

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

Program

Maria Rusu, viola
Higo Rodrigues, piano

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*)

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.robertcozma.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.

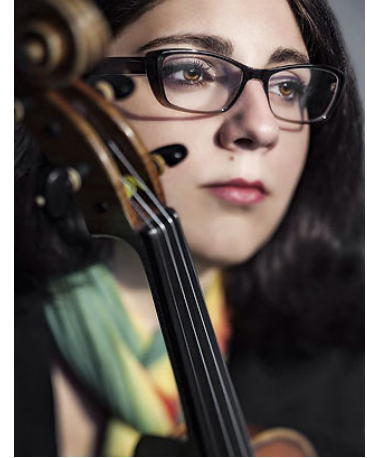
In 2019, the Sunday Night Orchestra in Nuremberg invited him to arrange Christoph Willibald Gluck’s “Almen se non possio” for big band. For the Sunday Night Orchestra he composed A Special View, inspired by Beethoven’s 7th Symphony, to mark the composer’s 250th anniversary. In September 2021, he was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

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.



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

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Interested in hosting a viola event? Contact Maria Rusu, President of the PhilaDELphia Viola Society at 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!

Link: www.philadelphiaviolasociety.org

Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/phildelviolasociety/>

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