leadership of multi-instrumentalist Yusef Lateef, the Count’s Rock Band (another early fusion band led by saxophonist Steve Marcus), and the musician who would introduce him to his fellow bandmates in The Fourth Way, tenor saxophonist John Handy. Handy had been a member of bassist Charles Mingus’s band in the late 1950s but moved to San Francisco on his departure from Mingus’s group. Handy’s own group achieved visibility when his debut recording for the Columbia record label of the band’s live performance at the Monterey Jazz Festival in 1965 garnered two Grammy nominations for the two songs that comprise the entirety of the album. Handy’s group featured a young violinist named Michael White, who was incorporating elements of the “new thing” (free jazz) into his playing and had achieved a highly individualized sound. When Handy received the opportunity to perform at the Nice jazz festival in France in 1967, he needed a pianist and offered Nock the piano chair.

In April 1968, the Handy quintet recorded in New York at a Columbia Records recording studio nicknamed The Church due to the building’s origin as a Presbyterian church. Located in the Lower East Side of New York City, members of the mixed-race ensemble would encounter various problems from the mundane—the failure to get cab rides until the white band members hailed a cab on their own with the rest



of the group quickly running into the cab before the cab driver could protest—to the dangerous—Nock had been robbed so often that it was one of the reasons he had finally decided to leave New York for the West Coast. When he was offered a permanent position in Handy's band after the saxophonist was impressed with his performance in Nice, Nock did not hesitate to be nearer his new bandleader.

Importantly, Handy's group had crossed over from an exclusively jazz audience, which, by the late 1960s, tended to be middle-aged, to a younger crowd that favored rock, performing at the Avalon Ballroom and the Fillmore Auditorium as supporting acts for rock groups such as the Grateful Dead, exposing them to the larger rock audiences who would become an important core of The Fourth Way's audience and foreshadowing the moves the band would initiate as one of the first jazz-rock fusion groups. White had quit the Handy group prior to Nock's involvement but was persuaded to rejoin when Nock "talked John [Handy] and Michael into playing back together again because [Nock] also had the idea of getting a separate band with Michael, which of course became The Fourth Way."<sup>25</sup> Delighted to be working with Nock again, White soon joined the pianist in informal duets at Nock's home when not rehearsing or performing with Handy's quintet.

Born in Houston, Texas, but raised primarily in Oakland, California, Michael White picked up the violin when he was nine years old. White had performed with a number of jazz artists, including pianist McCoy Tyner and alto saxophonist Eric Dolphy, among others, but became known through his association with Handy, particularly because of his work on the Monterey Jazz Festival recording. Prior to this, White had spent time studying music at Columbia University and, later, performing for two years in Sun Ra's Arkestra. Despite being a cofounder of Fourth Way, however, White was forced to amplify his violin—a prospect that he was not entirely comfortable with and would contribute to his leaving the band later. Ironically, White's commitment to playing acoustically had already been compromised with Handy, which had prompted his earlier leave.

There was an attraction beyond the music that energized The Fourth Way's early efforts. White had been interested in the relationship between music and spirituality, as well, and his interest would continue in his solo career post-The Fourth Way. Nock and White's mutual interest in alternative harmonic schemes as well as non-swing rhythms gave their music an unconventional sound—particularly for a jazz band at the time—and indicated the band's growing distance from jazz. The way in which the band members soloed, however, followed the contours of a jazz musician's solo rather than the path a rock musician might take by using, for example, the extended harmonic vocabulary developed in bebop and post-bop jazz.

Undoubtedly, however, like their rock counterparts, The Fourth Way was animated by the interest in Eastern religions and non-Christian spirituality that led the countercultural scene in the San Francisco Bay Area to focus on individualist metaphysical transcendence rather than collective material or political concerns. In fact, the band's name was not only inspired by pianist Nock's interest in G. I. Gurdjieff and P. D. Ouspensky but also reflected violinist White's shared if varied interest in spiritual and philosophical matters. Gurdjieff had described his teachings as the Fourth Way, a path distinct from other spiritual practices he described as way of the fakir, the monk, and the yogi.

