

= Mecha @-@ Streisand =

" Mecha @-@ Streisand " is the twelfth episode in the first season of the American animated television series South Park . It originally aired on Comedy Central in the United States on February 18 , 1998 . In the episode , Barbra Streisand obtains the Diamond of Panthios from Stan , Cartman , Kyle and Kenny , and transforms into a giant mechanical dinosaur called Mecha @-@ Streisand . She is ultimately defeated by The Cure frontman Robert Smith , who himself transforms into a giant moth monster .

The episode was written by series co @-@ creators Trey Parker and Matt Stone along with writer Philip Stark , and was directed by Parker . " Mecha @-@ Streisand " parodies numerous popular Kaiju films and features portrayals of actor Sidney Poitier and film critic Leonard Maltin .

According to Nielsen ratings , " Mecha @-@ Streisand " was seen by 5 @.@ 4 million viewers , a record high viewership for a South Park episode at the time . Streisand herself was critical of the series and her role in " Mecha @-@ Streisand " , although Leonard Maltin was complimentary about his portrayal .

= = Plot = =

During an archeological dig , Cartman discovers a mysterious stone triangle , which he promptly throws away without interest . Shortly after Kyle picks it up , the archeologist guide identifies the writing on the triangle as Anasazi . Kyle appears on television to discuss the find , making a jealous Cartman want the triangle back . Cartman constantly pesters Kyle until he returns the triangle to him . Meanwhile , Leonard Maltin comes to South Park and asks Chef whether he has seen Barbra Streisand . Maltin , who saw Kyle and the triangle on television , tells Chef the boys are in great danger .

Later , Streisand finds the boys at the bus stop and demands the " Triangle of Zinthar " , and gets aggravated when they reject her . As they search for Streisand , Maltin tells Chef she is seeking the triangle to complete the ancient relic , the " Diamond of Pantheos " , which will allow her to become an evil and dangerous creature that could conquer the world . Later , Streisand dons a disguise and visits the boys again , offering them a monetary reward for the triangle . Stan , Kenny and Kyle are suspicious , but Cartman insists they go along for the money . Streisand takes them to her condo in the mountains , where she chains the boys up ( while Cartman is attached on rack ) and tortures them with her singing voice . Cartman relents and gives up the triangle .

Streisand combines the triangle with the diamond , transforming herself into a giant mechanical dinosaur called Mecha @-@ Streisand , and begins to completely destroy South Park . Maltin and Chef arrive to free the boys , and Maltin asks Chef to call The Cure lead singer Robert Smith for help . Maltin then transforms into a giant robot and battles Mecha @-@ Streisand , but he is quickly defeated . The boys evade fiery debris from the fight , but Kenny is killed when he stops to play tetherball and gets strangled by the rope . Actor Sidney Poitier arrives and turns into a giant turtle with fangs to fight Mecha @-@ Striesand , but he too is easily defeated . After getting a call from the boys , Robert Smith arrives and transforms into a giant moth . After the ensuing battle , Smith punches the Diamond of Pantheos away from Mecha @-@ Streisand , who explodes and dies . The boys split the diamond again to try to prevent anyone else from getting the power by throwing it in the trash can , but the episode ends with the boys cowering in the presence of a Mecha @-@ Ike because Ike went inside the trash can and got the diamond .

= = Production = =

" Mecha @-@ Streisand " was written by series co @-@ creators Trey Parker and Matt Stone , along with writer Philip Stark , and was directed by Parker . " Mecha @-@ Streisand " first aired on Comedy Central in the United States on February 18 , 1998 . Robert Smith , lead vocalist and guitarist for the English rock band The Cure , makes a guest appearance as himself , marking only the second time a celebrity guest played a major role in an episode , after Natasha Henstridge in "

Tom 's Rhinoplasty " . Following the success of " Mr. Hankey , the Christmas Poo " , a large number of celebrities started contacting Comedy Central with the hopes of making guest appearances in South Park episodes , allowing Parker and Stone to practically take their pick of guest stars . Parker , a fan of The Cure , said it was his lifelong dream to meet Smith , and he was one of the few celebrities Parker specifically requested to make an appearance . Smith performed all of his lines via telephone and Parker used the first reading of each line , even though they were executed in a very dead @-@ pan voice .

When Parker and Stone made fun of celebrities in previous South Park episodes , they were chosen at random ; however , they chose to mock Barbra Streisand based on a strong distaste for the actress . Part of the reason they disliked her was that after Colorado passed Amendment 2 , an amendment to the Colorado state constitution forbidding homosexuals from being recognized as a protected class , Streisand made a public statement speaking out against the state and all its citizens , promising she would never visit Colorado again . Parker said he also finds her singing voice annoying , which inspired the scene with Streisand torturing the boys by singing to them . The duo tried to make Streisand 's portrayal as " sick and disgusting as possible " in " Mecha @-@ Streisand " . Mary Kay Bergman , a voice artist who had done most of the female voices on South Park , portrayed Barbra Streisand in the episode .

South Park animators created the episode using PowerAnimator , the Alias Systems Corporation animation program most commonly known as " Alias " . Eric Stough , director of animation for the series , said " Mecha @-@ Streisand " was slightly more challenging to animate than other first season episodes due to the laser beam @-@ type effects featured in the final monster fight , which were specifically designed to resemble a low @-@ budget monster movie with poor graphics . The scenes with an instructional guide taking the kids on a fossil hunt were based on real @-@ life arrowhead @-@ digging excursions Parker and Stone went on in Red Rocks Park during their childhood in Colorado . During a scene with Chef and Leonard Maltin driving in a car , actual video footage of Colorado roads is visible through the back window of the car . The footage was shot by a friend of Parker and Stone and used because the animators did not yet know how to create roads in perspective .

