

## WHAT THE PRESS HAS SAID ABOUT:

### Sao Paulo Underground

*Beija Flors Velho E Sujo*

Cuneiform

2013

[lineup: Mauricio Takara; Guilherme Granado; Rob Mazurek]

“...a Brazilian folk flavor... **This CD blends Latin sounds with improvisation and electronics and what results... may suggest Miles Davis’ electric bands but this doesn’t really sound like them. Instead there’s more a hint of Don Ellis’ electronic experiments as well as farther afield sounds like the Soft Machine, Faust, Brian Eno and Sun Ra...** ‘Evetch’ and ‘Rising Sun’ set a mariachi-like horn against jangly clouds of electronics... Mazurek has a lot of ambitious and creative projects going on **but this group sounds like his most purely fun work.**”  
- Jerome Wilson, *Cadence Jazz Magazine*, May-June, 2014

“**Sao Paulo Underground is a cultural and stylistic collision between electronica, tropicalia, avant garde jazz, and punk,** featuring Chicago Underground Duo’s Rob Mazurek... Sao Paulo’s Guilherme Granado on keyboards... and Mauricio Takara on percussion, cavaquinho and electronics. All thee men were in town... for the 2013 Guelph Jazz Festival...”

-Vish Kanna, *Kreative Kontrol*, 29 April 2014

“...a raucous affair, **Frankensteining Brazilian sounds with elements of post-rock, *Bitches Brew*, Sun Ra and electronica. The result is both sunny and abrasive, like a tropical paradise invaded by Terminators.** The group lurches into action with “Ol’ Dirty Hummingbird,” ...an homage to the late court jester of hip-hop’s Wu Tang Clan, suggesting the trio’s puckish sense of humor. The band weaves a web of sound into huge, powerful monoliths, most of which segue or simply collide into one another... **For every ocean air melody – the carnival bravado of ‘Evetech’... – there’s an equally dark, end-of-the-world explosion of sound.** “Six Handed Casio” is a computer meltdown set to music... **It’s the work of an ensemble that knows how to create music of real, clarion beauty but also knows how, and perhaps prefers, to sabotage it. [Rating: 4 stars]**”- *Downbeat Magazine*, Nov. 2013

“...**this trio sounds like a larger unit** ... Chicago progressive jazz trumpeter Rob Mazurek is the primary soloist, sporting a big brassy tone and imposing presence. The musicians unify the outside spectrum of jazz with conventional flavors... boundless imaginative powers and wily song forms... **The trio busts genres wide open, contrasted by tuneful themes and layered electronics, including moments that summon classic space-rock, house music beats, progressive jazz stylizations and venomous improvisational segments. ... pop sensibilities** come to light on “The Love I Feel for You is More Real Than Ever.”...for comparisons, perhaps **early Pink Floyd with a touch of The Beatles, aggregated into a roughly hewn Chicago avant-jazz mindset. [Rating: 4/5 stars]**”  
-Glenn Astarita, *All About Jazz*, 27 August 2013

“...a vibrant multi-cultural stew that goes well beyond merely infusing American jazz into Brazilian Tropicalia and Carnival traditions. The group seems to be **operating on planes both celestial and temporal** with several of the pieces achieving an almost shamanistic power while still firmly grounded in the heat and sweat of everyday urban reality. **They embrace distortion, noise, and aren’t afraid to experiment with signal processing, synthesis and sonic manipulation** to the point where it’s impossible to tell what instrument you’re actually hearing. **That this can happen while they still deliver a tune is simply amazing**, as on ‘Evetch’ and ‘Basilio’s Crazy Wedding Song.’ Elsewhere they embark on studies in improvised electronic chaos... Where they really click for me are on the Sun Ra-inspired cosmic voyages... **Every song is an example of why it’s important for musicians to leave their comfort zones. ...utterly rewarding** for both the musician and the listener.”  
- Paul Hightower, *Exposé*, 6 February 2013

