

What Is Iran?: A Playlist

Music to Read By:

1. Richard Strauss, 'Also sprach Zarathustra' (1896)
2. Reza Rooygari, 'Iran, Iran, Ragbar-e Mosalsalha' (1979)
3. Alireza Assar and Foad Hejazi, 'Vatan' (2005)
4. Hichkas, 'Ye Mosht Sarbaz' (2008)
5. Julia Boutros, 'Moqawem' (2017)

1. Richard Strauss, 'Also sprach Zarathustra' (1896)

Musical Piece:¹

'ALSO SPRACH ZARATHUSTRA' (Thus Spoke Zoroaster)

Composer: Richard Strauss (1864–1949)

Date: 1896

ORCHESTRAL (SYMPHONIC POEM)

No lyrics

2. Reza Rooygari, 'Iran, Iran, Ragbar-e Mosalsalha' (1979)

'IRAN, IRAN (RAGBAR-E MOSALSALHA)'

(Iran, Iran, a Storm Made of Automatic Rifles)

By: Reza Rooygari (1946–)

Release Date: 1979

Adaptive, free translation of lyrics:

Allah Allah Allah

There is no God but Allah

Iran, Iran, Iran, a storm (made) of automatic rifles (shooting on demonstrators)

¹ All musical pieces are readily available on the Internet and the reader is encouraged to listen to them before reading the chapters.

Iran, Iran, Iran, (we) raise our fists and (we) declare from (the) roofs
There is no God but Allah
Allah Allah Allah, Allah o Akbar (God is the Greatest)
Iran, Iran, Iran, this spilt blood and the deaths from (our) uprising
Listen to the screams of our people
Look at us, a hurricane (of believers)
Iran, Iran, Iran the screams of our people, we, the hurricane
Allah Allah Allah
There is no God, but Allah
Allah Allah Allah, Allah o Akbar (God is the Greatest)
The tears of the orphans, the blood of the martyrs
When spring arrives, a hundred tulips (will) rain from heaven
The martyrs, their blood are (our) witness: A hundred tulips will rain
from heaven
Allah Allah Allah
There is no God but Allah
Allah Allah, There is no God but Allah
Allah Allah Allah, Allah o Akbar (God is the Greatest)
Tomorrow when spring arrives, we will be free (only then) will we rest
Iran, Iran, Iran, Tomorrow when spring arrives, we will be free (only
then) will we rest
No oppression, no chains, we are in the service of God
Iran, Iran, Iran, no oppression, no chains, we are in the service of
God
Allah Allah Allah
There is no God but Allah
Allah Allah, There is no God but Allah
Allah Allah Allah, Allah o Akbar (God is the Greatest)
Those who say 'Allah' and have remained committed to their faith
Those who were not ready to accept disbelief (Kofr) and bow to a regime
which is against God
Those slain in the way of the Lord, May they be blessed with (the divine
light)
Spread the message that there is no more fear, insecurity and worry
To the firm believers, May you be granted a divine reward which the
prophets promised you
Allah Allah Allah
There is no God but Allah
Allah Allah, There is no God but Allah
Allah, Allah, Allah (I am a witness, there is no God but Allah and
Mohammed is his messenger) Allaho Akbar
Allah, Allah, Allah (I am a witness, there is no God but Allah)

3. Alireza Assar and Foad Hejazi, 'Vatan' (2005)

'Vatan' (Homeland)

By: Alireza Assar (1970–) and Foad Hejazi (1970–)

Release Date: 2005

Adaptive, free translation of lyrics:

Oh Homeland, the mother of history making
 Oh your soil (territory), is all I need to worship
 Your desert is the paradise of my life
 You, my eternal love, my Iran
 Oh from you, my roots (origin) gain sustenance
 There is nothing on my mind, apart from (serving) your goals (vision)
 You have heroes like Arash (the archer),¹ ready to shoot an arrow
 (And) the bare hands of Bahram to wrestle with lions²
 (And) Kaveh the Blacksmith,³ who kills Zakhak⁴
 You yourself are an enemy slayer ending Zakhak (tyranny)
 You unleash Rostam⁵ who charges with (his mighty stallion) Rakhsh⁶,
 For the awareness (and presence) of them, your enemies will never find
 you asleep (unprepared)
 Your border guards are courageous (and ready to sacrifice their life)
 Your victorious soldiers (Guards) stand in dense lines (in formation)
 They have given their heart and soul for your streams and prairies
 They returned Khorramshahr
 Oh, Homeland, Oh you mother of my Iran
 Mother of my ancestors and children
 My home, My Baneh⁷, My Tous⁸
 Every inch of your territory (soil) resembles my honour

¹ Heroic archer figure in Persian mythology.

² A reference to the legendary story of the Sasanian king Bahram 'Gur' in the Book of Kings (*shahnameh*) of Ferdowsi, when Bahram is said to have killed a lion with his bare hands.

