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Bio information: **SÃO PAULO UNDERGROUND**

Title: **BEIJA FLORS VELHO E SUJO** (Cuneiform Rune 359) Format: CD / LP / DIGITAL

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FILE UNDER: JAZZ / TROPICALIA / ELECTRONIC / EXPERIMENTAL

São Paulo Underground isn't just an international musical conspiracy. It's an electronica-laced Tropicalia funhouse, a secret passage between Chicago's volatile avant garde jazz scene and Brazil's teeming creative capital, an intoxicating state of mind where **Sun Ra** lays down in a field of giant poppies with **Ol' Dirty Bastard** to debate whether the Wizard of Oz is full of juke or jive.

Featuring Chicago improv maestro **Rob Mazurek** on cornet, harmonium and various effects, and São Paulo's **Guilherme Granado** on keyboards, synths, sampler and vocals, and **Mauricio Takara** on percussion, cavaquinho and electronics, SPU delivers its fourth revelatory album *Beija Flors Velho E Sujo*. Slated for release on June 4, the album is SPU's second album for **Cuneiform** (Mazurek's new label **Infinity Dogs Records** is co-releasing the "Beija Flors" LP with Cuneiform).

In its latest incarnation, SPU is a power trio and a post-modern orchestra rolled into one, marked by glistening sonic textures, seductive electronica beats, unabashedly beautiful melodies, an expansive improvisational palette and fiercely gleeful interplay. A potent program of new material honed during a 2012 North American tour, "Beija Flors" captures an ensemble hitting a fierce creative stride. Ecstatic, roiling and utterly unpredictable, the music flows from three distinct musical personalities united by "the idea of infinite love, the idea of breaking through to the other side through sonic power and beauty," says Mazurek, a veteran disrupter of genre conventions.

Rather than stretching out for extended improvisational flights, the trio delivers a series of brief blasts, each brimming with musical incident. "Beija Flors" explodes from the first track with the audacious "Ol' Dirty Hummingbird," an uproarious, disorienting free for all that opens up to reveal hidden depths, with a series of stately processions led by muted cornet and ambient synth. As the piece mysteriously circles back to the beginning, hinting at infinite returns, the trio reveals its trickster heart, "a real tribute to the master Ol' Dirty Bastard," Mazurek says.

SPU offers a loving embrace of another inscrutable sonic explorer with "ArNus NusAr," a slow accumulation of celestial sounds that quickly attain self-sustaining gravitational force. The album's longest track is a spiraling episodic journey that gradually segues into **Harold Arlen**'s immortal theme of dreamy, utopian displacement, "Somewhere Over the Rainbow," a development as surprising as it is through-the-looking-glass appropriate.

The celebratory "Evetch," a brief Carnival theme powered by Takara's supple, twangy cavaquinho, is a booty shake in honor of the powerhouse Bahian axé star **Ivete Sangalo**, "an absolute de-construction and re-fitting of what is possible when a melody is let loose with tigers hot on the trail," Mazurek says.

"Basilio's Crazy Wedding Song," a swaggering tune conceived for the director of Sardinia's Santa Anna Arressi Jazz Festival, surges with fecund energy. The tune crests with "a joyous rhythm that could be straight out of a Mickey Spillane story if it took place on an a tropical island in Nowheresville," Mazurek says. The album roars to a close with "Taking Back the Sea is No Easy Task," a piece that bucks, snorts, and gallops "over the side of an abyss that SPU thrives on," Mazurek says. "It's the constant idea of beauty and de-composition in the most beautiful of ways, like an African violet making love to a coca leaf."

The São Paulo Underground was born in the first year of Mazurek's long Brazilian sojourn, when he met Takara, the group's co-founder. Built upon their duo, SPU released its mindbending debut with 2006's *Sauna Um Dois Tres* (Aesthetics Records), a session that established the ensemble as a singular São Paulo/Chicago axis, with contributions by **Hurtmold**, **Marcos Axe**, **Tiago Mesquita**, **Wayne Montana**, **Damon Locks**, **Josh Abrams**, and **Chad Taylor**. Following up with 2008's *Principle of Intrusive Relationships* (Aesthetics Records), the band expanded to a quartet with Guilherme Granado and drummer **Richard Ribeiro**. By the time the group recorded its 2011 Cuneiform debut *Três Cabeças Loucuras*, Ribeiro was gone and SPU took its present form as an expansive trio.

Dauntless sonic explorers, SPU continues a relentless search into the mysteries of sound. "Sound has such potential, and needs to be split, cracked, slammed, caressed, kissed, sunk, buried, catapulted into new dimensions in order to begin a dialogue of the universes," Mazurek says. "What is hidden is more powerful sometimes than what is actually heard, the energy accumulated over time and thought and action. The power for the sound comes through when you take the simple particle of the thing and radically transform it through beauty and noise and time and everything between to project flocks of birds into the blue sky."