The liner notes to *The Fourth Way's* debut recording quoted Ouspensky: “The sense of four-dimensional space/Spatial sensation of time/The return to the law inside oneself/A New Conscience/The realization of oneself as an independent unit/The commencement of self-consciousness/Ecstatic states/Transitions to cosmic consciousness.”<sup>26</sup> Fittingly, Gurdjieff taught that music and movement was integral to achieving spiritual enlightenment, composing and performing music alone and in collaboration with Russian composer, Thomas de Hartmann. De Hartmann emphasized Gurdjieff’s idea, stating, “After the work of [Gurdjieff], we can understand [the role of music in spiritual practice] more, we can understand it better, that music helps to concentrate oneself, to bring oneself to an inner state when we can assume the greatest possible emanations. That is why music is just the thing which helps you to see higher.”<sup>27</sup> Nock and White, in particular, believed that their music could be pressed into the service of spiritual goals. Nock acknowledged the link between spiritual and musical ideas that were fundamental to the band: “The name came about because I had an interest in Gurdjieff’s ideas and liked the title *The Fourth Way* for many reasons including the fact I’d been interested in pursuing the idea of quartal harmony for several years, as opposed to tertiary based harmony. Michael White also had similar leanings.”<sup>28</sup>

Drummer Marshall, however, while acknowledging that Nock conceived the band as invested with a spiritual agenda, gently giped his former bandmate: “There was no one else like him in the band. Mike was always reading these weird philosophers, and he named the group *The Fourth Way*. None of us even knew what he was talking about for years.”<sup>29</sup> Marshall’s hesitancy to claim the “weird philosophers” as possible touchstones for the band’s music speaks to the different positions found within the counterculture. Unlike the seamless “youth movement” that the mainstream press described and would eventually lampoon, the band members reflected the patchwork of ideological persuasions caught under the “youth movement/1960s counterculture” quilt, a heterogeneity that is particularly salient when thinking in the context of the hothouse of countercultural activities and organizations in the San Francisco Bay Area at the time. Hippies and countercultural types were a relatively small segment of the youth population in 1968, and people moved in and out of countercultural allegiances, spaces, and activities.<sup>30</sup>

In fact, *The Fourth Way* also claimed influences from various indigenous and Afrodiasporic musical traditions filtered primarily by jazz performance and practice routines, though the members of *The Fourth Way* never claimed to be trained in or attempted performing authentic folk or indigenous music traditions. Indeed, while Nock was the primary composer as well as the band’s musical director, he acknowledges that much of the music achieved its final form through the live interactions among the four musicians—a practice George Lewis termed *Afrological* to indicate the reliance on musical priorities formed under Afrodiasporic conditions of displacement and dispersal.<sup>31</sup>

The band’s merging of jazz and rock contested the particular racialization of jazz and rock by musically sounding out the engagement of racial difference. Indeed, by crafting an aesthetic out of “seemingly antagonistic relationships as non-contradictory oppositions,” *The Fourth Way* challenged the notion of an oppositional white and black “sounding world” as well as a “high” and “low” cultural hierarchy, musically performing the countercultural ideals regarding racial inclusion and universal humanism band members espoused more explicitly in liner notes and interviews.<sup>32</sup>

By pursuing an interest in popular music, The Fourth Way challenged both mainstream and free jazz artists, who explicitly argued that their music be considered high art, by enacting a populist rather than an elitist aesthetic program. That The Fourth Way embarked on an aesthetic rather than an explicitly political agenda echoes Zimmerman's observation that the hippie counterculture "[exemplified] how the counterculture appropriated the antiofficial, outlaw sensibility of the [Black] Panthers, while remaining one step removed from participatory racial politics."<sup>33</sup>

But the racial politics of the day were unavoidable and played a role in the band's reception as it ran into the black power politics of the time. Nock: "The fact that we were a mixed [race] band was a positive, but for some people it was a negative; maybe some black promoters, or some young kids saying, 'These guys [Marshall and White] shouldn't be playing with these honkies.' That happened. The reverse wouldn't have happened, I don't think."<sup>34</sup> Nock implies that some young black listeners criticized the two black musicians for playing in a mixed-race band but that young white listeners did not mind or at least were not vocal about any discomfort with the racial makeup of the ensemble. But Nock is forgetting that white fascination with blackness, especially as expressed through a love of black music, is connected to white fans' abilities to enter and exit the space of black music in ways that are impossible for blacks. As Baraka keenly observed, whites can flow more easily from a bohemian lifestyle based on black culture by simply exchanging their denim for suits, but black individuals are always black—a suit does little to hide the fact of black skin.<sup>35</sup>

