Digital scan (2008) of original manuscript, assembled in Adobe InDesign. Title page, dedications, program note and afterword typeset digitally, based on manuscript.

More material by the composer is available at: 
http://www.badmindtime.com
Dedications

The following people have my deepest gratitude: SEMA is dedicated to them:

Joseph Waters and the Network for New Music, Philadelphia, for their energetic advocacy of the cause,

John White, for his commitment to excellence in the performance of this demanding work,

Barbara Kolb, for her support and friendship, and

Cheryl Bargsten-Yates, for introducing me to Rumi long before he became fashionable.
In a moment of revelation, one can be completely transformed. So it was in the case of Jelaluddin Rumi (1207 - 1273). Leading an ordinary life as a sober Islamic scholar and pedagogue, Rumi was shattered by a vision of the Beloved, an image he saw in the rugged face of the mysterious dervish, Shams al-Din, ‘The Sun of Tabriz’. Together they shared SOHBET, a deep spiritual and ecstatic bond.

When Shams disappeared, Rumi turned in bewilderment and longing for the absent yet immanent Friend. To commemorate and enshrine Shams, he created the whirling dance of the Mevlevi dervishes—the SEMA—to the accompaniment of languid flute and pacing drum. As he danced, Rumi would enter into a trance and improvise passionately spiritual verse. Thousands of these odes and poems were quickly transcribed by his students.

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In SEMA, I attempted no literal depiction of the events of Rumi’s life. Rather, the music grows from an enchantment with the transfiguring nature of personal vision.
molto accelerando .... a tempo
So, it’s been a little more than twenty years since I wrote SEMA: Rumi’s Dance. It’s clear to me now that this is my only piece where I achieved some sort of personal fusion of modernism and minimalism—a problem nagging at me since I started composing. The drama of ‘opposing’ musical styles (and its resolution) was a big concern to me then. Now, not so much.

Rumi is still in motion after all these years, spinning through his texts, echoing through the centuries, beyond the world of opposites, beyond culture clashes like those we are dealing with today—rich vs. poor, East vs. West, literal fanatics vs. the occasional solitary mystic:

“Beyond that world of opposites
lies an open field—meet me there!”