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'WE TAKE NO PRISONERS'

Joris Teepe Big Band (Challenge)

Big bands do not have to sound like creatures of the 1940s. Thomas Barber, Dave Rivello and Joris Teepe show that clearly on "Snow Road," "Facing the Mirror" and "We Take No Prisoners." They do that by putting together arrangements and ensembles that work in a creative way. Barber's album does that particularly by using a string quartet almost as an instrument rather than a group. On the mid-tempo "Shatzaquotek," for example, the strings offer statements that a listener might expect from a horn. Rivello's ensemble is more traditionally shaped, but uses harmony and tonal quality in an unusual way. "Chorale," for instance, is just that in brass and reeds, but has a rhythm section background that lifts it out of the classics. Teepe's ensemble is more traditional, too, but always uses its horn voices in fresh ways, particularly on a swinging "It Is Peculiar" and a butt-kicking title tune. All three show just how much many big bands have missed.

— *Bob Karlovits*