Nock's comment also ignores the long history of the racialization of music genres that help to dictate the kind of musicians who are deemed authentic or authoritative in a specific genre. This ideological assumption—certain musicians perform certain kinds of music more authentically or legitimately than other kinds of musicians—constrains both audiences and musicians and often leads to musicians feeling forced to comply with those expectations or suffer the economic liabilities of following their personal aesthetic interests. Black musicians, in particular, have suffered disproportionately, especially if one considers how much of the twentieth and twenty-first century popular music enjoys deep African American roots.

This situation did not necessarily preclude musicians from interacting across the color line—all the stories about black, white, and Latin music artists jamming in after-hours joints bear repeating here—but it had a serious impact on black- and brown-skinned musicians' professional lives where those sort of mixtures were suppressed in public performance spaces, record company contracts, and advertising and distribution networks, which effectively foreclosed their equal participation in the mainstream pop music market. While critics disparage the mainstream pop music market, musicians (black or white) often seek its higher monetary rewards foregoing critics' less material praise and acclaim as part of the price of mass popularity. The Fourth Way grappled with the racialized difference embedded within musical discourse that would lead to the generic rupture jazz critics would eventually dub somewhat dismissively as "fusion" or "jazz rock."

However, in 1968, no one had heard of "fusion music" yet. The worlds of jazz and rock were moving along separate if sometimes parallel paths. Musicians, critics, and fans maintained that there were a number of key differences between the two genres. While jazz record sales had never been huge (and, ironically, fusion

musicians would post the highest sales for nominal jazz recordings in the early 1970s (though their sales remained far below those for rock and pop recordings), at least jazz music was considered art music. Jazz observers and musicians worried over the notion that rock music would eventually be taken seriously as art—and evaluated higher than jazz by some—as not only a grossly mistaken aesthetic evaluation but also as an economic threat. Worse yet, fusion allowed rock musicians to initiate forays into jazz music. Jazz observers feared that rock musicians' participation diluted the decades of struggle for legitimacy by black artists for their music.

It did not help that many young fusion musicians and their audiences were white. In a time of Black Power politics and an increasing attention to the politics of identity, the tensions between jazz musicians and rock musicians for consumer attention was racialized, particularly in the politicized circles of many free jazz and mainstream jazz performers, both white and black. Fusion, then, was a way to express the mixture of these two genres as compatible rather than incommensurable. It is in this light that I wish to turn to the music of *The Fourth Way*.

### *Everyman's Your Brother*

"Everyman's Your Brother," the opening track to *The Fourth Way*'s debut recording, is emblematic of the ideals the group would espouse over its short career. The song title plays on the words "every man" and "Everyman" suggesting that not only could every man be your brother but that he was also an ordinary person. Importantly, linking "every man" to the category of "Everyman" spoke to a desire to transcend the types of differences, such as race or class, which have often been used to separate rather than join individuals and groups across those differences. This notion of fusing difference in this way is represented musically by Marshall's subtle interweaving within the eight-measure drum intro of rock's "straight 8ths" and a funky backbeat—a meeting of a "white" genre and a "black" one, both "Everyman," rather than art, musical genres. Once McClure's electric bass enters with a funky walking line, Marshall uses the bass drum to accent on the pulse while maintaining the rock feel on an open snare drum. In the third section of the composition, the rhythm becomes much more rock-oriented. This introductory track immediately signals the band's departure from mainstream jazz and nearer, in many ways, to rock with an arrangement that highlights Nock's electric piano solo in a modern rock setting.