For more information on São Paulo Underground, see:
www.robmazurek.com - www.cuneiformrecords.com

Rob Mazurek on São Paulo Underground's *Beija Flors Velho E Sujo*

Cuneiform asked Rob Mazurek to send us some thoughts about São Paulo Underground's new album. Here's what he said:

The new São Paulo Underground Record is called *Beija Flors Velho E Sujo*... a kind of shout to 'Ol Dirty Bastard, the Wizard of Oz and the great visionary Sun Ra. The idea of infinite love, the idea of breaking through to the other side of a thing through sonic power and beauty. Equal parts melody, noise, harmony both static and moving, rhythm both propelled and cracked, this is the 4th recording of a special triangle of humans that intensifies and grows with time. The new and ever shifting Novo Tropicalia and Universal love projecting bio-tech SOUND machine SPU.

Mauricio Takara's slamming rhythmic idea on the opening track "Ol' Dirty Hummingbird" is like initiation rites to jungle Illuminati... with Granado's stealth left hand laying down the bottom and Mazurek licking the sky with silver spirals of sound it juts in and out of alternate realities straight from a Philip K. Dick novel before snapping into a soothing structure of synths and muted cornet meant to induce a kind of tribal buzz before heading straight to the land of psychedelic string orchestra from Mars, building to the climax of the coda with its backwards sounds and electronic noise drums and hint of beginnings of rhythms and time. A real tribute to the master 'Ol Dirty Bastard.

"Into the Rising Sun" is a song of beauty and love. Like on Leblon Beach in Rio transported to the mangled ports of Manaus and long boarding it on the perfect wave on the island of Florianopolis, the song is the new Tropicalia reversed. Melody and rhythm in perfect non-harmony, touching the hearts of many.

"Arnus NusAr" is our tribute to the great mystic of sound and idea, Sun Ra... an egyptian bass line out-lines the trip to the mother star Sirius. Cracked sun and lightning strike all around in slow motion. An improvised dance of life and death towards the total re-claim of the universal law of compassion and chaos. This song structure builds like cumulous clouds on a forgotten planet and pushes us into the dimension of time travel and tele-transportation and before you look up you are definitely not in Kansas any more! And as the theme of "Over the Rainbow" comes wafting in, yet another transference of energy has taken place and you are in the mountains of Granada Spain in a tiny club where Granado and Mazurek accompanied by a classical pianist of some renown played this theme song of the Wizard of Oz, to crying emotional humans, as we lost Takara and Ribiero in an embarrassing situation at border control in Madrid, where Takara and Ribiero were put in a kind of airport jail and deported for no fucking reason at all back to Brazil before a São Paulo Underground tour in Spain. This song was Granado's and Mazurek's secret communicating device to our friends deported that all would be all right. We will finish the tour and meet in Verona Italy and experience the power of the 4 again. This is also a song that is close to the heart of Takara... as we learned after the recording that 2 of his beloved family members who recently passed away requested this song for there funeral rights. The treatment of "Over the Rainbow" in this recording also harks back to the masterpiece recording of Milton Nascimento's *Milagre Dos Peixes*, the part where the pianist in a bar is trying to be heard over the din of forks and knives and clanking bottles and glasses....

SOUND has such potential, and needs to be split, cracked, slammed, caressed, kissed, sunk, buried, catapulted into new dimensions in order to begin a dialogue of the universes. What is hidden is more powerful sometimes than what is actually heard... the power of *Beija Flors* comes from the underneathness of the thing... the energy accumulated over time and thought and action...the power for the SOUND comes through when you take the simple particle of the thing and radically transform it through beauty and noise and time and everything between to project flocks of birds into the blue sky. The sun catches these images, these SOUNDS these feelings and the universe responds... Sound and image should be lovers...

The potential to fly

"Evetch", a glorious number that could be a melody straight from Carnival time, is a shout out to the great Brazilian singer performer Ivete Sangalo. An absolute de-construction and re-fitting of what is possible when a melody is let loose with tigers hot on the trail. You wonder if the tigers will catch the melody and turn it into mince meat or if the tigers fly upward into a new dimension specifically designed to keep in check and protect the imagination. In Brazil the imagination soars and the feeling of warm shadows falls gently on the face and you are confronted with a kind of duality of time that could only be described as a scene from the Rio Negro... sitting on a small boat and petting the giant heads of the pink dolphins that habitat those magical waters, while imagining an electric eel orchestra below the soft waves.