³ Another mythological figure from the *shahnameh* where Kaveh leads a popular uprising against the tyranny of Zakhak.

⁴ Symbol of evil and foreign tyranny in Persian mythology, including in the Book of Kings (*shahnameh*) of Ferdowsi. In Zoroastrianism, Zakhak is an opponent of Ahura Mazda, the highest deity in Zoroastrianism.

⁵ The most legendary hero of the *shahnameh*; a symbol of power and justice.

⁶ Rakhsh is the loyal and powerful stallion of Rostam according to the *shahnameh*. It is first noticed by Rostam amongst the herds of horses brought over from Zabulistan and Kabul. According to this legend, no one but Rostam ever rides Rakhsh, and Rakhsh recognized no one but Rostam as its master.

⁷ A town in western Iran. ⁸ A town in eastern Iran.

Alas! If I witness your derelictions
 If I witness your (rank) and files emptied of your champions (heroes)
 Without your soil, my life and existence is void
 Without the existence of you (your soil), my life shall cease (is
 meaningless)
 Homeland signifies all the water and territory (soil) there is
 Homeland means complete love and purity
 It resembles a cradle, when you are an infant
 It becomes a remedy for your pains, at old age
 Homeland means father, mother, and ancestry
 It signifies pledging your blood for the sake of the country and its soil
 (territory)
 Homeland means identity, origin, and roots
 An opening, an ending and an eternity
 Homeland signifies cliffs, rocks, seas (and the lake of) Hamun⁹
 Aras, Zayanderud,¹⁰ Arvand,¹¹ and Karun¹²
 Homeland signifies the close (concordant) existence connecting Turks
 and
 Persians
 Homeland means the Gulf, which stays forever Persian
 Homeland signifies the complete sacrifice (of life if necessary)
 To reach the level (of resistance) at Tangestan and Dashtestan¹³
 To purify the country from despotism and detestation
 With the sacrifice of our warm blood filling the fountains of Fin Garden¹⁴
 Homeland means calling for a prayer (tale) of love
 Homeland means removing the clouds of dust from love
 Homeland means intention (and) gallantry

⁹ Refers to the lake and wetlands along the Afghan–Iran border in Sistan province.

¹⁰ Largest river of the Iranian plateau that runs through Isfahan. In Persian Zayanderud means 'life-giver'.

¹¹ Refers to the Shat al-Arab river that runs between Iran and Iraq by the confluence of the Euphrates and Tigris.

¹² Iran's most navigable river that runs through Khuzestan province, including Ahvaz connecting to the Arvand and the Persian Gulf.

¹³ Refers to the Tangestan and Dashtestan region in southern Iran known for its resistance to the invasion by British forces in the late nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, in particular under the leadership of Rais Ali Delvari, a committed Iranian independence fighter and anti-colonial activist. The group he headed was eventually referred to as 'Daliran Tangestan' – their story was turned into an Iranian TV series in the 1970s.

¹⁴ Fin Garden, located in Kashan, Iran, is the oldest extant garden in Iran. It contains Kashan's Fin Bath, where Amir Kabir, the much-lauded chancellor during the Qajar dynasty, was murdered by an assassin sent by Nasereddin Shah in 1852.

Homeland means dignity and martyrdom
 Homeland signifies the past, the present and tomorrow (the future)
 The nation and its share of (status in) the world
 Homeland, whether prosperous or in ruin
 Homeland is exactly here
 It means (that is)
 Iran
 Homeland means being liberated from fire and giving blood
 (It means) Kaveh's roar¹⁵ and Fereydoon's¹⁶ anger (outcry)
 Homeland indicates the demise of Simorgh¹⁷
 The tradition of Zal's power¹⁸ and the (wide) wings of Simurgh
 The Army of Life marched to Khuzestan
 (They) embraced martyrdom with open arms
 They took a prayer of (drenched in) blood in Khooninshahr
 They dislodged the invader from Khorramshahr
 Homeland means calling for a prayer (tale) of love
 Homeland means removing the clouds of dust from love
 Homeland means intention (and) gallantry
 Homeland means dignity and martyrdom
 Homeland signifies the past, the present and tomorrow (the future)
 The nation and its share of (status in) the world
 Homeland, whether prosperous or in ruin
 Homeland is exactly here
 It means (that is)
 Iran

4. Hichkas, 'Ye Mosht Sarbaz' (2008)

‘YE MOSHT SARBAZ’

(A Bunch of Soldiers)

By: Soroush Lashkary aka HICHKAS (No one) (1984–)

Release Date: 2008

¹⁵ Kaveh is the most famous of Persian mythological characters symbolising resistance against despotic foreign rule in Iran, in favour of Iranian unity.

