

A **Chicago Underground Duo** concert contains both composed and improvised music, with powerful grooves along with ambient sound structures, folk song simplicity and polyrhythmic bursts of energy with lyrical melodic vignettes. It combines high energy music with slow moving ballads. **Rob Mazurek** and **Chad Taylor** have been performing since 1996 under the rubric of the Chicago Underground Collective, which has ranged in size from duo, trio and quartet to orchestra.

“Stripped down, Mazurek and Taylor hint at the duo of Don Cherry and Ed Blackwell,” writes Mark Corroto. “But add tape manipulations and Moog and they are now treading from planet-to-planet like one time Chicago resident Sun Ra. Their music is simultaneously modern and retro-early electronics. The beauty here is the etherealness of electronica fused with a human component. This ‘life’ is achieved through the breath of Mazurek and the percussive touch of Taylor, be it on drums or vibraphone. Balancing audio manipulation with the randomness of human participation is the Duo's secret.”

Working within a multitude of stylistic contexts, electro-acoustic composer/cornetist Rob Mazurek has helped redefine the aesthetic boundaries of artistic expression for 25 years. Born in 1965 in Jersey City, NJ, Mazurek rose to prominence in the fertile mid-1990s Chicago jazz scene, quickly venturing beyond the traditional tenets of the idiom to become one of the most compelling improvising composers of his generation.

Mazurek first learned the foundations of improvised music while studying jazz theory and practice with David Bloom at the Bloom School of Jazz in Chicago, eventually working with other Chicago masters like Kenny Prince, Robert Barry, Jodie Christian, Lin Halliday and Earma Thompson. The Underground Collective's vanguard sensibility earned Mazurek the attention of the Windy City's creative music community at the turn of the Millennium, resulting in high-profile collaborations with such acclaimed genre-defying artists as Gastr Del Sol, Jim O'Rourke, Sam Prekop, Stereolab and Tortoise. Isotope 217 (started by Jeff Parker) was subsequently born from these endeavors, bringing further acclaim for Mazurek's eclectic talents.

Chad Taylor was born in Tempe, Arizona in 1973, and moved to Chicago 10 years later. As a high school freshman he met Matthew Lux (Isotope 217, Exploding Star Orchestra, Iron and Wine), who encouraged him to pursue the drums and start listening to jazz. He is now one of the most active, in-demand percussionists in the music.

In addition to forming the Chicago Underground Ensembles with Rob Mazurek and Jeff Parker, Taylor had an on-going relationship with Chicago legend, Fred Anderson, and worked with Matana Roberts, Joshua Abrams, Sam Prekop and many other top Chicago improvisers. He is featured on over 50 recordings and performs in Marc Ribot's Spiritual Unity project, co-leads Digital Primitives, with Cooper-Moore and Assif Tashar, and toured extensively with the indie rock band Iron and Wine. Taylor currently lives in Jersey City where he leads Circle Down, with Angelica Sanchez and Chris Lightcap.