"Six Handed Casio" is a number of distinction as the flock of birds with thrown stone scenario. A real live feel on this one with cut sound from studio and a performance in Baltimore Maryland.

All the songs on *Beija Flor* ... were devised, played, destroyed, caressed on a 20 show tour of the US and Canada in 2012 and then recorded for this 4th edition of SPU.

"The Love I Feel For You Is More Real Than Ever" was written for Mazurek's NOW wife... originally conceived as a ballad for lovers, this became the wedding song and love poem for his marriage to Brittany Catherine Berndtson on the island of Sardinia Italy August 30 2012. Mauricio Takara was best man and Gulherme Granada was bridesmaid respectively for this wonderful occasion.

"Basilio's Crazy Wedding Song" is a composition for the eclectic crazy Festival director Basilio, who has been programming the Santa Anna Arressi jazz Festival in Sardinia for many years. SPU had the pleasure of performing there in 2012. The song projects a joyous rhythm that could be straight out of a Mickey Spilane story if it took place on an a tropical island in nowheresville... the melodic and bass structure is solid as granite.

"A Arvore de Cereja E Ausente" is a calming before the last storm and is a shout out to both Don Cherry and also Brittany Catherine Berndtson's deceased grandmother's cherry tree. Takara's mysterious Cavaquinho has a gamelan type feeling to it and along with Granado's sampler and Mazurek's harmonium, create a cloud of sound and passion that could only be described as tangy and sweet at the same time. Kind of like the Romeo and Juliet, which in Brazil is Guava and mild cheese on top. mmmm

"Taking Back the Sea is No Easy Task"... is absolutely true! And this song proves it! Equal parts melody, noise, rhythm and non rhythm... we are taken on a voyage which will most likely end in disaster. it is this jumping over the side of an abyss that SPU thrives on... the constant idea of beauty and de-composition... in the most beautiful of ways, like an African Violet making love to a coca leaf.

Mazurek, Takara and Granado have been playing together as SPU for almost 10 years...this recording, the 4th in the cannon is a continuation of the idea of TOTAL SOUND, MODERN TROPICALIA, EXTREME MUSIQUE CONCRETE, UNIVERSAL HARMONIES, MELODIC BLISS and Extraordinary tri-feeling human interaction through the medium of sound and emotion.

- Rob Mazurek, April 2013

BIOGRAPHIES

ROB MAZUREK

A force on Chicago's singularly inventive sound scene for two decades, Mazurek is an intrepid sonic explorer eager to investigate new configurations. From his variable Chicago Underground units (duo, trio, quartet, and orchestra) to the Exploding Star Orchestra, Starlicker and the Pulsar Quartet, he's mastered a protean approach in which his collaborators give substance to a composition's form by creating layers of sound. After a fruitful eight-year sojourn in Brazil, he recently returned to Chicago, where he first gained notice as a visionary player and composer.

Born in 1965 in Jersey City, NJ, and raised in Naperville, about 30 miles west of Chicago, he studied at the Bloom School of Jazz in Chicago after high school, and by the early 1990s was performing around the UK with his hard bop quartet featuring drummer **George Fludas**, bassist **John Webber**, and pianist **Randolph Tressler**. Always looking for new musical directions, he launched the Chicago Underground workshop at Chicago's storied jazz club The Green Mill in 1994. Eventually the workshop gave birth to the **Chicago Underground Collective**, an ensemble that recorded several albums for **Delmark** and **Thrill Jockey** records and featured many of the scene's rising stars (including guitarist **Jeff Parker** and drummer **Chad Taylor**).

Over the years Mazurek has become an essential catalyst on the international scene, collaborating with a wide cross section of leading figures in jazz, rock and improvised music, including **Bill Dixon**, **Yusef Lateef**, **Roscoe Mitchell**, **Mike Ladd**, **Naná Vasconcelos**, and **Pharoah Sanders**, who will be joining the **Chicago Underground** and **Sao Paulo Underground** at Jazz em Agosto in Lisbon in August, and the Frankfurt Jazz festival on October 26. One of his most important vehicles has been his constantly shifting **Exploding Star Orchestra**, a capaciously inventive large ensemble featuring the likes of **Nicole Mitchell**, **John Herndon**, and on occasion, **Takara**, **Granado** and **Jason Adasiewicz**.

Over the past quarter century he's documented some 200 compositions on nearly four dozen albums released on numerous labels, including **Thrill Jockey**, **Delmark**, **Aesthetics**, **Mego**, and **Submarine**. Increasingly recognized as a creative force outside of the United States, Mazurek was awarded France's prestigious grant/residency at the Abbaye Royale de Fontevraud in 2005, which gave Mazurek the opportunity to hone his interest in multi-media works. The following year he debuted São Paulo Underground, a creative mainstay throughout his years in Brazil. His international profile hasn't fallen since moving back to Chicago. He topped off a high productive 2012 by being voted musician of the year by "Musica Jazz," Italy's top jazz magazine, and he's slated for the cover of the August 2013 issue of *Wire Magazine*.

