

**MEDIA RELEASE**  
**Monday 1 June**

**SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE presents**

**IDEAS AT THE HOUSE:**  
**AZAR NAFISI, LOUIS DE BERNIÈRES & SIR RICHARD J EVANS**

Ideas at the House will present three literary and historical icons over the next three months, with bestselling author of *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, **Azar Nafisi**, Cambridge University Professor **Sir Richard J Evans** and author of *Red Dog* and *Captain Corelli's Mandolin*, **Louis de Bernières**, coming to the Sydney Opera House as part of the ongoing talks and ideas program.

**AZAR NAFISI**

***On the Power of Literature***  
**Concert Hall, Sunday 5 July 2pm**

Azar Nafisi wrote NY Times bestseller *Reading Lolita in Tehran* in 2003 after holding a fellowship at Oxford University, where she conducted a series of lectures on the important role of Western literature and culture in Iran after the revolution in 1979. Translated in 32 languages and the winner of multiple awards, *Reading Lolita in Tehran* spent over 117 weeks on the New York Times bestseller list and was highly acclaimed as an “original work on the relationship between life and literature” (Publishers Weekly). Her latest book, *The Republic of Imagination*, is part memoir and part polemic; responding to those who say fiction has nothing to teach us and inviting readers to join her as citizens of the “Republic of Imagination”, a country where the villains are conformity and orthodoxy, and the only passport to entry is a free mind and a willingness to dream.

Azar Nafisi will also speak at the Wheeler Centre in Melbourne on Saturday 4 July. More info: [www.wheelercentre.com](http://www.wheelercentre.com)

Presenting Partner: Wheeler Centre for Books, Writing and Ideas  
University Partner: United States Study Centre at the University of Sydney

**SIR RICHARD J EVANS**

***Why we still talk about the Nazis***  
**Studio, Sunday 26 July 11am**

The Nazis still have a strong hold on us, with news stories, books and movies continuing to explore the events and personalities of the Third Reich. In the decades since 1945, the way we understand this period has evolved, with a more historical approach giving way to one that foregrounds the memories of those involved and the moral dimensions of the conflict. This may be part of why we are still so interested in the Nazis, but is not the whole story. Does it exert such a grip because it represents racism at its most extreme, a form of genocide that is unique? What has shaped the way we see the Nazis? And why do the Nazis still have such a powerful hold on our imagination?

Regius Professor of History at the University of Cambridge (2008-2014) and President of Wolfson College, Sir Richard J Evans regularly contributes essays, reviews and obituaries to Guardian UK. His general area of research is modern German and European history, especially social and cultural history since the mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century. Evans was a Visiting Fellow at the Humanities Research Centre, Australian National University, Canberra, in 1986. He is the author of over 20 books, with key publications including *The Feminist Movement in Germany* (1976), a three-volume history of the Third Reich (2003-2005) and his most recent book, *Altered Pasts* (2014), which addresses the history of history.

Event Partner: Academy Travel

**IN CONVERSATION WITH LOUIS DE BERNIÈRES**  
**Joan Sutherland Theatre, Monday 24 August 7pm**

Born in London in 1954, University of Manchester philosophy graduate Louis de Bernières has held many jobs, from landscape gardener, mechanic, and officer cadet to schoolteacher in Colombia and England, and of course writer. His

experiences in Colombia heavily influenced his first three books, referred to as the 'Latin American Trilogy', which includes debut novel *The War of Don Emmanuel's Nether Parts* (1990), *Señor Vivo and the Coca Lord* (1991) and *The Troublesome Offspring of Cardinal Guzman* (1992). Selected by Granta Magazine as one of Britain's Best Young Novelists in 1993, de Bernières' most famous novel *Captain Corelli's Mandolin* was published the following year, winning a Commonwealth Writers' Prize, Best Book in 1995. In 2011, de Bernières' released *Red Dog*, after hearing about the true story of the much-loved West Australian kelpie while on a writers' festival tour around Australia. His new novel, *The Dust that Falls from Dreams*, will be published next month.

Louis de Bernières will also speak as part of Melbourne Writers Festival on 20 August. More info: [www.mwf.com.au](http://www.mwf.com.au)

Presenting Partner: Sydney Writers' Festival  
Event Partner: Melbourne Writers Festival

## ABOUT THE SPEAKERS

Separate media releases available for each speaker.

**Ideas at the House** is Sydney Opera House's talks and ideas program. It presents ideas, conversation and debate from leading thinkers and culture creators. Ideas at the House online extends the reach of live events with unique content. As well as a year-round program of inspiring events, Ideas at the House features the annual festivals *All About Women* and the *Festival of Dangerous Ideas*, and one-day events *For Thought* and *Carnegie Conversations: Ideas for a better Australia*. The next *Festival of Dangerous Ideas* program will be announced mid-July and take place on 5-6 September 2015.

More info: [www.sydneyoperahouse.com/ideasatthehouse](http://www.sydneyoperahouse.com/ideasatthehouse)

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