“Here is my list (in no particular order) of the best albums so far... **Sao Paulo Underground *Beija Flors Velho E Sujo*... Like the city of Sao Paulo itself, the music is crowded, joyous, messy, and both modern and primitive...** the disc opens with a tsunami of sound... Their sound draws from the new tropicalia electronic movement and the work of cornetic Rob Mazurek’s Chicago Underground bands. **Like a futurist rendering of technology incorporated into the jungles of the Amazon basin, the altered DNA of this South-meets-North American collaboration could be a soundtrack for a Phillip K. Dick sci-fi novel ghost written by Roberto Bolano...** This trio has now established itself as the heir to bands like Tortoise, Godspeed You! Black Emperor, and Collections of Colonies of Bees. They can take a classic piece like Harold Arlen’s “Over The Rainbow” as Sun Ra could, configure it to have a rough exterior while remaining sincere. **The band’s clash of fuzzy electronics, percussion and melody is definitely urban, but the jungle’s entropy has subverted the sounds of the metropolis.**” - Mark Corroto, *All About Jazz*, 20 July 2013

“...***Beija Flors Velho E Sujo*, an eclectic, experimental rush through sexy, South American streets, and it’s unlike anything you’ve heard before... Prepare to be shocked – this is genuine, sonic skull candy.** Falling in love with the curvy, sultry brass of Brazil is an easy thing to do, and the experimentation on offer is...entertaining... **It’s a pure delight, and... an appealing listen...** the melodic temptation of latin jazz, a sizzling sound that fluctuates between tropicalia and spluttering, spaced out psychedelic vibes; it’s music that reaches beyond the outer limits... **Their music is a joyride of accessible, yet sprawling improvisations packed with exciting flavours and a few surprises....** Eclectic and ephemeral, the trio of São Paulo Underground explore the possibilities of music – musicians on a quest to push the limits... **Placing this album under the ‘experimental’ label would be the understatement of the decade**, but that’s where the majority of the music resides. Insatiable or insane, **São Paulo Underground have a very unique, distinct sound** – a fluid rainbow, shining with some spicy South American soul.” - James Catchpole, *a closer listen*, 12 August 2013

“Sao Paulo Underground’s... *Beija Flors Velho e Sujo*, translates as *Old and Dirty Hummingbirds* – ...appropriate...for **an album melding the nimble with the lowdown (and the abstract and trippily disorienting)**... Sao Paulo Underground take listeners on a kaleidoscopic journey ... “Ol’ Dirty Hummingbird” begins as muscular as a tank, its thick bassline and splashy rhythm undergirding **Mazurek’s** cornet solo, initially captured as if in mid-flight. The unexpected arrives... with an abrupt shift into muted tribalism...the

listener is catapulted into a realm of ghostly and mysterious electronica... before **Mazurek's** stately but subdued cornet emerges to end the track on an elegiac note... Yes, *Beija Flors Velho e Sujo* is **literally all over the map, earthly and otherwise. And that's a good thing**, particularly as the album winds through such latter-half tuneful numbers as "The Love I Feel for You Is More Real Than Ever," "Basilio's Crazy Wedding Song," and the closing "Taking Back the Sea Is No Easy Task," which **marry melodicism, drive, and experimentation in concise packages that display São Paulo Underground at their best...** for those who wish to experience the electrified **Mazurek** and friends dancing on the edge and not tumbling over an extended-form cliff, *Beija Flors Velho e Sujo* is a fine album worthy of investigation.”  
- Dave Lynch, *AllMusic*

“... Although a trio, Sao Paulo Underground provides a rich feel that could easily be attributed to a six or seven piece group... Despite the group's use of modern technology in the form of samplers and electronics, there is a distinct analog resonance to *Beija Flors Velho E Sujo*... the group comes across as having an earthy electric-Miles/Sun Ra retro thing going on. What makes São Paulo Underground stand out in... avant-jazz as well, is the playful Latin vibe throughout. Some tracks, such as “The Love I Feel For You Is More Real Than Ever,” are downright tuneful and fun. But make no mistake – this is not a mainstream album. **It is delightfully creative, noisy, and progressive. Beija Flors Velho E Sujo... easily makes my shortlist for album of the year.**”