In addition, Mazurek continues to develop as a solo and multi-media artist (sound, painting and video) with performance exhibitions and artist residencies, most notably at the Rothko Chapel in Houston, TX, the Abbey Royal de Fontevraud in France, and Galleria Coletivo in São Paulo, Brazil. Most recently, this winter he completed a fine artist residency at URDLA in France.

Rob Mazurek's website: <http://www.robmazurek.com/>

MAURICIO TAKARA

Considered one of the leading voices in the new post-Tropicalia wave of Brazilian music, São Paulo native Mauricio Takara, has performed and recorded with a dazzling array of artists. From Brazil, key connections include **Nacao Zumbi**, **Vanessa Da Mata**, **Sabotage**, **Naná Vasconcelos** and **Marcelo Camelo**. On the international scene he's allied with heavyweights such as Pharoah Sanders, **Archie Shepp**, **Yusef Lateef**, and **Prefuse 73**. Besides Rob Mazurek's São Paulo Underground, Takara has also worked with such other Chicago-connected projects and artists as Exploding Star Orchestra, Jason Adasiewicz, and John Herndon. Born in 1982, Takara started playing the acoustic guitar at the age of seven. Two years later, he took up drums. He played with local hardcore punk bands throughout the '90s and started **Hurtmold** in 1998, releasing five records on the Submarine label. He released the first of four solo albums for **Desmonta Discos** in 2003, including the latest, 2010's *Sobre Todas e Qualquer Coisa*. Takara has toured Europe (Sonar festival/Barcelona, Roskilde/Denmark, Womex/Seville & Club Transmediale/Berlin), the U.S., India (World Socials Forum) and Brazil (Nublu Jazz Festival, SESC Pinheiros, and opening for **Lo Borges** and **Milton Nascimento** at Coquetel Molotov Festival).

GUILHERME GRANADO

Guilherme Granado is in the vanguard of Brazil's electronic spiritualism sound makers, devoted to promoting music, beats and ideas in Brazil. Also hailing from São Paulo, he is the bass synth motor for the São Paulo Underground. Proving the point that good bassists never lack for work, he's been avidly sought after by a disparate array of artists, including Prefuse 73, Naná Vasconcelos, **Tulipa**, Pharoah Sanders, and Exploding Star Orchestra. Granado has also released three records under **Bodes** and **Elefantes**, his solo project, and is an integral member of the Brazilian Rock group **Hurtmold**.

PROMOTIONAL PHOTOS

Digital [High-Resolution] versions of these images are available for download on www.cuneiformrecords.com



[Photographer credit for all: **Jason Marck**]

WHAT THE PRESS HAS SAID ABOUT:

SÃO PAULO UNDERGROUND

TRÊS CABEÇAS LOUCURAS

CUNEIFORM

2011

Line-up: **Rob Mazurek** (cornet, electronics, voice), **Guilherme Granado** (keyboards, electronics, voice),

Mauricio Takara (drums, percussion, cavaquinho, electronics, voice), **Richard Ribeiro** (drums, voice)

w/ special guests: **Kiko Dinucci** (guitar, voice), **Jason Adasiewicz** (vibraphone), **John Herndon** (drums), **Matthew Lux** (bass guitar)

“... No matter what he plays, Mazurek executes on cornet with a delicate beauty, even as he channels his mentor Bill Dixon’s guttural blasts. São Paulo Underground...creates dreamy sound sculptures. ... In a way, SPU’s sound resembles dub reggae, where disembodied sounds fly in and out of the music over a simple chord structure. However, that music relies on bass... Instead, drummers Mauricio Takara and Richard Ribeiro and keyboardist Guilherme Granado create polyrhythmic grooves for Mazurek to color. “Jagoda’s Dream” combines tense drumming with a long-tone cornet line, the perfect example of Mazurek’s lyrical depth. ...”
—Mike Shanley, *JazzTimes*, April, 2012

“A few years ago, the Chicago-based cornetist Rob Mazurek... formed a new band (São Paulo Underground) that combined his Chicago Underground group dynamic and investigations in electronics with sounds from the Amazon. ... Its new release...brings together a collage of samples, loops and keyboard effects that buttress Mazurek’s stirring cornet tone. ...cavaquinho player Mauricio Takara and percussionist Guilherme Granado are as well-versed in electronica as Mazurek is. Some Chicagoans make guest appearances—like vibraphonist Jason Adasiewicz and drummer John Herndon—and the combined collective strength is reason enough to take this act on a global tour.”

