CELEBRATED AUTHOR AZAR NAFISI SPEAKS AT ZELLERBACH HALL 
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 5 AT 8:00 P.M.

BERKELEY, October 31, 2007—Award-winning author and women’s advocate Azar Nafisi comes to Cal Performances Wednesday, December 5 at 8:00 p.m., to give a talk entitled "The Republic of the Imagination," named after one of her two new upcoming books. Best known for her 2003 book *Reading Lolita in Tehran: A Memoir in Books*, hailed as “remarkable… an eloquent brief on the transformative power of fiction” (*The New York Times*), Nafisi has earned international recognition for advocating on behalf of Iran's intellectuals, youth and especially young women. She writes extensively on the political implications of literature and culture, as well as the human rights of the Iranian women and girls and the important role they play in the process of change for pluralism and an open society in Iran.

Born in Iran in the mid-1950s and educated in England and the United States, Nafisi returned to her home country in the late 1970s to begin what would become an eighteen-year pedagogical career at the University of Tehran, the Free Islamic University, and Allameh Tabatabaai. Two years into teaching, she was expelled from The University of Tehran for her refusal to wear the mandatory Islamic veil. The duration of Nafisi's career would be mired with conflicts posed by the reactionary despotism of the Ayatollah regime that strove to stifle women's progress and freedoms. Nafisi remained in Iran until 1995, when she finally left her teaching post. In the two-year period between her resignation and her move to the United States, Nafisi taught an underground literature class to seven female Muslim students from the university, juxtaposing Western imagination from the literature of F. Scott Fitzgerald, Henry James, Vladimir Nabokov, and Jane Austen, among others, with fundamental artifacts of Middle Eastern folklore such as *One Thousand and One Arabian Nights*. Nafisi’s experience in this group is the basis of her wildly popular *Reading Lolita in Tehran: A Memoir in Books*, which delineates the relationship between the many Western works of literature that Nafisi and her students explored and the lives of her students and Nafisi herself, eight individuals from the

-MORE-
collective female Iranian population whose rights and personal identities were institutionally being stripped away.


Currently a Visiting Professor and the director of the Dialogue Project at the Foreign Policy Institute of Johns Hopkins University’s School of Advanced International Studies in Washington, D.C., Nafisi has written for *The New York Times, Washington Post* and *The Wall Street Journal*. She is currently working on two books, *The Republic of the Imagination*, which is about the liberating power of literature; and *Things I Have Been Silent About*, a memoir about her mother and father that is to be published in fall 2008.

**TICKET INFORMATION**

Tickets for *Azar Nafisi* on **Wednesday, December 5 at 8:00 p.m.** at Zellerbach Hall are priced at **$18.00**, **$26.00** and **$30.00**. Tickets are available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at www.calperformances.net; and at the door. Half-price tickets are available for purchase by UC Berkeley students. UC faculty and staff, senior citizens, other students and UC Alumni Association members receive a $5 discount (Special Events excluded). For more information, call Cal Performances at (510) 642-9988, or visit the Cal Performances web site at www.calperformances.net.
$5 Student Tickets are now available for this special appearance for UC Berkeley students. Please note that there are a limited number of discounted tickets available, so order early. To purchase tickets, students must come to the Cal Performances Ticket Office in person. *This discount is not available online or via phone order, the limit is one (1) ticket per student with ID, and IDs will be checked at the door of the performance.*

For select performances, Cal Performances offers UCB student, faculty and staff, senior and community Rush Tickets. Rush Tickets are announced two hours prior to a performance and are available in person only at the Ticket Office beginning one hour before the performance; quantities may be limited. Rush Ticket sales are limited to one ticket per person; all sales are cash only. Rush Ticket prices are $10.00 for UCB students; $15.00 for UCB faculty and staff (UCB ID required) and seniors age 65 or older; and $20.00 for all other community members. Information is available at 510-642-9988, press 2 for the Rush Ticket hotline, two hours prior to a performance only.

# # #

Cal Performances’ 2007/08 Season is sponsored by Wells Fargo.

Classical 102.1 KDFC is Cal Performances’ 2007/08 season media sponsor.

# # #

**CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:**

**CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS**

**Wednesday, December 5 at 8:00 p.m.**

Zellerbach Hall, UC Berkeley Campus
Bancroft Way at Telegraph Ave., Berkeley

*Strictly Speaking*
Azar Nafisi, author

**Tickets:** $18.00, $26.00 and $30.00, available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at www.calperformances.net; and at the door.

-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------