

Barbra Streisand
CD: Live in Concert 2006

By Nancy Dunham

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Does anyone else remember when Barbra Streisand was just a singer?

She was an engaging one and an incredibly talented one, but she was a singer – no more, no less. Of course today Barbra is so much more – actor, activist, producer, legend – the list goes on and on. Perhaps that’s why this new album, billed as her final run of live performances, feels as if it should hold a special place in music.

Of course, fans everywhere flocked to see Streisand in every city in which she performed. Not only does she seem to effortlessly perform everything from classics such as “Funny Girl” and “Evergreen,” to “My Man,” but she’s an engaging personality on stage. This 31-track CD not only captures those songs but also some of the wit and wisdom that is Streisand, on everything from songwriting to her political leanings. Listening, you can’t help but find her a warm, intelligent, engaging speaker, no matter your take on her particular causes.

Some critics have moaned that Streisand’s voice shows the “wear and tear” of years. Perhaps that is the case. She’s no longer the 20-something who said (Have I Stayed) Too Long at the Fair?” But I submit that what some call “wear and tear” is actually more sophistication and worldliness. Singing these tunes – more familiar to Streisand than anyone – she seems to take special care and inject special meaning in the lyrics – perhaps as she reflects on the truth they hold for her. That type of self-assured knowledge just isn’t possible before you’ve experienced life.

Long-time fans will especially enjoy this album. Streisand does the aforementioned hits but also performs others that she rarely or never recorded before (including “Have I stayed too long at the fair”)?

Even the most jaded among us must admit that this two-disc presents Streisand at her magical best – on stage singing the songs of a generation.