—Aaron Cohen, “Editor’s Pick”, *Downbeat*, November 2011

“... It is impossible to ignore the attack of São Paulo Underground—musical terrorists of a different kind, their approach similar to that of Bill Laswell, yet different. ...On *Três Cabeças Loucuras* the cultures of the urban and the urban underground collide. ... The mangled electronics nestle cheek by jowl with the aching lament of the cavaquinho. Rob Mazurek’s cornet sounds a loud wail as the assault on the senses is made. ... This is music made out of the same dust that created the men who live it—a raw, beautiful lifestyle where the sadness of the choro can also mean utter joy...”

—Raul D’Gama Rose, *All About Jazz*, March 13, 2012

“...Though Mazurek’s Underground incarnations have been more concerned with grooves and melodies than many of his other projects, *Três Cabeças Loucuras* presses further into the melodic traditions of his second home. The music here very much bears Mazurek’s style, but it also combines the experimental jazz traditions of Sun Ra to create a type of “cosmic tropicalia.” The “miniature guitar” plucking of the cavaquinho combines with deep, buzzing synthesizers, noisy effects, and Mazurek’s effortless cornet fluctuations, allowing listeners to enjoy melodies as well as timbral depth. ...”

—Scott Morrow, *Alarm*, October 11, 2011

“*Três Cabeças Loucuras*...is the third release from São Paulo Underground to explore the furthest fringes of Brazil’s revolutionary Tropicalia movement. Updating the renowned genre’s patented psychedelia with free improvisation, laptop-driven electronica and musique concrete, the album unveils a spectrum of kaleidoscopic sound that pushes the bounds of each style to its limits, creating a new, unclassifiable amalgam in the process. ...Mazurek’s imaginative approach encompasses limitless sonic possibilities—all of which are entertained in this unrestrained environment. ...

The record’s prevailing mood is one of celebratory innovation and bold experimentation. ... Brazil’s Tropicalismo movement has come a long way since the seminal efforts of Caetano Veloso and Gilberto Gil. ...*Três Cabeças Loucuras* is more than just a jazz-based extrapolation of a venerable form—it’s a fascinating new hybrid.”

—Troy Collins, *All About Jazz*, October 26, 2011

“This is a very interesting group that combines jazz composition and improvisation with electronics and effects to create an intoxicating and exotic blend of music. ...The music on this album deftly mixes influences: contemporary Brazilian music, electronics and spiritual jazz like an updated version of Pharoah Sanders early 70’s groove-free LP’s... The music...defies any particular box or category...”

—Tim Niland, *Music and More*

“There are times when I come across a jazz album that breaks through traditional boundaries and creates something that is quite different to anything I have heard before, and that is definitely true of this the SPU’s third album. ... There are pieces that are very dreamy, with keyboards and electronic sounds being quite reminiscent of Can, while at others this is full-on. Mazurek has studied with Art Farmer, and it shows, while of course Miles Davis is also an obvious inspiration although Mazurek himself states that Bill Dixon is his biggest inspiration. ...this is an inspired album that fans of jazz or avant-garde music in general will get a great deal from.”

—Kev Rowland, *Amplified*, #123, October 2012

“... Takara, Granado and Ribeiro are all percussionists, but each man contributes something else as well...like keyboards, looped samples, vocals, or the cavaquinho... The result is a music filled with buzz and clatter, with Mazurek’s smeary, sometimes electronically manipulated horn meandering through the center of the sonic jungle. Melodies emerge like the harmony between multiple music boxes playing different but complementary songs at once, intricate polyrhythms gradually emerging like a huge system of tiny gears clicking into place. It’s got almost nothing to do with the common perception of Brazilian music (lilting, breezy, ephemeral); it sounds more like Battles attempting to interpret pieces from Miles Davis’s *Agharta*. ...in a compact 38 minutes; it’s practically an EP. ...concision is a virtue, allowing the group to explore ideas in compelling ways but stop before they become boring. ... Mazurek and his partners know when—and how—to leave the listener wanting more. ...”

—Phil Freeman, *Burning Ambulance*, October 24, 2011

“On...*Tres Cabeças Loucuras* (Cuneiform), cornetist Rob Mazurek and his band Sao Paulo Underground finally tapped into the musical traditions of their namesake city, in the process making their best album by far. ... On the new one his two main partners...Guilherme Granado and...Mauricio Takara, play a larger role, which includes injecting explicitly Brazilian flavors—Takara...composed two of the album’s strongest pieces and played lots of *cavaquinho*... On the gorgeous album opener, “Jagoda’s Dream,” Mazurek renders the pretty melody with a clear tone and generosity of spirit that recalls Don Cherry... “Pigeon” is based on a traditional maracatu piece, but its fuzzed-out keyboards, cornet overblowing, and clattering percussion make it one of the most abstract tracks on the album. ...”

