

Philadelphia Viola Society presents  
**Chamber Music Concert**  
**April 10th, 2026 – 7 PM EST**

In person at the Evangelical Presbyterian Church  
(308 Possum Park Road, Newark DE) and online via Facebook live

Maria Rusu, viola  
Higo Rodrigues, piano

*Program*

**Romeo Cozma**

- Echoes (*world premiere arrangement*)
- Ritual Dance (*world premiere arrangement*)
- Nostalgia

**Robert Cozma**

- Songs for a lonely heart (*world premiere*)
- Spirals of time (*world premiere*)

*Program notes*

**Echoes** re-composes “echoes” from the past, immemorial times, pastoral intonations coming from an imaginary land called “Voices of Highland”.

**Ritual Dance** revives magical voices and rhythms of ancient mystical rituals related to nature, astronomy or the worship of deities who controlled life and death.

**Nostalgia** is distinguished by an idyllic, timeless sound atmosphere evoking nostalgic memories of childhood times.

**Songs for a Lonely Heart** is a three-movement work that explores different emotional states of solitude—moving from introspection and stillness toward energy and transformation. Rather than portraying loneliness as something negative, the piece reflects it as a space for reflection, memory, and personal expression.

The viola plays a central role throughout the work, acting as a kind of narrator that connects the three movements and guides the listener through this inner journey.

The first movement, written in 3/4, unfolds slowly and gently, creating a calm and intimate atmosphere. The music feels suspended in time, with delicate textures and expressive lines that invite quiet listening and reflection.

The second movement, in 4/4, continues this introspective mood but introduces a slightly stronger sense of direction. The transition between the two movements is made through a solo viola cadenza, which acts as a bridge between contrasting emotional states. Subtle influences from tango begin to appear, adding a new layer of expression.

The final movement brings a clear shift in energy. Built on a rhythmic pattern in 7/4, it introduces movement and vitality. The viola presents a changing, evolving theme and later moves into a more distinctive and expressive solo passage. Here, elements of tango and choro become more evident, shaping the rhythm and character of the music.

Overall, *Songs for a Lonely Heart* traces a path from stillness to motion, from inward reflection to outward expression—transforming solitude into a rich and dynamic musical experience.

**Spirals of Time** is conceived as a work of synthesis, a musical reflection on the relationship between time, memory, and identity. From both an aesthetic and compositional perspective, the piece proposes a symbolic journey through multiple sonic layers, brought into dialogue with elements drawn from Romanian folk music as well as from other musical traditions. The suite follows a tripartite structure, each movement representing a distinct manifestation of time, explored through compositional techniques specific to contemporary jazz writing.

### I. Suspended Present

The first movement explores the idea of a dilated, suspended time, perceived as a continuous, almost meditative present. The slow tempo, supported by a constant ostinato and a subtle swing pulse, creates a static sound space in which musical evolution is suggested rather than overtly asserted. From a timbral perspective, the movement investigates contemporary sonorities, transparent textures, and subtle superimpositions, inviting the listener into a state of contemplation and introspection. Time is not experienced as a succession of events, but rather as a condition—a framework within which the music breathes and slowly transforms.

### II. Dance of Memory

The second movement marks the entry into a temporal dimension of remembrance and transformation. Written in 3/4 meter, it is based on a blues-inflected motive that undergoes various processes of development, including thematic transformation, imitation, rhythmic variation, and metric shifts. Throughout this section, the modern jazz language gradually becomes infused with folk elements—initially discreet, then increasingly recognizable. This gradual infiltration suggests the way collective memory and tradition influence the present, generating an organic transition from contemporary expression toward cultural roots.

### III. Beyond Time

The final movement proposes a symbolic transcendence of linear time. Maintaining the 3/4 meter but adopting a far more dynamic character, the movement is built upon an intensely rhythmical accompaniment and is based on a melodic line inspired by Romanian folk music. Here, the previously introduced influences are brought together and integrated into a coherent synthesis, in which contemporary jazz and Romanian tradition coexist within a unified musical language. The conclusion of the work suggests a reconciliation of past, present, and future, symbolizing the continuity and permanence of musical identity beyond the boundaries of time.

## *Composer biographies*

**Romeo Cozma** – pianist, composer, conductor, arranger, professor

Born on November 13th 1955 in Bucharest, Romeo Cozma took his first steps towards a career in music by studying piano at “Octav Bancila” College of Art in Iasi. Then he attended the courses at the Department of Composition of the “George Enescu” University of Arts in Iasi, where he majored in musical education and composition. His professors were some of the renowned Romanian composers, such as Vasile Spatarelu, Anton Zeman, Sabin Pautza, which had an important influence on his career.

His love for jazz music dates from the collage years, when he developed a deep admiration for Chick Corea and Herbie Hancock. He then continues to dedicate himself to jazz, although his works encompass different musical genres and styles from vocal-symphonic, choir and chamber music, to electronic, jazz and pop music.

Throughout the years, Romeo Cozma has revealed himself as a remarkable piano and keyboard player and as a band leader. His presence on different stages in Romania and abroad (the Republic of Moldova, Germany, France, the United States, Austria, Italy, Belgium, Sweden etc.) was refreshing, surprising his audience with different formulas from piano solo to combo and big band (starting with his own band “Studio” set up in 1980) and as solo piano player with symphonic orchestras. Romeo Cozma is also the first Romanian musician to receive the title of Doctor of Musical Arts in jazz music (2004).