¹⁶ Iranian mythical king symbolising victory, purity, justice and generosity. In the *shahnameh*, Fereydoon, together with Kaveh (see above), revolted against the tyrannical rule of Zahhak, and defeated and arrested him in the Alborz mountains. According to this myth, henceforth, Kaveh assumed the throne and ruled for 500 years.

¹⁷ Simurgh is a gigantic, benevolent bird in Iranian mythology and literature, comparable to other mythological birds such as the phoenix.

¹⁸ Father of Rostam. Recognized as one of the greatest warriors of the *shahnameh*.

Adaptive, free translation of lyrics

No one is alone

We are a bunch of soldiers

A bunch of soldiers

Who put our lives on the line

The Angel of Death [Gabriel] is down with us

I want you to throw your hands up high, Higher!

Throw 0,2,1 up forever!

I am with a bunch of 'cool' soldiers

And each of them has their (own) story

Like 'Tripee Maa' I begin this verse in the name of God

God is with us because

We are ever thankful to him

In good times, yet also when we feel like cursing the world

We are a bunch of soldiers, with our lives on the line

The Angel of Death [Gabriel] is down with us

We help each other even though we are all in poverty

Take a taste of my Raps, they are bitter aren't they?

We have taken it to the limit and reached the point

*We have monopolised everyone into listening to our Rap instead of the
'other side'*

We are prepared to give our precious lives for 4 things

God, Homeland, our family and our friends

We have stayed in the streets for 4 reasons

*First, because we have no other choice or place to go, the next reason is a
sense of honour-bound duty*

The next reason is not appropriate to be mentioned here

The 4th reason is a bit romantic

The leaves of autumn

I want you to throw your hands up high, Higher!

Throw 0,2,1 up forever!

I am with a bunch of 'cool' soldiers

And each of them has their (own) story

I want you to throw your hands up high, Higher!

Throw 0,2,1 up forever!

I am with a bunch of 'cool' soldiers

And each of them has their (own) story

I don't feel the peace of mind I feel here anywhere else

All the young ones are learning from us

Learning that a true soldier doesn't just think of himself

They think of the future and tomorrow

We are a bunch of soldiers

With Masters degrees from the biggest university in Iran
 I mean the streets, not formal education
 I chose the pavement over the school chair
 Remember to try and be different to us in this respect
 We also made mistakes, however in any situation we find ourselves in we
 build and make progress
 Many tears and a lot of blood will be shed on our journey
 But in the face of hopelessness and loss of faith
 We are the trees that will not be swayed
 We stand firm
 We do not even fear to be axed
 Not even a bit
 Let them know that we are prepared for war if they force us
 I want you to throw your hands up high, Higher!
 Throw 0,2,1 up forever!
 I am with a bunch of 'cool' soldiers
 And each of them has their (own) story
 I want you to throw your hands up high, Higher!
 Throw 0,2,1 up forever!
 I am with a bunch of 'cool' soldiers
 And each of them has their (own) story
 The flag is at full mast, never doubt that, never doubt that
 Don't even worry my friend, no reason to fear
 We are bunch of soldiers, there used to be more of us
 Take my words seriously, I am not one to joke around
 Many of our friends are no longer with us
 This new year our thoughts will be with you
 I want the martyrs to know that if we are keeping it real
 It is due to their blood which was spilt on the grounds for us
 All the people keeping it real, know that our flag is flying high
 If you are a real man then we are with you too
 I pray for the world to be secure and peaceful
 Amen
 We have felt (endured) enough fire
 I hope the day (when) we are all safe and secure comes soon
 So that we all may be happy together
 Don't stand still because I want you to throw your hands up high,
 Higher!
 Throw 0,2,1 up forever!
 I am with a bunch of 'cool' soldiers
 And each of them has their (own) story
 I want you to throw your hands up high, Higher!

Throw 0,2,1 up forever!
I am with a bunch of 'cool' soldiers
And each of them has their (own) story
I want you to throw your hands up high, Higher!
Throw 0,2,1 up forever!
I am with a bunch of 'cool' soldiers
And each of them has their (own) story
The flag is up, The flag is up, The flag is up

5. Julia Boutros, 'Moqawem' (2017)

‘MOQAWEM’

(Resistance)

By: Julia Boutros (1968–)

Release Date: 2017

Adaptive (free) translation of lyrics:

Your glory was tainted with humiliation and defeat
When the south stood up to resist.
The history of dignity is wide awake.
It's writing in our land stories of triumphs.
Your glory was tainted with humiliation and defeat
When the south stood up to resist.
The history of dignity is wide awake.
I'm the definition of Will when the word is employed.
My sword hails your fall in every battle.
Every single soul in my nation embraces resistance.
Won't settle for less than glory.
Never bowed to humiliation, never bargained.
We triumphed despite your aggression.
Let the whole free world see,
How glory is made in nations.
Your glory was tainted with humiliation and defeat
When the south stood up to resist.
The history of dignity is wide awake.
It's writing in our land stories of triumphs.