—Peter Margasak, *Chicago Reader*, September 23, 2012

“... A magnificent chaos like an analog samba through ancient-like modules... São Paulo of the future, like a sound which is studiously broken and traditional at the same time. ...”

—fragile balloon, *breakaplate*

“Sao Paulo Underground takes the fertile and endlessly productive Brazilian strains of samba and other indigenous outcroppings and combines them with modern electric jazz in some very new, creative ways. ... The group features cornet-composer extraordinaire Rob Mazurek, who has been doing some remarkable music in and around Chicago as well as around the world... The...album is an unusual mix of rhythmic excitement, cornet-wielding goodness, hip tunes and neo-psychedelics. It's an excellent listen, modern and electric without a trace of cliché.”
– Grego Applegate Edwards, *Gaplegate Guitar and Bass Blog*, November 28, 2012

“...Três Cabeças Loucuras is an exhilarating experience, as it is simultaneously retro and avant-garde. ... Compellingly atmospheric and intentionally short on improvisational rigor, this engrossing disc is nevertheless highly enjoyable and thought provoking with its tight thematic structure...”
– Hrayr Attarian, *Chicago Jazz Magazine*, November-December 2012

“...Mazurek is Mazurek, and this is no polite samba or bossa nova repertoire that he's dipping into here with his Brazilian mates. ... Mazurek clearly is an artist who likes to take chances, and the occasional excess...is what makes a very high percentage of music on this CD so dynamic and satisfying.”
–William Tilland, *Foxy Digitalis*, February 27, 2012

“Sao Paulo Underground are one of the heaviest experimental jazz outfits you'll ever come across. ...”
–Russ Slater, *Sounds and Colours*, November 2011, www.soundsandcolours.com

“...São Paulo Underground's new album is titled *Três Cabeças Loucuras*... The music has the heavy feel of street culture, evoked by parade rhythms, extreme distortion like a boombox with blown speakers playing a stepped-on cassette, and the collisions of competing sounds in one open space. ... I can't think of another album that does quite what São Paulo Underground's latest does. It's very melodic and full of rude noise, often at the same time. The music can be as dense as a Sun Ra freakout and sunny as a Pat Metheny tune. ... This record's got it all, all at once.”
–Kevin Whitehead, “Two South-American Jazz Fusions (No, Not That Kind)”, *NPR Music*, www.npr.org

“...From Argentina, Brazil, Panama and Mexico, we've got new songs about traveling: exploring new musical styles, voyaging to outer space, crossing borders and sometimes simply closing your eyes and embarking on a trip through your own mind. ... Carambola... Artist: São Paulo Underground...Album: *Tres Cabeças Loucuras*”
–Jasmine Garsd, *NPR Music: Alt.Latino*, October 19, 2011

“... Fusion in its best sense, *Tres Cabeças Loucuras* is open-minded music that melds North and South American impulses without fissure.”
– Ken Waxman, *The New York City Jazz Record*, September 2012

“...you've got a platter that sounds like few in the marketplace. ... Perculating textures, crackling cornet (smacking of Miles Davis and Don Cherry), and surreal electronica process local riffs and rhythms for music that dances and frolics with all the joy and cheery chaos of a São Paulo street fair. If Syd Barrett lost his mind in Brazil instead of Britain, hooked up with Sergio Mendes and... (...pre-heavy guitar-era Return to Forever) and DJ Logic to town, this'd likely be the upshot. [Rating: 4 stars/excellent]”
–Mark Keresman, *ICON*, March 2012

“...São Paulo Underground has definitely found its footing, nailing an elusive meeting place between continents. The Post-Don Cherry melodic splendor of Chicago cornetist Rob Mazurek has never been clearer, and it finds a simpatico home amid the polyrhythmic chaos forged out by his Brazilian cohorts. ...all eight pieces concern themselves with various sorts of collisions– gentle vs. harsh, melodic vs. noisy, human vs. machine...stunning balancing acts. ... This high-energy romp takes the sting out of the term fusion in the best possible way. [Rating: 4.5 stars]”
–Peter Margasak, *Downbeat*, February 2012, Volume 79, Number 2

