



Barbra Streisand: Redefining Beauty, Femininity, and Power (Jewish Lives)

Neal Gabler

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Barbra Streisand has been called the “most successful...talented performer of her generation” by *Vanity Fair*, and her voice, said pianist Glenn Gould, is “one of the natural wonders of the age.” Streisand scaled the heights of entertainment—from a popular vocalist to a first-rank Broadway star in *Funny Girl* to an Oscar-winning actress to a producer and director. But she has also become a cultural icon who has transcended show business. To achieve her success, Brooklyn-born Streisand had to overcome tremendous odds, not the least of which was her Jewishness. Dismissed, insulted, even reviled when she embarked on a show business career for acting too Jewish and looking too Jewish, she brilliantly converted her Jewishness into a metaphor for outsidership that would eventually make her the avenger for anyone who felt marginalized and powerless.

Neal Gabler examines Streisand’s life and career through this prism of otherness—a Jew in a gentile world, a self-proclaimed homely girl in a world of glamour, a kooky girl in a world of convention—and shows how central it was to Streisand’s triumph as one of the voices of her age.

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