

## STEP TEMPEST

CREATIVE MUSIC SHOULD CHALLENGE US, MAKE US THINK AND MOVE US FORWARD. MUSIC CAN  
MAKE ONE'S LIFE BETTER AND FULLER, ONE OF LIFE'S GREATEST PLEASURES.

December 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021

### ***Canadian Wonderlands***

**Carn Davidson 9**, the brainchild of trombonist/ composer **William Carn** and multi-reed player/ composer **Tara Davidson** (they are also husband and wife), has been in existence for a decade. Composed of nine of the busiest musicians and educators in the Toronto, Canada, area, the nonet (see personnel below) features three reeds, four brass, and bass and drums, but no chordal instruments. The intelligent compositions and arrangements spread the warm sounds of the brass and reeds across the sound spectrum with rich melodies and harmonies that pull in the listener. Kudos also go to the splendid rhythm section — bassist **Andrew Downing** and drummer **Ernesto Cervini** — for their great support, enthusiastic as well as musical playing, and sensitivity in propelling the "little big band".

The nonet's third album, "***The History of Us***" (Three Pines Records), consists of two three-song suites plus one composition by Carn dedicated to the late Murphy the Cat who is positioned in the middle of the album cover. The trombonist's "***Finding Home Suite***" (Pt. 1 – "***A New Life***") opens the recording in a ballad tempo led in by the flutes and clarinets with the brass and supportive reeds on either side of the sound spectrum. **Kevin Turcotte** creates a fine trumpet solo in the middle, reminiscent of the sound and style of the late Kenny Wheeler. The opening brass and reeds fanfare of "***A Mother's Song***" has the richness of a Bob Brookmeyer arrangement— as the song progresses, the trumpets open the melody then share it with the reeds and trombones. The suite closes with "***Home***" with the baritone saxophone and low tines leading the way to the melody. The emotion of the melody pushes the piece forward to a bluesy and powerful baritone sax solo from **Shirantha Beddage** that fills the mid-section of the nearly nine-minute piece. The reeds follow with a repetition of the melody that builds in intensity until a solo trombone line slows the piece down, producing a lovely coda.

As the album title suggests, this is a very "family-centric" program with songs by both co-leaders dedicated to parents (and, yes, the late family cat). The music is impressionistic but nearly always with a calm center. On "***Swept Out to Sea (For Dad)***", the sweep of the brass and reeds as well as how **Kelly Jefferson's** tenor sax solo steps out is reminiscent of Maria Schneider's "open sounds" — the sharp but not harsh brass sounds and the warm reeds blend fill in the musical portrait.

"***The History of Us***" is a powerful yet mentally soothing program from **Carn Davidson 9**. Powerful because the songs and the performances are so heart-felt and soothing because in these uncertain often frightening times, we need "us" more than ever. To find out more, go to [www.threepinesrecords.ca/home/carndavidson9](http://www.threepinesrecords.ca/home/carndavidson9). To hear, watch, and purchase the album, go to <https://carndavidson9.bandcamp.com/album/the-history-of-us>.

Listen to "***A Mother's Song***", the second Movement from the "***Finding Home Suite***":  
[Bandcamp]

Personnel:

Tara Davidson – alto & soprano saxophones, clarinet (track 4), flute, piccolo  
Kelly Jefferson – tenor & soprano saxophones, clarinet (track 1)  
Shirantha Beddage – baritone saxophone & bass clarinet  
Jason Logue – trumpet & flugelhorn  
Kevin Turcotte - trumpet & flugelhorn  
William Carn – trombone & bass trombone (track 4)  
Christian Overton – bass trombone  
Andrew Downing – acoustic bass  
Ernesto Cervini – drums & percussion

*Richard Kamins*