



December 2009

### JORIS TEEPE BIG BAND

*We Take No Prisoners* (Challenge)



The first big-band recording by Dutch bassist Joris Teepe takes us on a chameleonic journey that often changes its colors (and eras) within a single track. "Flight 643" takes off in a Kenton-ish idiom, a harmonium of reeds discoursing with the brass, but when Josh Evans splutters in on trumpet, the electricity is turned on behind him and we veer into a *Bitches Brew* soundscape. The title track launches with a Basie-like intro from pianist Jon Davis, followed by a flurry of brass that approaches Maynard Ferguson testosterone levels before Jason Marshall sidles in for a silky baritone solo that winks at Lester Young along the way.

"Peace on Earth" starts back in Kentonland with an opening melody reminiscent of "Portrait of Jenny." But here we slip-slide into a carnival funk. Soon Teepe and drummer Gene Jackson are cooking some boogie under a second melody leading up to a couple of solos that are anything but peaceful. In fact, Michael P. Mossman on trumpet and Peter Brainin on tenor take fewer prisoners than their counterparts on the title track, Vitaly Golovnev and Adam Kolker, who both play smartly but safely.

"Almost Lucky" has layers of chant and freeform tone poem, beautifully colored by guest percussionist Rashied Ali. "It Is Peculiar" swings hard with an angular groove, a solo by trumpeter John Eckert that echoes Eldridge and Gillespie, and a Don Braden tenor tirade that spins on a Coltrane-Rollins axis. "The Princess and the Monster" is the best of Teepe's originals, layering on moods of eeriness and melancholy over a brooding Teepe prelude before the protagonists face off.

Braden's solo is unquestionably the beast as he rages through his hard-bop grab-bag, while Davis is the most elegant of the soloists, working up to a pleasing Hancock-ian lather and unwinding seductively. **PERRY TANNENBAUM**