



**B**arbra Streisand has had a tough time the last couple of years. The Academy awards passed over her film *Yentl* and an unauthorized book *Barbra Streisand: The Woman, the Myth, the Music* was published much to her dismay.

These events might have been hurtful but this Booklyn-born woman who is reclusive, temperamental, difficult, a perfectionist, a Grammy and Oscar winner and a superstar is a fighter. She's back stronger than ever.

She's producing and starring in the film *Nuts*. She plays a strong-willed woman who launches a fierce battle to prove her mental competence along with Richard Dreyfuss who portrays her court-appointed lawyer.

Martin Ritt directs the screenplay written by Tom Topor, Darryl Ponicsan and Alvin Sargent based on Topor's Broadway play. The movie also stars Maureen Stapleton, Karl Malden, Eli Wallach, Robert Webber and James Whitmore.

Streisand's first years were filled with insecurities and she lived

# BARBRA STREISAND

## PRODUCES AND STARS IN NUTS



through many traumas to become what she is today. She has been able to put most of them to rest and forge ahead with her life. She's more at peace with herself now than she ever has been before.

Her 35-year-old father died when she was 15 months old. She was told by her mother it was from a cerebral hemorrhage brought on by overwork. For 35 years she and her brother Sheldon lived in dread thinking they might die of overwork too, only to find years later, their father died of respiratory failure when he was improperly treated during an epileptic fit.

She always felt she never had a father and if she thought of him at all, it was with resentment for making her the only kid on her block who didn't have one. The situation became worse when her mother, who was now destitute, was coping with her own misery and couldn't give her the affection she needed. The family moved to her mother's parent's three room apartment in Brooklyn.

Five people were crowded into the small apartment and Streisand had to sleep with her mother. Her grandparents and mother were cold and undernourished which

resulted in very little love being given out. Her brother and the only toy she had, a hot-water bottle with a little sweater on it, gave her comfort.

The situation didn't improve when her mother married used car salesman Lou Kind who wasn't too pleased with the two children he inherited from his wife's former marriage. He kept telling little Barbra how plain she was compared to his and her mother's daughter Roslyn. The comments didn't do much to build Streisand's self esteem.

Since there wasn't any encouragement at home, it was natural for her fantasy life to take over. She dreamed of becoming rich and famous and wanted to become a singer or an actress. Her mother had other plans. She thought Barbra should take up typing and look for a position as a secretary. But Streisand foiled her mother's plan by growing her nails so long she couldn't type.

Life took on a new perspective when she graduated from high school with honors at 18 and high-tailed it to a Manhattan acting school. She entered a singing contest in Greenwich Village and realized people liked to hear her sing. She won a part in the Broadway production of *I Can Get It For You Wholesale* when she was 19 and was a smash hit. Goodness knows, the rest is history.

Today, she's much more compassionate about men. She still loves the biological differences between them but no longer finds it necessary to be competitive.

Men find her magnetic and are attracted to her even though she's not considered a great beauty. She was first married to Elliott Gould and they have a son Jason who is now going to University. Her name was romantically linked with Warren Beatty, Canada's ex-prime minister Pierre Trudeau and others, before she and her lover, hair stylist now film producer Jon Peters, started to live together. They stayed together for almost eight years and she says they fought like tigers and lived on an adrenaline high.

Now her private life is kept private. She keeps information about any man in her life carefully from the press.

In 1986 Streisand sang live again for the first time in eight years to raise money for the Streisand Foundation which gives money to different charities and organizations. One hundred people happily paid \$5,000 a ticket to hear her sing again and they reported to the press afterwards that they were thrilled with her performance and said she was better than ever.

Not surprising. After all there are very few that can equal Barbra Streisand's talent.

—Sylvia Train

