



# Iranian Music and Popular Entertainment: From Motrebi to Losanjelesi and Beyond (Iranian Studies)

*GJ Breyley, Sasan Fatemi*

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The word *motreb* finds its roots in the Arabic verb *taraba*, meaning ‘to make happy.’ Originally denoting all musicians in Iran, *motrebi* came to be associated, pejoratively, with the cheerful vulgarity of the lowbrow entertainer.

In *Iranian Music and Popular Entertainment*, GJ Breyley and Sasan Fatemi examine the historically overlooked *motrebi* milieu, with its marginalized characters, from *luti* to *gardan koloft* and *mashti*, as well as the tenacity of *motreb* who continued their careers against all odds. They then turn to *losanjelesi*, the most pervasive form of Iranian popular music that developed as *motrebi* declined, and related musical forms in Iran and its diasporic popular cultural centre, Los Angeles. For the first time in English, the book makes available musical transcriptions, analysis and lyrics that illustrate the complexities of this history. As it presents the findings of the authors’ years of ethnographic work with the history’s protagonists, from senior *motreb* to pop-rock stars, the book reveals parallels between the decline of *motrebi* and the rise of ‘modernity.’ In the twentieth century, the fate of Tehran’s *motrebi* music was shaped by the social and urban polarization that ensued from the modern market economy, and *losanjelesi* would be similarly affected by transnational relations, revolution, war and migration.

Through its detailed and informed examination of Iranian popular music, this study reveals much about the values and anxieties of Iranian society, and is a valuable resource for students and scholars of Iranian society and history.

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