

Los Alegres

Five musicians from Freiberg Theatre take off with lively chamber jazz on Spotify

After three concerts by the new chamber ensemble in Central Saxony with resounding success in 2022, it was clear that a CD was needed. Now it's here.

Freiberger Zeitung - Torsten Kohlschein

Sometimes it happens at concerts with new, never-before-heard music: it leaves such a strong impression that you think to yourself: I'd like to hear that again right now. Followed by the reflexive thought: "Where's the CD for that?" Alternatively: "Is there even one? And if so, where can I get it?"

Sometimes the answer is a little slow in coming. But then it is complete. Today, for example, the Spotify music streaming platform has added a new ensemble from the ranks of the Freiberg-Döbeln Central Saxon Theatre Philharmonic Orchestra: Los Alegres is the name of the quintet made up of saxophonist Anja Bachmann, cellist Anna Pyrozchkowa, trombonist Alexis González, percussionist Michael Winkler and pianist José Luis Gutiérrez. Following the presentation of the physical CD shortly before the turn of the year, the album "Worlds Beyond" is now also being released digitally and disembodied.

According to Anja Bachmann, the whole story began before corona. "I am driven by the desire to put my music into people's hearts and souls, to make them happy and to make myself happy at the same time," says the 1st solo clarinetist of the Central Saxon Philharmonic Orchestra, who is also a member or founder of several smaller ensembles. These include the klezmer ensemble Harts un Neschome. In any case, the musician is always on the lookout for new inspiration. She calls herself curious: "It's great to always play something new, to discover new music!" she says.

Or to reload them after a certain time: The chamber suite "Worlds Beyond" by the Swiss-born New York composer and saxophonist Daniel Schnyder. In November 2013, she had already performed the work, which oscillates between classical and jazz, in a chamber concert. In 2019, she made initial preparations to perform it again in front of an audience. With soprano saxophone, bass trombone and piano in the original, this time with percussion added in movements. Complex, moderately modern, technically something for advanced players, but thoroughly entertaining. Fine food for the ears with something to keep the organ busy in between.

And it was to become part of a programme with other similar pieces. A partner was quickly found in the form of Sergei Tsoys, the deputy concertmaster of the Mittelsachsen at the time: The Russian-born Kazakh, who had spent part of his youth in California and had already composed music for the theatre on several occasions, wrote a seven-movement suite for the quintet entitled "A Trip Down Memory Lane". Musical reminiscences of his high school days in Los Angeles with a world music accent: swinging, dance-like, light, with clever, original, catchy but never banal melodies, in which the instruments, so different in sound, throw figures, caesuras, motifs and rhythmic ideas at each other in the most beautiful way and repeatedly unite in interplay and polarisation to create surprising sound contrasts. And the whole thing is congenially realised. You can clearly hear that five instrumentalists have come together to create very organic, self-explanatory music. This is the impression of the finished CD.

At the beginning of 2020, however, the musicians stood there with the newly composed, learnt and rehearsed sheet music. No concerts for the time being, for the well-known reasons. After the coronavirus pandemic, it would take until February 2022 for the curtain to rise on the quintet with Schnyder's five-movement and Tsoy's seven-movement work as well as several other pieces for soloists and ensemble parts at the Freiberg Theatre. As Anja Bachmann recounts, this premiere already saw something that has been happening more often in classical concerts recently: the audience did not wait until the end of the multi-movements, but applauded enthusiastically after each individual piece. An influential Freiberg resident then expressed the opinion that this kind of thing should actually be recorded on CD. He was not the only one with this idea that evening.

Well, that was the home game. But two other concerts with the programme in the tiny Central Saxon communities of Bieberstein and Gödelitz were exactly the same: Heavy applause between movements and the wish expressed several times by the audience to be able to take this music home with them. In a concerted effort with the Förderverein des Mittelsächsischen Theaters as publisher, the idealistic support of the theatre and its new artistic director Sergio Raonic Lukovic and the head of the planning office Ronny Erfurt as main sponsor, the musicians went to a Leipzig recording studio for two days last autumn and preserved the musical joy that the two compositions radiate - which can also be found on Spotify as of today, Wednesday, under the title "Worlds Beyond" and the ensemble name "Los Alegres".

According to Anja Bachmann, this name, which means "the happy ones", came about quite naturally: "We simply had a lot of fun together at work. What's more, with the two Spanish-speaking men in the team, the Mexican Gutierrez and the Argentinian Gonzalez, the definite article "Los", which originates from Spanish, kept cropping up in their colloquial German.

Meanwhile, Anja Bachmann's curiosity for new music is as virulent as ever. And that of new audiences: "We would be delighted to be able to play our concert elsewhere," emphasises the musician, who is just as proficient on the clarinet as she is on saxophones of various pitches and exotic instruments such as the basset horn. Which, of course, predestines the musician for a variety of projects. One, once again with Schnyder, who also composed a number of instrumental concertos, is already on her shortlist: "I would love to perform his triple concerto for soprano saxophone, cello and percussion," she says. "It's great!" It will hopefully be heard in the foreseeable

future at one of the Central Saxon Philharmonic's jazz symphony concerts. Negotiations with the New Yorker-by-choice about the performance are ongoing. And he recently received two copies of the CD from Freiberg in his post.

The album "Worlds Beyond" by the Los Alegres ensemble is available on CD from the Freiberg Theatre Promotion Association.