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John Stewart | Jun 12, 2012 - 8:17 AM |  0 | [Report a Typo or Correction](#)

Nine-piece jazz band makes noise at festival

Fronting a nine-piece jazz band is a challenge at any time, let alone in these days of plummeting record sales and disappearing playing venues.

But trombonist William Carn and saxophonist Tara Davidson, a married Mississauga couple who moved to a home near Cawthra and Lakeshore Rds. last November, aren't daunted by the obvious difficulties finding regular work for their jazz nonet.

That's because they're having too much fun playing with their friends in the group they called Carn Davidson 9.

"We had the idea a long time for a primarily woodwind ensemble," says Carn of the group that's been together less than a year. "Keeping a large group together and working is getting harder and harder but these guys are all top notch musicians and dear friends, and we all get along really well," says Carn, who lived in Erin Mills for several years in his elementary school days.

"The whole crux of this thing was to play original music with no piano or guitar."

Davidson, a Mayfield Secondary School graduate who grew up in Brampton, has her father Ron to thank for her interest in jazz. He was a long-time high school music teacher in Aurora and trumpeter who played in the Jazz Mechanics. That exposure whetted his daughter's appetite for the musical path less travelled by.



Carn and Davidson. Trombonist William Carn and saxophonist Tara Davidson, a married Mississauga couple who moved to a home near Cawthra and Lakeshore Rds. last November, are playing with their friends at the TD Toronto Jazz Festival Sun on June 24 at Nathan Phillips Square at 5 p.m. The group is called Carn Davidson 9. *Supplied*

Locals jazz it up

There are a number of Mississauga jazz musicians in the lineup for the TD Toronto Jazz Festival this year, besides CD9.

Here's a rundown:

- Jason Logue, lead trumpet with the Brian Barlow Big Band on the main stage, Nathan Phillips Square June 25

"It's seven horns, bass and drums," Davidson says of D9, which will be playing just its fourth gig of the year when it graces the outdoor stage at the TD Toronto Jazz Festival Sun on June 24 at Nathan Phillips Square at 5 p.m. for a free concert.

"The chords have both melodic and harmonic elements," she says. "There's lots of playing for everybody."

The arrangements are critical. The couple have each rearranged some of their small-group music (such as Davidson's Ellingtonesque composition Marni's Way) for the new format.

But they've also recruited some of Toronto's best arrangers. Reg Schwager, Andy Ballantyne and two members of the nonet, Terry Promane and Jason Logue, have also contributed key pieces to the repertoire.

"One of the things we really wanted to explore is all of the skill sets," of the veteran players in CD9, says Davidson. The three saxophonists all double on instruments: Kelly Jefferson on tenor and flute, Perry White on baritone and bass clarinet and Davidson on soprano and alto sax and flute.

There's some Rob McConnell-sounding material (Promane was in the Boss Brass) and some rock-based sounds as well.

Carn calls the group "a chameleon", while Davidson describes it "like a chamber ensemble with drums."

After its Jazz Festival appearance, CD9 will be making its first CD, with the help of an Ontario Arts grant, in July on Steve Bellamy's Addo label.

Asked about how they picked their instruments, Carn and Davidson have strikingly similar stories. When he was faced with trying a bunch of instruments in Grade 7, he couldn't get a squeak out of the trumpets or saxes but there was a "a loud sound" the first time he puffed up on the trombone, Carn recalls.

Since her dad was a music teacher, he brought home the whole woodwind family for Davidson to sample. When she picked up the alto sax, "the sound was immediate," she says. "If you can make a sound out of it, I guess it's worth a career," she laughs.

Although she realizes now how nervy it was of her, Davidson's career really got started when she looked up sax ace Mike Murley in the Toronto phone book and boldly called him up to ask for lessons. Much to her surprise, he agreed to teach the young teen.

She not only found a teacher, says Davidson, she also found a mentor who set her on her way in the jazz world.

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- **Kieran Overs, with guitarist Lorne Lofsky, at Mezzetta Restaurant & Tapas Bar June 22 at 9 p.m.**

- **Tyler Yarema at the Reservoir Lounge June 23, 9:45 p.m.**

- **Alex Pangman with her Alleycats at Cherry Street Restaurant, June 22 at 8 p.m. and with her quintet at Shoppes at Don Mills on June 24 at 3 p.m.**

- **Arlene Paculan, June 24 at The Central on Markham St. Show starts 6:30 p.m.**

- **Carol McCartney, part of the Sophisticated Ladies with Peter Appleyard, at Koerner Hall on June 26, 8 p.m.**

- **Pat Collins Accordion Trio July 1 at noon on the Pure Spirits Patio in the Distillery District.**

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