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A Sip from the Well of Rumi

A timely message of unity and diversity.

by Sage Knight

"Don't drive off the cliff today." Within minutes of hearing this, Canadian filmmaker Tina Petrova hit black ice and plunged 6,000 feet off the side of the road, ending her life as a yoga teacher, actor and dancer. A year later, still in a partial body cast and feeling suicidal, Petrova walked into a church and prayed to the Virgin Mary. That night, she dreamt of a robed man who told her it was time to bring his teachings to the world. Although her only experience with Rumi was fourteen years prior, when she overheard a stranger reading his poetry at 1:00 A.M. in a hotel lobby, she recognized the robed man in her dream to be the great 13th century Sufi luminary, Mevlana Jelalludin Rumi.


Petrova took another plunge, this time into

the work of the poet whose U.S. sales have outstripped Shakespeare over the past two decades, the words of a man who synthesizes literary genius and devotional passion.

Beginning with her fateful car crash on December 21, 1997, *Rumi: Turning Ecstatic* is Petrova's autobiographical documentary film of the mystic poet's influence in her life as well as an exploration of his influence in the world today. Featured scholars include author Andrew Harvey, the now-deceased United Nations award-winning architect Nader Khalili in his famous Mojave Desert emergency shelters; numerous readings of Rumi's poetry by translator Coleman Barks and mesmerizing Sufi dancing by the Whirling Dervishes of Turkey.

With Rumi's staggering U.S. popularity, Petrova sees potential for this Islamic-born poet to be a bridge between the East and

West. Her goal with the film and the tour is to plant seeds in the minds of today's youth and replace their media-induced images of Islam as a birthplace of terrorism with the universal message of inclusive spiritual love that Rumi so eloquently inspires. Petrova wishes, as she says, "to show the kids that, from within Islam, this poet of peace arose."

Rumi: Turning Ecstatic has shown in 14 countries and at private screenings for U.N. and World Bank employees. *Turning Ecstatic* has also been introduced into the Canadian school system in Toronto through a sponsorship from Scarborough Missions, an interfaith organization. Petrova is currently on a self-funded goodwill ambassador tour. 

Rumi: Turning Ecstatic by Tina Petrova is distributed by Choices, Inc. For more information visit [choicesvideo.net](#).