The main theme is performed in unison by the electric piano and violin. A chorus or interlude section between two passes through the "head," or song structure, shifts to a more straightforward rock pattern with the bass sounding evenly on the pulse. The solo section as a whole has the driving yet static feel of a rock rave-up, especially as Marshall's drumming increases in intensity, and the track sounds like it would have been a great song to experience live. White's violin sounds like a small string section due to the doubling on bowed bass McClure provides (McClure performs on both electric and acoustic bass on this track) as they repeat the V-IV-I harmonic progression underneath Nock's solo. After Nock's solo, the band returns to the main theme, performing the complete form before fading out on the repetition of the final riff while slowing the tempo of the composition, ending with an upward glissando flourish of Nock's electric piano.<sup>36</sup>

The music *is* Everyman's music: concise riffing, blues-tinged soloing, alternately funky and rocking bass and drum cross-rhythms that lock onto a groove throughout the entire track, giving the entire song an overlaying coherence and accessibility. Yet given the racialization of genres—jazz is a black American musical form, rock is seen as a genre produced by white musicians for white audiences—the merging of the two was roundly dismissed by many jazz critics at the time as a regrettable attempt to gain younger audiences and larger record sales. But for young musicians such as Nock, White, Marshall, and McClure, this was a logical “next step.” They didn't see jazz and rock as having hopelessly incompatible aesthetics. They blended the supposed incommensurable musical worlds of jazz and rock into what became known as jazz-rock or fusion music by late 1970 because, unlike many of their jazz peers, they respected and enjoyed rock as much as jazz, unapologetically utilizing elements from rock that not only challenged but often threatened to overwhelm any jazz features. The elements that help identify early fusion are present: the electric instrumentation, including an amplified acoustic violin; the interweaving of rock, soul, and jazz rhythms; the experimental flourishes, especially in terms of form and timbre; and the creation and reception of this music in venues favored by young rock audiences as well as at jazz clubs.

### Conclusion

While the band members espoused spiritual aims in conjunction with their music, Nock was clearly excited by the prospect of an “outrageous sum of money” from a contract with Capitol Records. That he was not alone in the dialectical struggle between spiritual belief and material necessity can be inferred by Michael White's recruitment by another record company, Impulse, that was successful, in part, by promising to focus on making White a solo star, thereby effectively breaking up the band. Still, while it was active, The Fourth Way combined the spiritual and the material to create a music that is transcendent as well as grooving, ethereal yet grounded.

It may matter little that the members of the band have all performed and recorded with other leading jazz musicians including John Abercrombie, Toshiko Akiyoshi, Michael Brecker, Randy Brecker, Kenny Burrell, Jack DeJohnette, Al Foster, Stan Getz, Eddie Gomez, Dexter Gordon, John Handy, Billy Hart, Joe Henderson, Freddie Hubbard, Ahmad Jamal, Rahsaan Roland Kirk, John Klemmer, Lee Konitz, Yusef Lateef, Dave Liebman, Charles Lloyd, Bobby McFerrin, Art Pepper, Michel Petrucciani, John Scofield, and Archie Shepp.<sup>37</sup> In the end, The Fourth Way was eclipsed by the commercial imperatives signaled by White's departure from the band. Ironically, the release of Miles Davis's *Bitches Brew* announced the arrival of fusion to the larger jazz and popular music world just as The Fourth Way were breaking up. Davis, in taking young musicians' genre-merging underground style “above ground” ended up being credited by jazz critics with transforming jazz in the process and relegating bands that had already been playing with jazz and rock such as The Fourth Way to the historical dustbin. Like the hippies who left the Haight once mass popularity and commercialism sullied the original ideals of an often unorganized and inchoate movement, The Fourth Way folded under the contradictions that underlay the divided concern between spirituality and selling records

and concert tickets. Such tensions are often caricatured in popular music discourse as a face-off between Woodstock and Altamont, the Janus-faced visions of the hippie counterculture that failed to recognize its own entanglements with capitalism, bourgeois notions of the individual, and the legacies of the systemic differentials of power between individuals and institutions.

