

**Chico Freeman, Reto Weber and Heiri Känzig with original compositions and a lot of improvisation.**

Chico Freeman, who performed on Friday evening with the Exotica Trio in the Lörrach Jazztone, is one of the great American jazz saxophonists of the generation after John Coltrane. Especially in the 1980s and 90s made the Chicago-based musician furor and played with many other well-known jazz greats. So he was in the 1990s member of the allstar saxophone ensemble Roots with Arthur Blythe, Nathan Davis and Sam Rivers and Don Pullen on the piano. Freeman showed himself at the beginning of his career very experimental, he turned in the 1980s to the jazz traditions, to open in the 90s again strong for experimentation and diverse influences. This is followed by the Exotica Trio...

With saxophone, double bass and percussion, the trio played less rhythmic than expected, but explored wide, bright spaces, sometimes with expressive momentum, sometimes with almost romantic echoes. The percussion was played by Reto Weber, born in Solothurn and based in Biel, who had made a name for himself worldwide as a jazz drummer and percussionist since the mid-seventies. He is the initiator of Hang, this sounding percussion instrument that looks like a steel discus. From India, Weber has brought a traditional instrument that resembles a clay vase, but is a tuned musical instrument that he also used in the jazz zone. But over time, he said on Friday night, the tonal possibilities of this instrument seemed too small. He went to his steel manufacturer in Berne, they welded together two sheet metal parts and so the slope was formed. Hang, because one plays the instrument with the hand, which is pronounced in the Bern German "Hang". It's not just a rhythm instrument. "It has room for nine notes, more is not possible because of the design," he said. Today there are 30 manufacturers who have copied it, but none sounds like the original, assured Weber.

With its spherically shimmering sound, the Hang is often used for music that is always in danger of falling into esoteric kitsch. Quite different with Reto Weber himself, who clearly states that he comes from jazz and the instrument percussive, with more emphasis and more bite plays. This resulted in a wonderful interaction with the saxophone by Chico Freeman, with whom Weber has been working for decades. Instead of the originally announced cellist Heiri Känzig was there with his double bass, a very outstanding bassist from Switzerland.

The trio played pieces that Chico Freeman had written alone or together with Reto Weber, which included a high percentage of improvisation. Chico Freeman played his tenor saxophone fluid and inspired, trumped with elegant runs, but without putting too much in the foreground. In the interplay with Reto Weber, who not only used Hang, but also a Djembe, and the expressive bass playing of Heiri Känzig, the music developed a gripping flow, came along lithe and lively. An impressive evening with a refreshingly idiosyncratic and high-caliber trio.