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**WALLIS ANNENBERG CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS  
AND WRITERS BLOC  
PRESENT  
AN EVENING WITH REZA ASLAN**

**Event Features the Internationally Renowned Iranian-American Writer,  
Professor, and Emmy- and Peabody-Nominated Producer  
Discussing his Recent Book,  
*An American Martyr in Persia***

Evening MC'd by Comedian-Writer Maz Jobrani  
with Readings by Actress Shohreh Aghdashloo (*House of Sand and Fog*)  
and Music by Singer Leila Forouhar

**Tuesday, November 1, 2022, 7:30 pm  
The Wallis' Bram Goldsmith Theater**

Beverly Hills, CA, October 3, 2022 – Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts and Writers Bloc present **AN EVENING WITH REZA ASLAN**, featuring the internationally renowned Iranian-American writer, professor, and Emmy- and Peabody-nominated producer on Tuesday, November 1, 2022, 7:30 pm, in The Wallis' Bram Goldsmith Theater. The evening, MC'd by comedian-writer Maz Jobrani (author of *I'm Not a Terrorist, But I've Played One On TV*), features readings by Shohreh Aghdashloo (*House of Sand and Fog*), the critically acclaimed and Academy Award-nominated Iranian American actress, and music by Leila Forouhar, a prolific Iranian American pop and classical singer. Aslan, a recipient of the prestigious James Joyce Award, is a leading expert in world religions. His books, including his #1 *New York Times* Bestseller, *Zealot: The Life and Times of Jesus of Nazareth* (over a million copies sold), have been translated into dozens of languages around the world. Aslan will discuss his latest book, *An American Martyr in Persia: The Epic Life and Tragic Death of Howard Baskerville* (October 11, 2022). The Wallis's partnership with Writers Bloc, dating back to 2014, features a series of conversations that provide deeper insight into the literary process.

For nearly two decades, Aslan has been exploring the intersection of faith and politics in books like *Zealot* and *No god But God* in his TV series "Believer" and in essays, news commentaries, and podcasts. His latest work, *An American Martyr in Persia* introduces the little-known but influential American missionary Howard Baskerville, who traveled to Iran (then Persia) at the dawn of the

twentieth century and was immediately swept up in the local movement for constitutional reform. He died fighting for that cause. Baskerville's life and death represent a road not taken with respect to US-Iran relations – one of practicing the ideals that we preach of respect and support for the democratic and constitutional aspirations of the people. He left behind a complicated legacy, however. Some considered him the "American Lafayette" of Iran; others, as a naïve, reckless, and easily manipulated "white savior" who inserted himself into Persian affairs. Still others in the American government and the Presbyterian Church deemed Baskerville a traitor and threatened him with imprisonment. *An American Martyr in Persia* highlights the complex and historic ties between America and Iran, but it also tells a bigger story about how and why religious and political convictions become tangled up in foreign policy – for better and for worse.

Tickets (\$60 premium seating plus a copy of *An American Martyr in Persia*; \$25 general seating, no book) are on sale now, as are single tickets and subscriptions to all performances in The Wallis' 2022/2023 Season. [TheWallis.org/WritersBloc](http://TheWallis.org/WritersBloc)

The Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts is located at 9390 N. Santa Monica Blvd, Beverly Hills. To purchase single tickets, subscriptions and for more information, please call 310-746-4000 (Monday – Friday, 10 am to 6 pm) or visit [TheWallis.org](http://TheWallis.org).

The Wallis is closely monitoring the ever-changing local health and safety environment carefully and addressing known health factors at the moment. Should plans change and any performance be required to be postponed or cancelled or if venue capacity limitations are instituted, ticket holders will be notified immediately with options for their purchased tickets per The Wallis' ticketing policies.

The health and safety of patrons, our staff, and artists inside and outside the venue are a top priority for The Wallis. Facial masks, covering both the mouth and nose, are still required at all times while within the venue. The Wallis' health and safety protocols are also subject to change at the venue's sole discretion or in accordance with LA County and City of Beverly Hills regulations. Current Health & Safety Protocols and updates may also be accessed at [TheWallis.org/Safety](http://TheWallis.org/Safety). Policies are subject to change.

