

The Politics of Musical Participation: An Ethnographic Study of Women Singers in Post-Revolutionary Iran

The position of women in Iranian society is mostly dependent on the political discourse of the country. After the Revolution of 1979, the position of women in Iranian society drastically changed. This has also extended into the role of females as musicians in Iran. According to the revolutionary fundamentalist Islamic government, it is illegal and improper for women to sing solo in public spaces and women's participation in music became more restricted. In some ways, women's status has improved such as increased literacy, and a greater number of women musicians in general (paralleling an increase in musicians of both genders). However, in the sight of the law, women and men do not have equal rights. So, the dynamic of an increased number of women musicians appearing even as restrictions increased creates a rich opportunity for research. The opportunities for women to record and perform music differ from those of men, and many women, especially singers, find a creative outlet only in underground, illegal situations. Therefore, the main focus of my presentation/documentary screening is based on strategies of female singers for overcoming the censorship in Iranian society. In addition, I am going to present the activities and significant role of women's music/voices in the recent revolutionary protests in Iran by the codes/ slogans such as "Mahsa/Jina Amini" and "Women-Life-Freedom".

And here is my short biography:

Yalda Yazdani is an Iranian ethnomusicologist and curator. Currently she is working as a research fellow and also completing her PhD studies at University of Siegen, Germany. In 2017 and 2018 she founded and curated the festivals "Female Voice of Iran" and in 2021, "Female Voice of Afghanistan" in collaboration with Contemporary Opera Berlin.