

About her commission from the Cypress String Quartet, composer Elena Ruehr writes:

"I read Ann Patchett's ***Bel Canto*** when it first came out about 10 years ago. At the time, I loved it, wanted to write an opera based on it, but...***Bel Canto*** was already being worked on as an opera with another composer.

When the *Cypress String Quartet* asked me to write a new quartet for them, they said they were programming it with Schubert's ***Death and the Maiden*** and wanted me to write a quartet that, like Schubert's, was based on a song/poem or piece of literature.

My immediate thought was that I wanted to use Samuel Barber's song *Crucifixion* as a basis for a new quartet--this is a song that I have loved since I was a little girl. Barber's song reminds me of a Japanese folk song (Sakura) and in fact, it uses the same notes as that song in the opening bars of the piano.

I have made it a credo to only work with living writers for many years, and so I thought 'Of course, ***Bel Canto!***' Barber's song could easily be one that Roxanne Coss, soprano, sings in the book, and, with so many Japanese characters in ***Bel Canto***, the Barber song's relationship to a famous Japanese folk song made everything crystallize.

The Cypress Quartet knows that I always travel with a big novel, and in fact, I read for at least an hour every day, as it's one of my great pleasures. My fifth quartet, the ***Bel Canto***, combines my greatest loves: the modern novel, gorgeous songs from the 19th and 20th centuries, and my favorite string quartet, the CSQ."

Elena Ruehr's ***Bel Canto***, based on the novel by Ann Patchett, will receive its World Premiere on the Cypress String Quartet's **Call & Response** program:

February 26th 2010
Concert starts at 8pm
7:15pm Pre-concert Talk by the composer, Dr. Elena Ruehr
Herbst Theatre, War Memorial Building
401 Van Ness Avenue
San Francisco CA 94102
[\(MAP\)](#)

Get your tickets today!

At the door: \$40/\$25
In advance: \$30/\$20
Students & Seniors: \$10
City Box Office: (415) 392-4400 or www.cityboxoffice.com

Discount for groups of 10 or more; call the Cypress String Quartet office at (415) 585-9045 for more information.