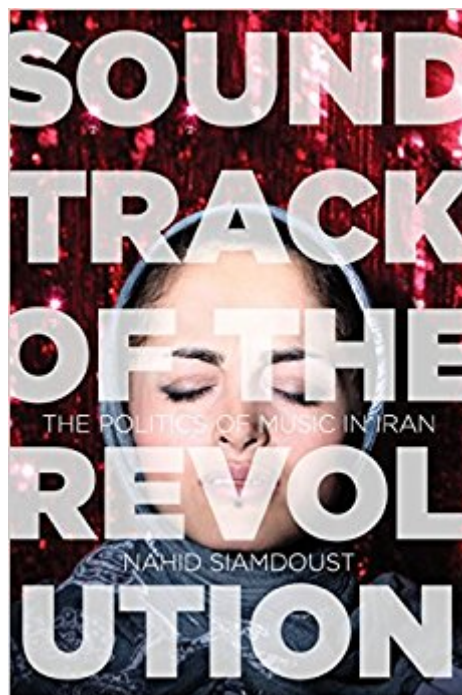




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# Soundtrack Of The Revolution: The Politics Of Music In Iran (Stanford Studies In Middle Eastern And Islamic Societies And Cultures)



## Synopsis

Music was one of the first casualties of the Iranian Revolution. It was banned in 1979, but it quickly crept back into Iranian culture and politics. The state made use of music for its propaganda during the Iran–Iraq war. Over time music provided an important political space where artists and audiences could engage in social and political debate. Now, more than thirty-five years on, both the children of the revolution and their music have come of age. *Soundtrack of the Revolution* offers a striking account of Iranian culture, politics, and social change to provide an alternative history of the Islamic Republic. Drawing on over five years of research in Iran, including during the 2009 protests, Nahid Siamdoust introduces a full cast of characters, from musicians and audience members to state officials, and takes readers into concert halls and underground performances, as well as the state licensing and censorship offices. She closely follows the work of four musicians—a giant of Persian classical music, a government-supported pop star, a rebel rock-and-roller, and an underground rapper—each with markedly different political views and relations with the Iranian government. Taken together, these examinations of musicians and their music shed light on issues at the heart of debates in Iran about its future and identity, changing notions of religious belief, and the quest for political freedom. Siamdoust shows that even as state authorities resolve, for now, to allow greater freedoms to Iran's majority young population, they retain control and can punish those who stray too far. But music will continue to offer an opening for debate and defiance. As the 2009 Green Uprising and the 1979 Revolution before it have proven, the invocation of a potent melody or musical verse can unite strangers into a powerful public.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Nahid Siamdoust's beautiful writing paints a vivid portrait of the struggles over popular music in the Islamic Republic and brings to life some of the most unique and colorful characters in Iranian society today. An instant classic that will launch conversations on Iran and contemporary popular music globally." (Mark LeVine author of *Heavy Metal Islam*) "Music is the language of liberation. Nahid Siamdoust, who knows all the players and has taken personal risks to tell this story, has written a lovely tribute to the courage and creativity of Iran's musicians. This is a book that, like Iran itself, is filled with hope and sadness and the universal human desire for freedom." (Joe Klein *Time Magazine*) "Nahid Siamdoust's *Soundtrack of the Revolution* is a groundbreaking study of a potent cultural register in post-revolutionary Iran. For both the casual reader and the aficionado, Siamdoust's pioneering insights are revelatory." (Hamid Dabashi author of *Iran: A People Interrupted*)

Nahid Siamdoust is a Postdoctoral Fellow and Lecturer at Yale University's MacMillan Center for International and Area Studies. She has taught at Oxford University and New York University, and previously worked as a journalist based in Iran and the Middle East for *Time* magazine, *Der Spiegel*, and Al Jazeera English TV.

This makes the complicated history of Iran completely accessible. I love the way Siamdoust describes so vividly different chapters of Iran's history with an economy and beauty of language that draws you in and keeps you flipping pages for hours. For anyone who wants to deeply understand Iran and the Middle East, this is a must read. For anyone who wants substantiation for why a travel ban on Iranians is so unthoughtful, this is a must read TODAY. I love the section: "throughout these years, music has served as important alternative political, societal, and ideational space .... The soundtrack of revolutionary Iran tells the story not just of matters that have lain in at the center of people's and policy maker's negotiations about politics, religion, and national identity, but also the story of the evolution of the Islamic Republic itself."

Great book, well researched and well written. I definitely recommend this to anyone interested in current events and some cultural background.

Well written and very readable. Fascinating viewpoint for anyone wishing to understand the beliefs and culture of modern Iran.

One of the best ways to learn about a country and its music from a wonderful writer. I have not been able to put it down and I keep rereading chapters so I remember all this valuable information. I have listened to most of the music that is mentioned and I am enjoying learning about all these artists and their voices.

Stellar book. Much like Asghar Farhadi's films, this book provides deep insights into the culture of Iran and the everyday lives and desires of its citizens through the four musicians that Siamdoust follows. A compelling and moving read for anyone who's interested in contemporary Iran.

This book describes some of the younger generation of Iranian musicians that struggle with many legal and cultural obstacles facing non-traditional forms of music, to innovate and create new forms of musical expression. For example a chapter on the pioneer of Iranian rap offers information and insight into this little known aspect of urban culture in Iran after the Islamic revolution.

Well-considered, scholarly read that makes the historical events and Iranian music clear and pertinent to readers like me who have a limited knowledge of either! Siamdoust's inclusion of memories of her experiences of the Revolution indicates an interesting and careful understanding of the topic while avoiding sentimentality.

Former TIME magazine correspondent Nahid Siamdoust provides a revelatory look into the unique role music has played in Iran's culture and politics since the country's 1979 Revolution, which saw the overthrow of the Iranian monarchy and eventual establishment of an Islamic Republic. For those planning to visit Iran, or those who've always wanted to visit the country but haven't yet had the chance, Siamdoust's book offers a beautiful view of Iranian society through the prism of music. It's a lovely read, and I highly recommend it.

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