

BOOKFILTER'S MAY PICK OF THE MONTH

MICHAEL GILTZ | MAY 13, 2019

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On Streisand: An Opinionated Guide

By Ethan Mordden

\$21.95, Oxford University Press

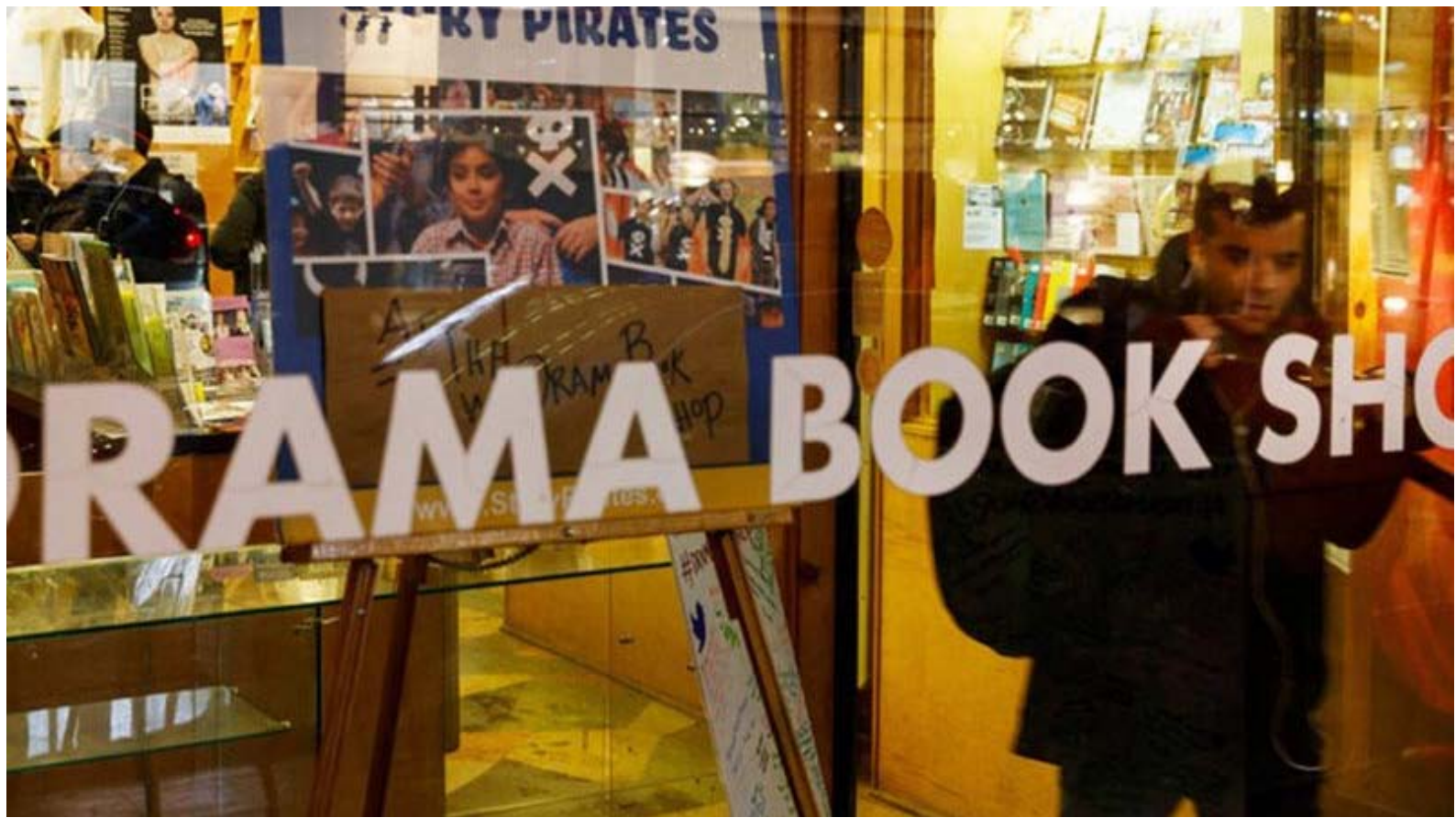
Published May 9

Barbra Streisand has never won a competitive Tony. Never! Shocking but true. She was honored with a special Tony, and she was among the hopefuls twice — once for her breakthrough work in *I Can Get It for You Wholesale*, and a second time for *Funny Girl* — but a win was not to be. Streisand's lifelong love of musical theater and landmark recordings make her a Broadway baby even if she hasn't performed on the Great White Way since *Christmas Day* in 1965. Indeed, her 1985 tribute to show tunes, titled *The Broadway Album*, is the artistic peak of Streisand's career, combining a voice and acting ability at their respective best. We can only hope those competitive juices will convince her to return to the theater someday, if only in

concert. Why not? It worked for Bette Midler! Surely critic and historian Ethan Mordden agrees she's one of the greats. His impassioned book looks at Streisand's artistry and importance from every possible angle, adding a scholarly critique to the obsessive passion of a true fan. A good critic, of course, is someone who appreciates your work, but not all of it. Mordden delves into the albums, the movies, the TV specials, and her early work in cabaret and theater. His book is subtitled *An Opinionated Guide*, and opinionated ain't the half of it. You start reading but immediately feel like Mordden is galloping far, far ahead. He's so informed and enthusiastic and defensive and wide-ranging in his claims for Streisand's talent, artistry, legacy, impact, and all-around greatness that it's a pleasure just trying to keep up. And his insights into her key years in New York City as she figured out who she was and how to bend the world to her vision are many.