#### **About Reza Aslan**

Reza Aslan, a leading expert in world religions, is also an internationally renowned writer, professor, and an Emmy- and Peabody-nominated producer. His books have been translated into dozens of languages around the world. He is a recipient of the prestigious James Joyce Award. His producing credits include the acclaimed HBO series, "The Leftovers" and the CBS comedy "United States of Al." Aslan is also the host and Executive Producer of two other original television programs: "Rough Draft with Reza Aslan" on Topic and CNN's documentary series "Believer." He served as an Executive Producer on the ABC drama "Of Kings and Prophets" and on the Emmy-nominated documentary series "The Secret Life of Muslims." In 2006, Aslan co-founded [BoomGen Studios](http://BoomGenStudios.com)—the premiere entertainment brand for creative content from and about the Middle East—which has provided an array of targeted services ranging from strategic messaging to grassroots marketing to publicity and social media outreach, to producers, studios, and filmmakers. Aslan's first book, international bestseller *No god but God: The Origins, Evolution, and Future of Islam*, has been translated into seventeen languages and was named one of the 100 most important books of the last decade by Blackwell Publishers. He is also the author of *Beyond Fundamentalism: Confronting Religious Extremism in a Globalized Age* (originally titled *How to Win a Cosmic War*) and *God: A Human History*, as well as editor of two volumes: *Tablet and Pen: Literary Landscapes from the Modern Middle East*, and *Muslims and Jews in America: Commonalties, Contentions, and Complexities*. *Zealot: The Life and Times of Jesus of Nazareth* has been translated into twenty-seven languages worldwide and is soon to be a major

motion picture with a script co-written by Aslan and Oscar- screenwriter James Schamus. Aslan's degrees include a Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies from Santa Clara University (Major focus: New Testament; Minor: Greek), a Master of Theological Studies from Harvard University (Major focus: History of Religions), a PhD in the Sociology of Religions from the University of California, Santa Barbara, and a Master of Fine Arts from the University of Iowa, where he was named the Truman Capote Fellow in Fiction. Aslan is a tenured Professor of Creative Writing at the University of California, Riverside, and serves on the board of trustees for the Chicago Theological Seminary and The Yale Humanist Community, which supports atheists, agnostics, and humanists at home and abroad. He is a member of the American Academy of Religion, the Society of Biblical Literature, and the International Qur'anic Studies Association. Born in Iran, he lives in Los Angeles with his wife, author and entrepreneur Jessica Jackley, and their four children.

### **About Writers Bloc**

For 26 years, Writers Bloc has been fostering the significance and importance of literature as an art form as well as enhancing the public knowledge and awareness of contemporary writers and thinkers who have made a significant impact on the cultural and literary landscape.

### **About Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts:**

Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts is a dynamic cultural hub and community resource where local, national and international artists share their artistry with ever-expanding audiences. The campus, located in the heart of Beverly Hills, CA, is committed to robust and distinctive presentations and education programs curated with both creativity and social impact in mind. Distinguished by its eclectic programming that mirrors the diverse landscape of Los Angeles and its location in the entertainment capital of the world, The Wallis has produced and presented more than 350 theater, dance, music, film, cabaret, conversation, and family entertainment programs since its doors opened in October 2013. Hailed as "au courant" (*LaLa Magazine*), The Wallis was lauded by *Culture Vulture*, which proclaims, "If you love expecting the unexpected in the performing arts, you have to love The Wallis." Its programming has been nominated for 79 Ovation Awards and nine L.A. Drama Critic's Circle Awards. The campus itself, a breathtaking 70,000-square-foot facility, celebrating the classic and the modern, has garnered six architectural awards. Designed by acclaimed architect Zoltan E. Pali (SPF:architects), the restored building features the original 1933 Beverly Hills Post Office (on the National Register of Historic Places), which serves as the theater's dramatic yet welcoming lobby, and includes the contemporary 500-seat, state-of-the-art Bram Goldsmith Theater; the 150-seat Lovelace Studio Theater; an inviting open-air plaza for family, community and other performances; and GRoW @ The Wallis: A Space for Arts Education, where learning opportunities for all ages and backgrounds abound. Together, these elements embrace the city's history and its future, creating a performing arts destination for L.A.-area visitors and residents alike. Michael Nemeroff is Chairman of The Wallis' Board of Directors.

For more information about The Wallis, please visit: [TheWallis.org](http://TheWallis.org).

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### **EDITORS PLEASE NOTE:**

#### **WHAT:**

**The Wallis & Writers Bloc Present**

**AN EVENING WITH REZA ASLAN**

Maz Jobrani, MC

Shohreh Aghdashloo, Readings

Leila Forouhar, Music

Bram Goldsmith Theater, Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts

#### **WHEN:**

Tuesday, November 1, 2022, 7:30 pm

#### **TICKET PRICES AND INFORMATION:**

Tickets (\$60 premium seating plus a copy of *An American Martyr in Persia*; \$25 general seating, no book) are on sale now, as are single tickets and subscriptions to all performances in The Wallis' 2022/2023 Season. [TheWallis.org/WritersBloc](http://TheWallis.org/WritersBloc)

**RUNNING TIME:**

Approximately 90 minutes with no intermission.

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**PLEASE NOTE:**

Due to current health and safety variables, performances are subject to change, postponement or cancellation.