-Mike, *AMN Reviews*, 2013

**“Integrating spirited avant-garde jazz improvisation and lo-fi electronica with the revolutionary innovations of Brazil's Tropicalia movement, *Beija Flors Velho E Sujo* is Sao Paulo Underground's fourth recording... the electro-acoustic material... is more melodically focused and thematically concise than any of the group's previous efforts... "Ol' Dirty Hummingbird." An enigmatic ode to the Wu-Tang Clan's Ol' Dirty Bastard... vacillates wildly from a frenetically amplified fanfare to a mysteriously impressionistic elegy and back again, making it an ideal tribute to the master trickster... "Arnus Nusar," devoted to Sun Ra, reveals the trio's boundless capacity for sonic experimentation.. before segueing into a phantasmagoric interpretation of Harold Arlen's tender "Somewhere Over The Rainbow.**

Operating as a true collective, the members casually alternate between support and leadership roles, their congenial interplay and individual contributions reinforcing the multihued tunes' harmonic, melodic and rhythmic characteristics... **An adventurous yet accessible offering from São Paulo Underground, *Beija Flors Velho E Sujo* expertly conveys Mazurek's "idea of breaking through to the other side ... through sonic power and beauty."**

- Troy Collins, *All About Jazz*, 4 July 2013

“Sao Paulo Underground... play a brand of **loud and distorted but quite melodic bluesy rock sludge that sounds as if it were emitting through several blown tube amps at the same time... they hit you with a galloping stoner rock groove, pentatonic and power chord riffing that wouldn't be out of place on a Boris record, and yet the prominent and inspired use of horns sets it apart from that genre.** A sharp, bleating cornet carries the lead melody of many songs, harkening to Miles Davis as well as a distinctly Latin style of pointed overblowing and circular melody... Many times, there will be a sudden interruption of the riffing for a beautiful consonant chorale of horns, lasting just a few bars... The chord progressions and melodies...are elegantly constructed...”

**...Each piece on the album breezes by, as the band's hypnotic, zoned out rhythm is infectious.** There are many odd and entertaining playful moments... In true krautrock fashion, the music will at times break down into dissonant trails of noise... **It's one of the most exciting rock/jazz releases I've heard in years**, bringing to mind similar minded groups such as Fontanellse, but showing perhaps more vitality and energy. [Rating: 5/5 stars]”

-Josh Landry, *Musique Machine*, 2013

**“...the album is similar to *Skull Sessions* in its momentum and busy orchestration, but denser, more protean, and with greater emphasis on non-acoustic sound.** “Ol' Dirty Hummingbirds” plunges the listener straight into the Mazurek & co's Tropicalia blender. It's an almost frantic mix of splashy, polyrhythmic percussion; squelchy, distortional or otherwise characteristically rude electronics...and Mazurek's lead cornet... **The muzzy, muted sound of the cornet, the funk of treated electronics and the underlying rhythmic impetus may echo Miles Davis' practice in his Fillmore years, but the uptempo drive, the diverse palette of processings, and the rhythmic freedoms of Mazurek's music are all absolutely box-fresh...** Amid all the incidental detail, Mazurek rarely strays far from an incisive melody, and two atypical moments stand out: “Over the Rainbow”, played poignantly and surprisingly straight... and a melody that recurs throughout “The Love I Feel for You is More Real Than Ever” which... recalls... the chorus of the Beatles' “Norwegian Wood”. **The album treads a tightrope between exuberance... and discord...** but the balancing act is a thrilling thing indeed.”

- Dalston Sound, 5 August 2014

“São Paulo Underground... **has a...frivolous and joyous sound, more nu jazz with high density and rhythms with lots of overdubs and electronics...** The music would at times almost be danceable, if the rhythms and tempos didn't change so often... keep listening in wonder to this fantastical and phantasmagoric journey in retro-psychedelia and innovative nostalgia with "*Over The Rainbow*" including bar room piano, up tempo Latin rhythms, tongue-in-cheek fun, soaring trumpets, and self-destructive beats turning into electronic noise, shapeshifting into beautiful melodies, tropical exuberance invaded by mystical space voyagers... the magic of multiple sounds and crazy inventiveness and grand themes... a new era of sound of beats and electronics, full of warm tropical breezes and physical sensuality countered by intellectual derailers and sonic excursions into territories unknown.”