***Michael Giltz** is the creator of the website **BookFilter**, a book lover's best friend. He has written for *Huffington Post*, *New York Post*, *New York Daily News*, *Los Angeles Times*, *The Advocate*, and many other publications, profiling talent, covering the theater business, and reviewing shows in *New York City* and *London*. When he's not attending the theater, he's reading about it.*

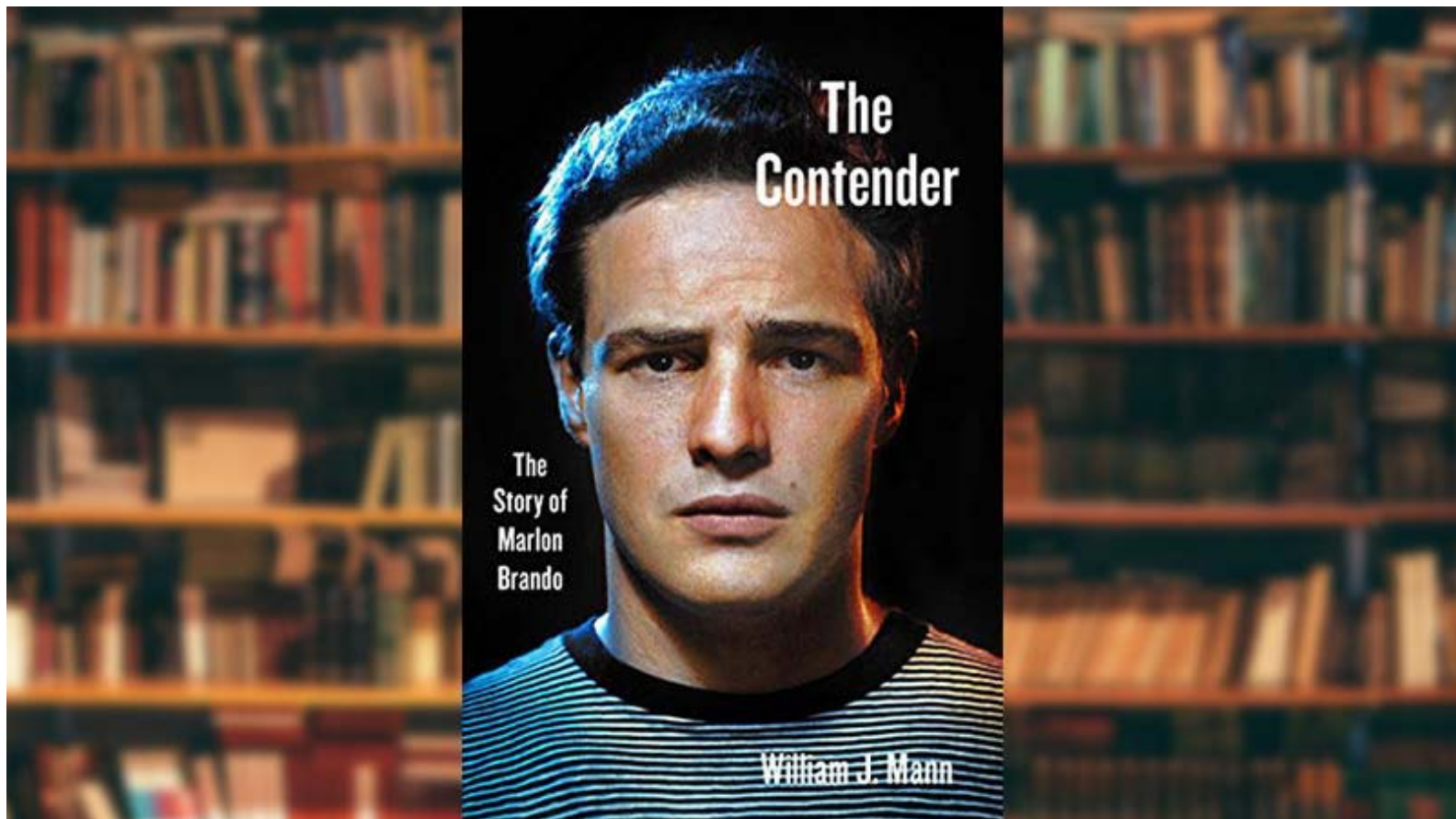
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