

theWholeNote

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The History of Us is the latest studio album from the Carn Davidson 9, and the third since the group's inception in 2010. The 50-minutes-worth of music heard on this disc stands on its own enough to pique the interest of any jazz fan, and behind the excellent compositions, solos and interplay, lies much personal inspiration. Listeners are treated to multi-movement suites by both of the group's namesake members, William Carn and Tara Davidson, sandwiched around the brief but poignant *Goodbye Old Friend*, a tribute to their late feline Murphy – namesake to their last release in 2017.

Both suites heard on the album utilise personal narratives from Carn and Davidson's lives. Carn's *Finding Home Suite* documents his parents' migration from Hong Kong to Canada, and Davidson's *Suite 1985* is described as "a collection of love letters to her family." Alongside these non-musical themes, there is an ever-present balance between composition and improvisation. After first hearing the *Finding Home Suite*, I was craving more improvisation amidst the composed notes. But this ratio is definitely a creative choice, and a valid one given the quality of the writing. Each member of the nonet is an excellent soloist as well as a great section player, and Kevin Turcotte exemplifies this perfectly, soloing on the first movement of both suites. The album has a superb flow to it, and benefits from being recorded exceptionally well too. I recommend *The History of Us* for casual listeners and diehard jazz fans alike!

Sam Dickinson