-Stef Gijssels, *Free Jazz Collective*, 23 November 2013

**“It's electric, electronically drenched contemporary post-Milesian music (with a relation to tropicalia and electronica as well) with drive... it's a kind of shout-out to Ol' Dirty Bastard, the Wizard of Oz and Sun Ra...** Rob's cornet sounds just beautiful; Guilherme and Mauricio contribute mightily to the sound. It has the bite of the electronic, interesting arrangements, powerful drumming, enough outness to provide traction and Rob in a definite groove. What more?”

**“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... ‘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... I love how we are simply launched into the midst of a chaotic proceeding – with ‘Ol’ Dirty Hummingbird’... I am reminded of Art Ensemble of Chicago’s ‘Reese & The Smooth Ones’ or Zappa’s ‘Weasels Ripped My Flesh’. There is a sonic intensity that is unsettling yet mesmerizing all at once... The other thing I immediately loved was that this is jazz ... yet it isn’t. Or it doesn’t care whether it is or not.**

**There are clear jazz elements, improvisational segments that mark the proceedings as avant-garde, there is rock, funk, electronica, ambient, latin themes and rhythms, and on and on... Although this is a trio, there is a tremendous density to the sound** owing to the wild array of instrumentation... **There are a ton of great songs ...** ‘Six Handed Casio’ reminds me of...the epic Namlook/Schultze ‘Dark Side of the Moog’ series crossed with Nils Peter Molvaer’s Sonic Trance... **great melodies, engaging rhythms, interesting arrangements and instrumental choices** and more. ‘The Love I Feel For You Is More Real Than Ever’... is a gorgeous melody... The production is raw... the instruments seem to be in the red zone of the recording, distorting on the top end... Gorgeous.... **For fans of modern jazz it is an incredibly rewarding experience.**” –Michael Anderson, *Gear Diary*, 20 July 2013

**“...you have NEVER heard the music of Brazil like THIS... those who truly enjoy sonic madness, you’ll love the electronic jazz** on “Into The Rising Sun” just as much as I did... their version of ‘Over The Rainbow’ is ‘way over’ it... ha! ha! ha! My personal favorite... was ‘Six Handed Casio’ – just think of an Octopus playing a full-size 88 keyboard. I give them a MOST HIGHLY RECOMMENDED, with an “EQ” (energy quotient) rating of 4.98.” – Dick Metcalf, *Improvijazzation Nation*

**“...SP Underground sprays both electronic- and folk-dirt on Mazurek, the Brazilian forms boosted by keyboardist Guilherme Granado and percussionist/electronics ace Mauricio Takara... I know one track from this will be on my year-end jazz/world discs retrospectives.** (‘Ol’ Dirty Hummingbird,’ ‘Basilio’s Crazy Wedding Song,’ ‘Taking Back the Sea Is No Easy Task’).”

–Milo Miles, *Miles To Go*, 5 October 2013

**“Sao Paulo Underground is a very exciting band that combines jazz, electronics and fusion into a vigorous brew of music... The band sounds much bigger than three musicians with the use of electronics and strong percussion recalling Miles Davis’s mid-1970’s dark-funk records like *Dark Magus*, *Agharta* and *Pangea*. But the music on this album never turns to sludge no matter how industrious it becomes, and the personalities of the group shine through... the group supersedes any easy genre description in developing a broad based and resonant sound pushed forth with an energetic vigor.”** – Tim Niland, *Music and More*, 18 June 2013

**“Beija Flors Velho E Sujo is startling - startlingly new and compelling.** You could get away with calling it jazz fusion, but that begs the question, to what is the jazz being fused? **There are grooves aplenty, hypnotic free-floating noise and no trace of pretentiousness. It all rolls out just the way it ought to,** or at least the way it feels it ought to... Of Mazurek’s three releases for 2013 (that I am aware of as of this writing), this is easily the best. [Rating: 8/10]” – John Garratt, *Pop Matters*, 31 July 2013

**“...this is more of the strange but strangely appealing alchemy of the bright, festive Brazilian grooves, the experimental Chicago jazz and the lo-fi circuited effects and reverb drench sonic terrain that Mazurek has gotten quite good at molding ...** ‘The Love I Feel For You Is More Real Than Ever’... brings those three worlds into the same place by smashing them together. Mazurek leads a joyful, bouncy melody that could have been a song onto itself... there’s always a darker side with the Underground... Mazurek repeats a new theme over an increasingly messy electronic/percussion wad of sound, and before long his ostinato is that only thing keeping the song tethered to the ground...” – S. Victor Aaron, *Something Else!*, 28 May 2013