Besides his distinguished compositional and performer skills, Romeo Cozma has a special gift for teaching young students. That is why he initiated and still coordinates the class of jazz and pop music at “George Enescu” University of Arts in Iasi. He is also the founder and coordinator of “[Richard Oschanitzky](#)” Music Club, where students from all the universities in Iasi can come and develop their abilities to sing or play an instrument.

Accomplished musician, Romeo Cozma is currently a professor at the University of Arts in Iasi, his talent and creativity making him a representative figure in the musical world of this town. For more information about Romeo Cozma, please visit [www.romeocozma.com](http://www.romeocozma.com)





**Robert Cozma** (born 1993) is a Romanian jazz composer, arranger, trombonist and pianist. He began his musical journey at the “Octav Băncilă” National College of Art in Iași, Romania. His passion for jazz led him to the “George Enescu” National University of Arts Iași where he majored in Jazz Composition.

Between 2016-2017, he received an Erasmus scholarship and studied Jazz Trombone at the Hochschule für Musik in Nuremberg, Germany, under Professor Jürgen Neudert. He graduated in 2019, refining his skills in trombone performance, jazz theory, and composition. From 2019 to 2021, he studied jazz composition and arrangement with Steffen Schorn. He also took jazz piano lessons with Rainer Böhm and Andreas Feith, two leading figures in contemporary German jazz.

In 2019, the Sunday Night Orchestra in Nuremberg invited him to arrange Christoph Willibald Gluck’s “Almen se non possio” for big band. For the Sunday Night Orchestra he composed A Special View, inspired by Beethoven’s 7th Symphony, to mark the composer’s 250th anniversary. In September 2021, he was invited by Sunday Night Orchestra to conduct a full concert of his compositions.

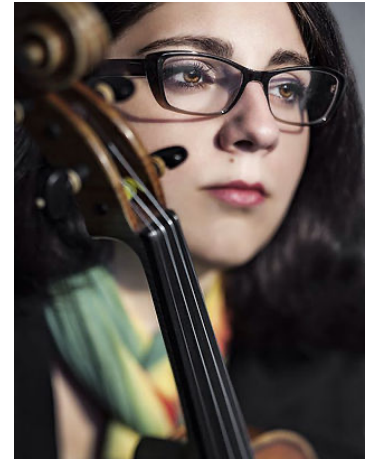
In January 2022, he joined the NDR Big Band in Hamburg for the Podium for Composers and Conductors. His composition Midnight Visions was conducted by David Hveem (NO). His impact in jazz grew in 2022 when he became a member of the Union of Composers and Musicologists of Romania. He completed his Doctorate in Music at the “George Enescu” National University of Arts in Iași. His PhD Thesis, Jazz Styles and Writing Techniques for Big Band in My Own Works.

Currently, Robert Cozma is a Teaching Assistant (PhD) at the “George Enescu” National University of Arts. He teaches jazz improvisation and composition. For more information about Robert Cozma, visit [www.robertcozma.com](http://www.robertcozma.com)

## *Performer Biographies*

Romanian-born violist, violinist and Jazz singer **Maria Rusu** is an active performer and educator based in Wilmington, DE. She serves as Core Faculty and Senior Student Services Manager at The Music School of Delaware, where she teaches violin, viola, jazz violin and jazz voice. Maria performs regularly with multiple ensembles in the tri-state area, some include Vox Ama Deus Ensemble, Wilmington Community Orchestra, Cairn University Orchestra, CoroAllegro, Philadelphia String Quartet, UD Lyric Opera, and is the alto section leader and guest violinist at Trinity Episcopal Parish in Wilmington DE.

She holds degrees in Viola Performance from the University of Delaware (M.M.) and Bowling Green State University (B.M.), and has performed with orchestras across the U.S. and Europe. Maria is the director of the Philadelphia Viola Society since 2017 and a passionate advocate for community arts. As a jazz singer, she has recorded and performed widely and premiered original works on regional radio. In her free time, Maria is active in the Cuban dance community through Treinta y Tres Delaware Rueda, a non-profit dance organization. For more information, visit [www.mariarusu.com](http://www.mariarusu.com).



**Higo Rodrigues** is an active musician in the Newark area. He is the Music Director at Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Newark, DE, where he leads two choirs and plays the piano and the organ for their regular services. He is also the accompanist for Mount Sophia Academy's Senior Chorale. Higo has played with the Newark Symphony Orchestra, CoroAllegro (Wilmington, DE), Wilmington Children's Chorus, for several undergrad and graduate students from the University of Delaware, as well as a soloist and accompanist in concerts alongside his wife, soprano Irailda Rodrigues. He holds a Ph.D. in Music Theory from the University of Kentucky, where he taught music theory and aural

theory classes as a Teaching Assistant. More details about Higo can be found at [www.epcnewark.org/higo-rodrigues](http://www.epcnewark.org/higo-rodrigues)

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Interested in hosting a viola event? Contact Maria Rusu, President of the PhilaDELphia Viola Society at [philviolasociety@gmail.com](mailto:philviolasociety@gmail.com) Share your Viola News with us and we will post it on our website! Make sure to check out our website where you will find all the viola resources you need and info on upcoming events! **Website:** [www.philadelphiaviolasociety.org](http://www.philadelphiaviolasociety.org)

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*We thank you kindly for your support and for attending this event and we wish you a wonderful spring!*