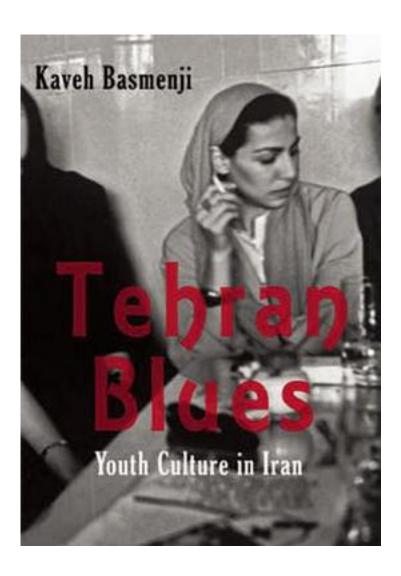
Tehran Blues



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著者:Basmenji, Kaveh

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More than two decades after their parents rose up against the excesses of the Shah,

increasing numbers of young Iranians are risking jail for things their counterparts in the West take for granted: wearing makeup, slow dancing at parties, holding hands with members of the opposite sex. Arrests of youngsters often take place at parties raided by hardline religious paramilitaries of roughly their own age, brandishing AK-47s. And every day anxious parents queue at the courthouse to bail out their children, who - in furious defiance of Ayatollah Khomeini's brand of sombre religiosity - have been detained for 'moral crimes'. Kaveh Basmenji, who spent his own youth amidst the turbulence of the Islamic Revolution, argues that Iran's youth are in near-open revolt for want of greater personal freedom, in furious defiance of the mullahs and their brand of sombre religiousity. Through candid interviews with young people, and in a careful assessment of Iran today (including a special chapter on the implications of the recent election to the presidency of hardliner Mahmoud Ahmadinejad), Basmenji gets to the heart of the matter: what do Iran's youth want, and how far are their elders prepared to accommodate them?

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