**“Every month I highlight a couple of new or new-ish jazz and not-only-jazz records for closer listening... Beija Flors Velho e Sujo... finds the Underground in a riotous and fun trio setting.** Mazurek is joined by keyboardist Guilherme Granado and percussionist Mauricio Takara... **It’s a hybrid of free-ish jazz, Brazilian music of various forms and electronic things. There’re songs dedicated to Ol’ Dirty Bastard and Sun Ra. What more need I say?”** – KUSP 88.9 Central Coast Public Radio, 31 July 2013

**“Collaborations between Brazilian and American musicians go back, of course, to Joao Gilberto and Stan Getz in the 1960s; here is a thoroughly 21st century meeting... It’s a far cry from the pure and mellow acoustic guitar and tenor of Getz/Gilberto. ...the whole thing has a kind of electronic/static fog of distortion lain across it. ...this invigorating...always exploring music. The rhythms of Brazil and the melodies of its tradition are the vital ways in, giving the listener aural handholds in this industrial jungle of sound. There aren’t really any extended improvisational sections – it’s all very much group interaction. ... At one point Harold Arlen’s by now clichéd Over The Rainbow enters the fray, and it sounds so fresh and intriguing in this context – rather like an innocent at a post-industrial rave. ... Mazurek speaks of “beauty and decomposition” and SPU’s fourth album thrives on both.”**

– Peter Bacon, *thejazzbreakfast*, August 7, 2013

**“...São Paulo Underground...represent what art is about. ...Beija Flors Velho e Sujo... Songs have become more and more rounded, topped...São Paulo Underground aim...for a more redolent environment, an evocative soundscape... It’s undoubtedly the most**

accessible work by the band so far. ...a new style, more concise and dramatic. ...The Brazilian nature of the ensemble is still their distinctive character... But there's...more influences...taken into consideration. ...

For example, the title-track, with its roller-coaster evolution, is a tribute to Ol' Dirty Bastard, reflecting the personality of the former Wu-Tang Clan member in a bipolar piece alternating the mighty Mazurek's cornet with the mellifluous synth of Takara. "Arnus Nusar" goes beyond this, revitalizing the genius of Sun Ra. ...the tune is the most unpredictable of the album; psychedelia mixes with ambience and experimentation, climaxing with a reinterpretation of "Over the Rainbow".

... One of the albums highlights is the honest and ethnic tone of "Evetch", which explodes in a festive mood thanks to the introduction of Mauricio Takara's *cavaquinho*.

"The Love I Feel For You Is More Real Than Ever" ...which is also, possibly, the nearest thing to a São Paulo Underground ballad. It's followed by "Basilio's Crazy Wedding Song", a song of pure joy... [Rating: 4 out of 5 stars]"

- Marco Canepari, *Sounds and Colours*, August 5, 2013, [www.soundsandcolours.com](http://www.soundsandcolours.com)

### **"8<sup>th</sup> Annual Jazz Critics Poll: 2013**

Karl Ackerman (All About Jazz)

NEW RELEASES

3. São Paulo Underground, *Beija Flors Velho e sujo* (Cuneiform)

Troy Collins (All About Jazz, Point of Departure)

NEW RELEASES

6. São Paulo Underground, *Beija Flors Velho e sujo* (Cuneiform)

Duck Baker (The Absolute Sound, New York Jazz Record)

NEW RELEASES

8. São Paulo Underground, *Beija Flors Velho e sujo* (Cuneiform)

LATIN

\* São Paulo Underground, *Beija Flors Velho e sujo* (Cuneiform)

Derk Richardson (The Absolute Sound, KPFA 94.1 FM)

NEW RELEASES

\* São Paulo Underground, *Beija Flors Velho e sujo* (Cuneiform)

Derek Taylor (The Absolute Sound, KPFA 94.1 FM)

LATIN

\* São Paulo Underground, *Beija Flors Velho e sujo* (Cuneiform)"