“Sometimes musical taxonomies just don't work, and for that we can be thankful. ... Mazurek's music (and his visual art) focuses on a colorist three-dimensionality that is able to put forth both gauzy thinness and a hell of a lot of mass. ... The opening “Jagoda's Dream” stitches together Tropicália and Windy City post-rock in a seamless, bright fusion of the type that was hinted at on Tortoise's *TNT*. ... this is a music that's collectively arrived at, with players and approaches in a continual dance of foreground, background, and allover-ness irrespective of “genre.” Taxonomies be damned.”
–Clifford Allen, *Tiny Mix Tapes*

“...Tropicalia, experimental jazz, progressive rock and many other territories of sound become overly present when you hear this new record of theirs but it's done in the most blended and coalesced way. The pure psychedelia of the record removes any darkness or shade... The experimental and electric jazz work Miles Davis and Herbie Hancock...comes through in full on *Três Cabeças Loucuras*, especially the phrasing Rob Mazurek brings to the album. ... What really makes this album so unique is how much they take from groups as removed in terms of time and followings as Jaga Jazzist and Os Mutantes or Stereolab and The Soft Machine. ... Regardless of the level of experimentalism, there is always a state of groove that exists in every track... Tropicalia never sounded this modern and alive post 70s.”
–Erik Otis, *Sound Colour Vibration*, July 10, 2012, www.soundcolourvibration.com

“...“Jagoda's Dream”...is the love-at-first-listen song that deservedly kicks off this trippy-jazz Amazon adventure. ...Mazurek's stroke of genius was to integrate both the dark textures of other Underground projects and the bright melodies of Brazil into a tightly constructed, catchy tune. ... *Tres Cabeças Loucuras* received a lot of shout outs last year, and as one of the most truly original music of any release from 2011, it also has that rare combination of being singular and, in a lot of spots, catchy. ...”
–S. Victor Aaron, *Something Else!*, September 27, 2012

“Sao Paulo Underground play an exciting mélange of Brazilian, Jazz, and Electronic music... sounds that conjure visions of tropical vegetation and dense urban jungle through a distorted lens. ...this record is...texturally rich and dynamic in movement — offering another view into their technicolor, sun drenched sound world.”
–Matt Schulz, *The Squid's Ear*, July 9, 2012, www.squidsear.com

“...*Três Cabeças Loucuras*...a true group aesthetic took hold, gliding Mazurek's delay-laden yet dry cornet tones over kaleidoscopic electronics. ... Hypnotic album opener “Jagoda's Dream” rides on a driving, genre-defying dialogue...while the flickering “Carambola” sets a bright, percussive tropical melody played on Mauricio Takara's *cavaquinho*...against throbbing synthetic sound washes. A rare tour sees the combo...heading to the Bottle for the first night of the venue's annual “outsider sounds” showcase with Brit mag *The Wire*, *Adventures in Modern Music*. The latter seems like the perfect forum for Mazurek, to whom descriptors like jazz, rock and “world” are irrelevant.”
– Areif Sless-Kitain, *Time Out Chicago*, September 27, 2012

“...Cornet player Rob Mazurek, who divides his time between Chicago and São Paulo, is determined to drag Brazilian music into the 21st

or even 22nd Century with this group. Their percussive, electronically manipulated sonic jungle is like Brazilian jazz remixed by Autechre.
...”
– Phil Freeman, “The Most Futuristic Music of 2011”, *io9*, December 19, 2011

“On its third album, this project of Chicago cornetist Rob Mazurek makes a huge leap, largely by involving its Brazilian members as composers to a much greater extent... **Brazilian music...front and center, providing a plush harmonic and polyrhythmic foundation for Mazurek's warm, melodic improvisations.**”
–Peter Margasak, “My favorite albums of 2011”, *Chicago Reader*, December 29, 2011

“...2012 looms, Jerome and *Radio M* host Tony Sarabia pick their favorite music from this year. ...
Tony Sarabia's global picks from 2011 (in no particular order) ... Sao Paulo Underground - *Três Cabeças Loucuras* ...”
–Tony Sarabia, “Global Notes: Tony and Jerome pick their favorite albums of 2011 (sort of)”, *WBEZ 91.5*, December 14, 2011

“The results of the annual **Jazz Critics Poll... Top ten albums:** ... São Paulo Underground, *Três Cabeças Loucuras* (Cuneiform)...”
– Peter Margasak, “Music / Post No Bills Jazz Critics Poll results announced”, *The Chicago Reader*, January 11, 2012

“**Rob Mazurek returns to Brazil and floats his cool blue cornet over a spellbinding collage of saturated textures, syncopated rhythms and sundry electronics.**”
– Areif Sless-Kitain, “Top 10 jazz albums of the year”, *Time Out Chicago*, www.timeoutchicago.com

“6th Annual Jazz Critics Poll: 2011 - Ballot 2011 [*Hullworks.net*]

