



Carn Davidson
Nine

ADDO 14
★★★★½

Pursuing that piano-less terrain pioneered by baritone saxophonist Gerry Mulligan in the early 1950s, Tara Davidson (saxophones) and trombonist William Carn put their own stamp on the strain, arranging original material for their nine-piece chordless ensemble. The pair, both JUNO nominated artists, nudge the muse somewhere between chamber jazz and that equally renowned but loosely defined 1950s style, "crime jazz," as composed by such notables as Henry Mancini, Quincy Jones, Elmer Bernstein and Lalo Schifrin.

Though it's more implied than literal, there's no denying the bold moves and urban atmospheres created by the Carn/Davidson group in opener "Battle Scars," with its coolness and pensive, zigzagging tempos, the breezy Latin flourishes portrayed in "Out Of Necessity" (can you say, "Mannix"?), the cerebral, Bill Holman worthy brass spread of "Code Breaking," and the super swinging mellow tones of "Time Flies," which somehow pulls off the trick of making seven horns sound like 16. Carn/Davidson's particular skill, beyond writing compelling material, is scoring, arranging and voicing horns to create the widest chordal possibilities (as in the lovely counterpoint of the Ellington-ish "Marni's Way"), and doing so naturally, in the pocket, in the groove. Their artistry is not about pushing the envelope but maintaining tradition, and wonderfully so. Drummer Fabio Ragnelli comes from the Mel Lewis school of gentle persuasion; tenor saxophonist Kelly Jefferson lays down a pungent, warmhearted trail; Perry White's bass clarinet plays humorous Don Quixote to the ensemble's down-the-center approach. *Nine* satisfies.

—Ken Micallef

Nine: Battle Scars; Out Of Necessity; South Western View; When You Least Expect It; Code Breaking; The Gift; June; Time Flies; Marni's Way; Malice. (71:27)

Personnel: William Carn, trombone; Tara Davidson, alto, soprano saxophones; Kelly Jefferson, tenor saxophone, flute; Perry White, baritone saxophone, bass clarinet; Jason Logue, lead trumpet, flugelhorn; Kevin Turcotte, trumpet, flugelhorn; Terry Promane, trombone, bass bone, tuba; Andrew Downing, bass; Fabio Ragnelli, drums

Ordering info: williamcarn.com



Rob Mazurek Exploding Star Electro Acoustic Ensemble
The Space Between

DELMARK 5007
★★★★

Cornetist Rob Mazurek defines the Buddhist concept of Indra's Net as "a continuous reflection of, but always changing reality of, our universe and what is not seen or heard." *The Space Between*, his collaboration with the dancer, choreographer, and video artist Marianne M. Kim, is about as abstract and intriguing as that idea, which guided the project. Brought to life with assistance from Mazurek's Exploding Star Electro Acoustic Ensemble, the music is minimalist, foreboding and thrillingly disorienting.

Though divided into eight sections, *The Space Between* is essentially one long piece. From Guilherme Granado on sampler, Todd Carter on "sonic manipulation" and Matt Bauder, Damon Locks and Mazurek on electronics come backdrops including cloudy, swelling noise and sparkling, tinkling space-age sounds. Against those and other landscapes, Nicole Mitchell's commanding flute growls, darts, jumps and searches. The leader's cornet barks, screeches and emits long tones. Jeff Kowalkowski's piano rumbles and asks questions. And the percussion provided by Carrie Biolo and Tortoise's John Herndon rustles intermittently. From time to time, Locks coolly delivers lines like "the mountain has grown wings today," "overnight, the burnt landscape turned green," and "let me live in the minutes before the end begins again." To his Exploding Stars, the leader has provided "written scores," "hidden scores" and "video scores." What are the latter two? Mauricio Takara contributes cavaquinho, a four-string guitar used to play samba, though it's not clear where. Musically, *The Space Between* is a wild ride.

—Brad Farberman

The Space Between: Vortex 1-5; We Are All One With The Moon And Planets; Only; The Shifting Sequence; Illumination Drone 17; Space Between; Seven Blues; Indra's Net. (40:09)

Personnel: Rob Mazurek, electro acoustic composition, written scores, hidden scores, video scores, paintings, cornet, main electronics, text (1-2); Marianne M. Kim, video, choreography, dance; Todd Carter, live sound recording and sonic manipulation, recording and mixing engineer; Damon Locks, voice, electronics, text (3-8); Nicole Mitchell, flute; Matt Bauder, electronics; Jeff Kowalkowski, piano, electric piano; Carrie Biolo, percussion; Mauricio Takara, electric cavaquinho; Guilherme Granado, sampler; John Herndon, drums.

Ordering info: delmark.com

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