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**For Immediate Release**

October 28, 2011

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**Outer Cape Health Services, Inc. Presents Cypress String Quartet**  
*Featuring Boston Composer Elena Ruehr's "Bel Canto" String Quartet*  
*and Outer Cape Performer, Larry Marsland*

WELLFLEET, Mass.— The [Cypress String Quartet](#) (**Cecily Ward**, violin; **Tom Stone**, violin; **Ethan Filner**, viola; and **Jennifer Kloetzel**, cello) will perform at Wellfleet Congregational Church at 200 Main St., Wellfleet, Mass., Wednesday, December 7, at 7 pm. The concert will feature **Elena Ruehr's** *Bel Canto* string quartet, inspired by Ann Patchett's best-selling novel, and narrated selections of the novel read by Larry Marsland. The event will benefit Outer Cape Health Services, Inc., and includes a post-concert reception at Wellfleet Preservation Hall.

Known for elegant performances, the **Cypress String Quartet's** sound has been called "beautifully proportioned and powerful" by *The Washington Post* and the ensemble has been singled out by *Chamber Music Magazine* as "a Generation X ensemble to watch." In over just a decade, Cypress has commissioned and premiered more than 30 new works, four of which are now included on Chamber Music America's list of 101 Great American Ensemble Works. The Quartet represents the voice of the new generation of American culture. As comfortable playing Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven in recital halls as it is being the foundation of multi-media collaborations, the Quartet brings passion, inspiration and enjoyment to every audience.



**The Cypress String Quartet will perform at the Wellfleet Congregational Church, Wellfleet, Mass., on December 7th at 7pm, featuring Elena Ruehr's *Bel Canto*.**

To explore the relationship between literature and music, the Cypress Quartet commissioned Ruehr to write a piece that responded to a work of literature—just as Schubert did in *Death and the Maiden*. Ruehr chose the best-selling novel *Bel Canto* by Ann Patchett. The commission was part of the Cypress Quartet's annual Call & Response program, which was born out of the quartet's commitment to present music as a dynamic and ongoing process of inspiration.

With music called “sumptuously scored and full of soaring melodies” by the *New York Times* and “unspeakably gorgeous” by *Gramophone Magazine*, American composer **Elena Ruehr** is reaching a critical mass of public recognition after a quarter century of steady work and enthusiastic response from audiences and critics alike. Ruehr’s creative output is rooted in equal measure to a deep reverence for and connection to both literature and nature. An avid reader, Dr. Ruehr has frequently drawn inspiration from literary works, from ancient mythology (*Averno*) to modern fiction (*Bel Canto*, *All Soul’d Rising*) and poetry (*Averno*, *Gospel Cha-Cha*, *Cricket Spider Bee*). And from her earliest works, she has returned again and again to the natural world as the ultimate source material (*Of Water and Clouds*, 1986; *Slender Wind* 1988; *Rain Down* 1989; *Sky Above Clouds* 1993; *The Law of Floating Objects* 2000; *Ladder to the Moon* 2003; *Jane Wang Considers the Dragonfly* 2007). In April 2012, a CD will be released of Ruehr’s complete works for chorus and orchestra, featuring the Trinity Choir under the direction of conductor Julian Wachner. Currently available recordings of Dr. Ruehr’s music include *How She Danced: String Quartets of Elena Ruehr* (Cypress String Quartet); *Toussaint Before the Spirits* (Arsis); *Jane Wang Considers the Dragonfly* (Albany) and *Shimmer* (Albany).

She was composer-in-residence with the Boston Modern Orchestra Project from 2000 – 2005, where the orchestra premiered her pieces *Shimmer*, *Sky Above Clouds*, *Ladder to the Moon*, and her opera *Toussaint Before the Spirits*. Her five string quartets have been championed by the Cypress, Biava, Borromeo, Lark and Shanghai String Quartets. A complete cycle of her quartets is currently being performed by the ROCO Quartet in Houston. She has also written two scores for silent films: *Manhattan Trade School for Girls* and *Deschutes Driftwood*. Both are available on DVD from the National Film Preservation Foundation.

Elena Ruehr was raised in a small town in Michigan. In addition to her formal studies in composition at the University of Michigan and Juilliard, she has also studied modern dance, and played in Javanese and West African performing ensembles. Dr. Ruehr has taught at MIT since 1991 and lives in Boston with her husband and daughter.

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. 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 fifth quartet, the *Bel Canto*, combines my greatest loves: the modern novel, gorgeous songs from the 19th and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, and my favorite string quartet, the CSQ." Cecily Ward describes their relationship as simpatico. "Elena has described a credo she has had since her 20s: 'The surface is simple, but the structure is complex,'" she said. "That's probably why we get along; it's what our quartet does!"

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**More about the Cypress Quartet may be found at:** [www.cypressquartet.com](http://www.cypressquartet.com)  
**For more about Ruehr, visit:** [www.elenaruehr.org](http://www.elenaruehr.org)