Clifford Allen (The New York City Jazz Record, Ni Kantu) LATIN...São Paulo Underground, *Três Cabeças Loucuras* (Cuneiform)
A.D. Amorosi (Philadelphia Inquirer, Blurt) NEW RELEASES... #10 São Paulo Underground, *Três Cabeças Loucuras* (Cuneiform)
Andrey Henkin (The New York City Jazz Record) LATIN...São Paulo Underground, *Três Cabeças Loucuras* (Cuneiform)
Peter Margasak (Chicago Reader, Downbeat) NEW RELEASES...#6...São Paulo Underground, *Três Cabeças Loucuras* (Cuneiform)
Tim Niland (Music & More) LATIN...São Paulo Underground, *Três Cabeças Loucuras* (Cuneiform)
Derek Taylor (Dusted, Master of a Small House) LATIN...São Paulo Underground, *Três Cabeças Loucuras* (Cuneiform)
Neil Tesser (Examiner.com, Chicago News Cooperative) LATIN...São Paulo Underground, *Três Cabeças Loucuras* (Cuneiform)
Kevin Whitehead (Fresh Air [NPR], Why Jazz?) NEW RELEASES São Paulo Underground, *Três Cabeças Loucuras* (Cuneiform)” – *Hullworks.net*

“**Recommended New Releases...** São Paulo Underground - *Três Cabeças Loucuras*”
–Andrey Henkin, *The New York City Jazz Record*, January 2012, No. 117

“**Best Latin Album...** [#]4. São Paulo Underground, *Três Cabeças Loucuras* (Cuneiform)”
– Francis Davis and Tom Hull, “2011 Jazz Critics’ Poll Results”, *Rhapsody: The Mix*, January 10, 2012

“**Best of 2011...Honorable Mentions...** São Paulo Underground - *Três Cabeças Loucuras*”
–*The New York City Jazz Record*, January 2012, No. 117

“...It was another great year for jazz releases - in fact, we're still catching up! **For anyone who doubts that the genre is vital and offers immediacy and daring, check out the 3 minute tune "Pigeon" above from the wondrous São Paulo Underground. ...**
...Without further ado, here are this year's prestigious D:O nominees:... **Best Album... São Paulo Underground, TRÊS CABEÇAS LOUCARAS...**”
– *Destination Out*, February 22, 2012

FEATURE

“...At present, Mazurek is the leader of the compact duo and trio versions of **Chicago Underground**; its antipodal counterpart, **São Paulo Underground**; the expansive, sprawling **Exploding Star Orchestra**; and the nascent **Sound Is Quintet**. Though his various projects all offer unique perspectives on sound and structure, **they're all propelled at some level by Mazurek's fascination with the visual and often seek out new sounds through the expressive manipulation of color.**

Imagination is an important part of Mazurek's methods. His compositions exist in a dreamy world that incorporates elements of jazz, post-rock, electronic music, and noise, drifting, floating weightlessly in a limbo that practically demands the listener to dive deeply into the piece and create form in the spaces and gaps left open. ... On many of his albums, he uses unorthodox methods of composition and conducting...

...Mazurek considers himself a visual artist as well as a musician. ... His paintings deal with bold color and shape... Highly evocative of the chromatic abstracts of **Mark Rothko**, these works appear simple at first glance, but closer inspection reveals layers of details and subtle inflections.

... Mazurek doesn't claim to be a synesthete, but his belief in the intimate connection between color and sound certainly make him sympathetic to one's worldview.

... **All his work, regardless of medium, is geared toward discovery, and for him, music and visual art are two sides of the same coin, two ways of achieving the same goal, inexorably intertwined with one another. “Color, form, texture, power,” he says. “These ideas all seem to be applicable, in sound and in plastic.”**

This mindset was not exactly shared by Mazurek's idol and collaborator, free-jazz legend **Bill Dixon**. Like Mazurek, the trumpet legend also moonlighted as a visual artist and painter...

Dixon, who passed away in June of 2010 at the age of 84, considered his two domains to be separate. Mazurek sees things differently... “I could always make my own parallels to his music and paintings,” he says “... Anyone interested in the ideas of sound, color, and form should study his works deeply. ...”

... On deck for Mazurek is... a 10-volume set of music for...Sun Core Records... I am creating video pieces and sound pieces...juxtaposing each on the other and creating a whole different universe. ...

...**his inspirational compositions are drawn from a colorful palette that appears to be inexhaustible. ...”**

– Michael Patrick Brady, “Rob Mazurek: Jazz Composer / Visual Artist Challenges Boundaries of Sound, Light, and Color”, *Alarm Magazine*, November 4th, 2011