

The Lovers of Rumi



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*We may know who we are or we may not.
We may be Muslims, Jews or Christians
but until our hearts become the mould for every heart
we will see only our differences*

In 1997, inspired by the poetry of the 13th century Sufi mystic poet Jelaludin Rumi, Azima Melita Kolin began a series of concert-readings, combining his poems and stories with classical music. Since 1997, she and a group of six readers have given many concerts in Europe and England including London's Queen Elizabeth Hall. They have also performed in collaboration with Persian and Indian musicians and, more recently, with Sri-Lankan Karnatic singer Manickam Yogeswaran. They have created a form in which words and music are woven into a tapestry on different themes. Rumi's timeless wisdom and message of love transcend the limitations of language, the boundaries of time, speaking directly to the heart. Rumi's words are a guiding light on the path of the future.

In the last four years Maryam Mafi and Azima Melita Kolin have translated three books of Rumi's poems: *Whispers of the Beloved*, *Hidden Music* and *Gardens of the Beloved*, all published by Thorsons HarperCollins.

Rumi

What is the magic in Rumi's words that appeals to us today, seven centuries after his death? His words trouble, pierce, console and uplift the heart. He speaks of a love beyond the limitations of intellect and the senses, beyond divisions and dogma. Rumi is the teacher of love, the love that he finds difficult to convey the magic of to 'those who are made of dust'. Yet he takes the dust and moulds it into white silent lilies that speak the truth. The poems of Rumi live in the warmth of awareness, coming from personal experience; he knows the wounds of life and has passed beyond them into the ecstasy of love. According to Rumi, love is the most difficult thing to define 'My pen splinters when I write Love.' From this love, Rumi's poems burst with life and fill the sky like bright stars in the desert night. Like Rumi, who found in Shams his only Friend, his water of life and the music of his soul, we too find in Rumi the friend who quenches the thirst of our soul, and we fall in love.

Born Jelaludin Mohamad on 30th September 1207 in Balkh, Rumi was brought up a Sufi by his father and became a brilliant and respected scholar. He was 37 when he met a highly advanced spiritual master, Shams of Tabriz, who became his soul mate and the inspiration that Rumi had been waiting for. Shams was an enigmatic figure in his sixties, a wandering dervish walking on the path of love. His appearance was shabby and his manner rough and uncompromising. He had been searching the world for someone who could receive his wisdom and become his spiritual confidant. He found that person in Rumi and Rumi found in Shams the embodiment of God's beauty, in him he saw the face of God. Shams opened new dimensions of divine love to Rumi and showed him the direct path to the Beloved through the heart. He showed him an ecstatic way of worship through poetry, music, *Sama* or meditative whirling, and freed him from the restraints of piety and self-renunciation. No one knows what passed between them but the poetry that poured out from Rumi is the true testimony of the love they shared for the Divine. Shams' disappearance and subsequent death was the catalyst for Rumi's extraordinary outpouring of longing and love that eventually led him to the ultimate union with the Beloved. To achieve ultimate union with the Beloved, the lover must surrender all sense of self and become the Beloved. "You are my face, small wonder that I cannot see you..."

Azima Melita Kolin and Maryam Mafi

Azima Melita Kolin, born in Sofia, is a concert pianist, artist and translator of Rumi's work. She has won many International piano competitions and toured Europe and America. In 1997 she formed the Lovers of Rumi and began a series of concert-readings combining Rumi's poems with classical music by Bach, Scriabin and Beethoven. She also leads workshops based on the teachings of Rumi.

Ann Marie Terry, born in London, divides her time between researching for an investment banking company and practicing as a therapist and body worker. She is a leader at the London Sufi Centre with a special interest in singing, chant and the Dances of Universal Peace.

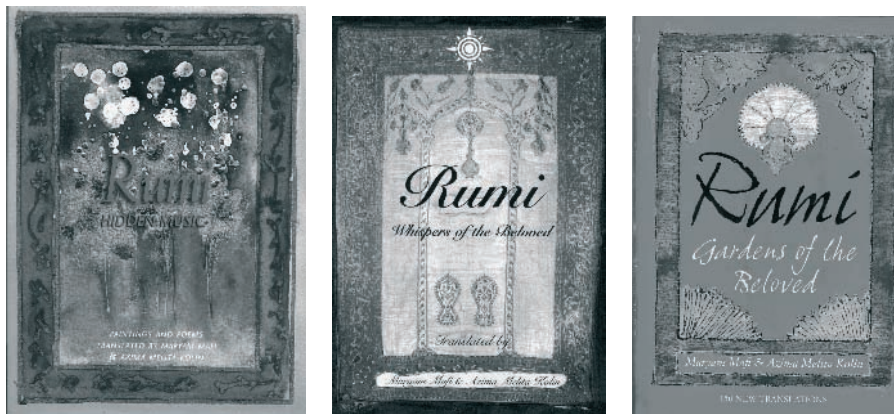
Anne Louise Wirgman, born in London, has worked in theatre for over twenty five years at the National Theatre, Joint Stock, Tamasha Theatre Company, the Almeida and the Young Vic.

Kim Richardson, born in Surrey, is a founder partner in book development company Bender Richardson White, producing books for educational publishers in the UK and the USA. He is also a published haiku poet, writing workshop leader and a practitioner and teacher in the Usui Reiki tradition.

Uta Schlichtig, born in Tuttingen, finished the Music Academy in Düsseldorf and plays in many solo and chamber music formations. She has toured with the German Camera Academy throughout Europe, America and the Middle East and has played in many concerts with the Lovers of Rumi.

Manickam Yogeswaran, born in Jaffan, Sri Lanka, is a Tamil singer composer and multi-instrumentalist who has worked in traditional as well as multi cultural ensembles such as Dissidenten in Germany, The Shout, Jocelyn Pook ensemble and the Lovers of Rumi.

Our books



RUMI

