



# What Would Barbra Do?: How Musicals Can Change Your Life

*Emma Brockes*

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## What Would Barbra Do?: How Musicals Can Change Your Life Emma Brockes

Emma Brockes didn't always love musicals. In fact, she hated them. One of her earliest (and most painful) memories is of her mother singing "The Hills Are Alive" while young Emma crossed the street to go to her babysitting gig. According to her mother, the music would keep muggers at bay. According to Emma, it warded off friends, a social life, and any chance of being normal. As she grew older, however, these same songs continued to resonate in her head, first like a broken record and then as a fond reminder of her mother's love.

Some people would slice off their arm with a plastic knife before they'd sit through *Fiddler on the Roof* or *The Sound of Music*. But musicals are everywhere, and it's about time someone asked why. From *An American in Paris* to *Oklahoma!*, Brockes explores the history, art, and politics of musicals, and how they have become an indelible part of our popular culture. Smartly written and incredibly witty, this is a book for people who understand that there are few situations in which the question "What would Barbra do?" doesn't have relevance, in a world much better lived to a soundtrack of show tunes. At the heart of *What Would Barbra Do?* is a touching story about a daughter, a mother, and how musicals kept them together. Part memoir, part musical history tour, it will keep you laughing and singing all at once.

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