The Fourth Way example can be used, perhaps, to argue that these tensions and contradictions may have been insurmountable. Still, as Herbert Marcuse declared in *The Aesthetic Dimension*, “Inasmuch as art preserves, with the promise of happiness, the memory of the goals that failed, it can enter, as a ‘regulative idea,’ the desperate struggle for changing the world. Against all fetishism of the productive forces, against the continued enslavement of individuals by the objective conditions (which remain those of domination), art represents the ultimate goal of all revolutions: the freedom and happiness of the individual.”<sup>38</sup> In this light, The Fourth Way “entered as a regulative idea in the desperate struggle for changing the world” and like many others who shared the band’s high ideals and that motivated many of the events of 1968, these musicians would find that their ideals would continue to challenge the reactionary forces, material concerns, and political realignments of the following decade.

### Notes

1. Theodore Roszak, *The Making of a Counter Culture*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995 [1968]), xxxiv.
2. Maureen Mahon, *Right to Rock: The Black Rock Coalition and the Cultural Politics of Race* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004).
3. An important work that held that jazz had developed a growing sophistication through an engagement with European art music was written by composer and writer Gunther Schuller, *Early Jazz: Its Roots and Development* (NY and London: Oxford University Press, 1968). For a defense of jazz as a black art form, see LeRoi Jones (Amiri Baraka), *Blues People: Negro Music in White America* (NY: William Morrow and Company, 1963).
4. For a considered view of the position of white criticism, see Marshall Stearns, *The Story of Jazz* (NY: Oxford University Press, 1956). For a polemical view of the situation in the late 1960s from a black perspective, see Amiri Baraka (writing as LeRoi Jones), *Blues People* (NY: William Morrow and Company, 1963). For a study of free jazz musicians, see David Such, *Avant-garde Jazz Musicians: Performing “Out There”* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1993) and Valerie Wilmer, *As Serious as Your Life: John Coltrane and Beyond* (London: Serpent’s Tail, 1992 [1977]).  
For a cogent study of the history of jazz discourse with regard to its status as art, see Paul Lopes, *The Rise of a Jazz Art World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
5. An indication of the gravity of *Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band* was indicated by the fact that it was the first rock album to include its lyrics, which were printed on the inside of the gatefold sleeve. This, the Beatles seemed to be asserting, was no mere pop recording. For an indication of the growing acknowledgment about rock’s increasing sophistication by the intelligentsia, see Brandeis art history professor Carl Belz’s 1969 book, *The Story of Rock* (NY: Oxford University Press, 1972).
6. Even when fusion became highly visible and commercially viable, the rock press had little interest in the music beyond Miles Davis’s *Bitches Brew* (Columbia Records, 1970) and the Mahavishnu Orchestra.



7. See, for example, Amiri Baraka (writing as LeRoi Jones), *Blues People: The Negro Experience in White America and the Music That Developed From It* and, for jazz musicians' views that are more contemporaneous with the events described in the text, see drummer Art Taylor's book of interviews conducted between 1968 and 1972 with over two hundred jazz artists speaking directly to this issue in *Notes and Tones: Musician-to-Musician Interviews* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1993 [1977]).
8. Zimmerman, 29.
9. Zimmerman, 35.
10. Slick is quoted in Patrick Burke, "Tear Down the Walls: Jefferson Airplane, Race, and Revolutionary Rhetoric in 1960s rock," 62.
11. Quoted in Zimmerman, 60.
12. Marsh's notes can be found on *East-West Live*, a recording keyboardist Naftalin released on his *Winner* label in 1996.
13. According to the IMDB (Internet Movie Database) entry on the Monterey Pop festival, the lone exception was the \$3,000 fee paid to Indian sitar master, Ravi Shankar. According to the webpage, "When John Phillips and Lou Adler took over the promotion of the festival from the original promoters, they decided to honor Shankar's original contract."  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monterey\\_Pop\\_Festival](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monterey_Pop_Festival) (accessed March 10, 2010).  
 Moreover, according to the website, "Grateful Dead Time Capsule," the Grateful Dead "protested the commercialism of the event by setting up their own stage with 'borrowed' equipment, and refused to sign a release for the documentary film."  
<http://www.dead101.com/1195.htm> (accessed March 10, 2010).
14. Besides Ellwood, see Ronald B. Flowers's *Religion in Strange Times: the 1960s and 1970s* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1984).
15. Zimmerman, 58.
16. For a perspective from an ex-hippie "insider," see Charles Perry's *The Haight-Ashbury: A History* (New York: Wenner Books, 2005). While somewhat nostalgic in tone and skewed to Perry's subjective experience of the years he covers, 1965–1968, the text is hampered somewhat by its dry litany of names and dates at the beginning. The text reveals a bit more about the sense of the times when Perry inserts his journal entries from 1967 in the middle of the text but, again, it is a highly subjective view. There is also Barry Miles's *Hippie* (London: Sterling Press, 2005), an oversized "coffee table" book that is primarily a photo-documentary of the period. However, Miles does provide text that contextualizes the images and reports on the global nature of the movement rather than solely focusing on San Francisco.
17. For more on the impact of FM radio in the 1970s, see Richard Neer, *FM: The Rise and Fall of Rock Radio* (New York: Random House-Villard Press, 2001). For a broader survey of rock radio, see Marc Fisher, *Something in the Air: Radio, Rock, and the Revolution That Shaped a Generation* (New York: Random House, 2007).
18. Meehan, 113–114. For more on Bill Graham, see *Bill Graham Presents: My Life inside Rock and Out* (New York: Da Capo Press, 2004).
19. Readers can hear the Cream advertisement on the website, "PowerPop: Annals of Late Capitalism": [http://powerpop.blogspot.com/2012/10/annals-of-late-capitalism-special-this\\_17.html](http://powerpop.blogspot.com/2012/10/annals-of-late-capitalism-special-this_17.html)  
 The Jefferson Airplane advertisement can be heard here:  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gw0C5Sga6So>
20. For a perhaps jaundiced view of the contradiction between revolutionary rhetoric and commercial interests that was inherent in the aspirations of rock musicians in this time period, see Peter Doggett, *There's a Riot Going On: Revolutionaries, Rock Stars, and the*

- Rise and Fall of 1960s Counter-Culture* (London and New York: Canongate Books US, 2009).
21. Quoted in Jeff Tamarkin, "Jefferson Airplane: The Summer of Haight," *Mojo* April 2003. Accessed online at [rocksbackpages.com](http://rocksbackpages.com): Jefferson Airplane/2003/Jeff Tamarkin/Mojo/Jefferson Airplane: The Summer Of Haight/12/08/2012 04:51:17/http://www.rocksbackpages.com/article.html?ArticleID=19203 (accessed October 7, 2012).
  22. Meehan, 183.
  23. Meehan, 125.
  24. Meehan, 68.
  25. Meehan, 112.
  26. *The Fourth Way*, liner notes (Capitol ST-317, 1969).
  27. Thomas de Hartmann discussing the role of music in Gurdjieff's teachings on the recording, *The Music of Gurdjieff/de Hartmann* (New York: G-H Records, 1971).
  28. Personal communication, January 31, 2012.
  29. Meehan, 120.
  30. Besides the Charles Perry and Barry Miles books cited in note 7, see *Imagine Nation: The American Counterculture of the 1960s and '70s*, edited by Peter Braunstein and Michael William Doyle, for more on the fluidity of participation within the counterculture.
  31. See George Lewis, "Improvised Music after 1950: Afrological and Eurological Perspectives" *Black Music Research Journal* v22 Supplement: Best of BMRJ (2002; originally published in *BMRJ* v16 n1 [1996]): 214–246.
  32. Angela Davis, *Blues Legacies and Black Feminism: Getrude "Ma" Rainey, Bessie Smith, and Billie Holiday* (New York: Random House-Vintage, 1998), xv.
  33. Zimmerman, 33.
  34. Meehan, 153.
  35. See Baraka, *Blues People*.
  36. If you listen closely to the entire fadeout, you will hear the band closing the song by slowing down on the final riff of the A section, performing in an increasingly "square" manner before the song ends in a final flourish with an upward glissando on the electric piano.
  37. Tragically, Marshall died in 2011 from a heart attack at the age of 73, as reported in the *San Francisco Chronicle* (Wednesday, September 14, 2011), available here: <<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2011/09/13/BAE21L3EDP.DTL>>
  38. Marcuse, 69.