= = Cultural references = =

" Mecha @-@ Streisand " parodies Kaiju films such as Godzilla , Gamera , Mothra , and Ultraman . Parker and Stone watched many Godzilla films during their childhoods , and Parker said he knew from the beginning of South Park that he would base an episode around the films . Streisand is based on Mechagodzilla , the mechanical doppelgänger of Godzilla . Smith is based on Mothra , the giant moth @-@ like monster from the 1961 film Mothra and also one of Godzilla 's rivals , which Parker described as his favorite of the Kaiju films . The scene in which six @-@ inch @-@ tall twins appear and ask actor Sidney Poitier to fight Mecha @-@ Streisand are based on similar scenes and characters from the Mothra film . Poitier portrays a monster similar to Gamera , a flying turtle monster , and film critic Leonard Maltin transforms into a giant mechanical superhero resembling that of Japanese television superhero Ultraman . During the fights sequence , Stan shouts for Smith to " use robot punch " , a line frequently used in Ultraman television shows . The Diamond of Pantheos , on the other hand , closely resembles the pendant worn by a major character in the anime Galaxy Express 999 .

When the monsters battle each other at the end of the episode , a Japanese man sings songs about each of the monsters while they approach . This mirrors a common element throughout actual Japanese monster movies , which commonly have theme songs for the monster characters . Parker wrote the songs in Japanese language . The English translation for the lyrics sung when Robert Smith transforms translates are , " I really like Robert Smith " , and the lyrics sung about Mecha @-@ Streisand translate , " Barbra , Barbra , she 's a bitch , Barbra " . When Streisand becomes Mecha @-@ Streisand , the line was written in Japanese , " From this moment on , I am Mecha @-@ Streisand ! " , but Parker said Bergman misread some of the words so the on @-@ air translation was imperfect . Before Leonard Maltin transforms , he screams in Japanese , " Listen ,

listen , here 's a tulip " , which Parker said is a phrase Japanese children say before passing gas .

During the fight scene , a number of skyscrapers are shown getting destroyed . Parker , who acknowledged the buildings were never featured in any other South Park episode , said they were modeled after real @-@ life skyscrapers in Denver and included in " Mecha @-@ Streisand " only so they could get destroyed during the monster fight , a frequent element of battles in real Japanese monster films . Musical elements from the Hanna @-@ Barbera cartoon Super Friends are also featured during the battle . Actress Sally Struthers , who was previously lampooned in the South Park episode " Starvin ' Marvin " , is briefly seen during a scene in " Mecha @-@ Streisand " , in which she is filming a movie scene with Poitier . Kyle tells Robert Smith , " Disintegration is the best album ever " . The line was based on Parker 's own enthusiasm for The Cure 's 1989 album , Disintegration , and Robert Smith himself would go on to say in an interview that the line was his " happiest moment " . As Smith walks into the sunset , a version of The Cure 's " Let 's Go to Bed " is played on the Japanese Lute ( Biwa ) . Officer Barbrady makes a reference to singer @-@ songwriter Fiona Apple with the line , " Well , you ain 't Fiona Apple , and if you ain 't Fiona Apple , I don 't give a rat 's ass . "

= = Reception and release = =

In its original American broadcast on February 18 , 1998 , " Mecha @-@ Streisand " received a 6 @. @ 9 Nielsen rating , translating to 5 @. @ 4 million viewers in 3 @. @ 2 million households . At the time , it was a record high viewership for a South Park episode , breaking the record that was set earlier that month by " Damien " , and was ten times the average of Comedy Central 's non @-@ South Park programming .

Parker and Stone were very happy with the episode , but received feedback from fans that it was one of the weaker episodes of the first season , and that the constant jokes about Barbra Streisand started to grow redundant . Many fans also did not like Kenny 's tether ball accident death scene because it had nothing to do with the plot of the episode , which Parker and Stone said was supposed to be the joke .

Streisand herself took a negative view of her portrayal , stating in a Mirabella interview ,

Parker and Stone created the second season episode " Spookyfish " in response , where they took a picture of Streisand 's head , placed the image into all four corners of the screen and called it " Spooky vision " .

Leonard Maltin was complimentary about " Mecha @-@ Streisand " , and told Parker and Stone his children particularly enjoyed his portrayal in the episode . Regarding his appearance , Robert Smith had claimed that nothing in his career mattered as much to his younger nephews and nieces as the fact that he was featured on South Park .

" Mecha @-@ Streisand " was released , along with 11 other episodes , in a three @-@ disc DVD set in November 1998 . It was included in the third volume , which also included the episodes " Starvin ' Marvin " , " Mr. Hankey , the Christmas Poo " and " Tom 's Rhinoplasty " . " Mecha @-@ Streisand " , along with the other twelve episodes from the first season , was also included in the DVD release " South Park : The Complete First Season " , which was released on November 12 , 2002 . Parker and Stone recorded commentary tracks for each episode , but they were not included with the DVDs due to " standards " issues with some of the statements ; Parker and Stone refused to allow the tracks to be edited and censored , so they were released in a CD separate from the DVDs . In 2008 , Parker and Stone made " Mecha @-@ Streisand " and all South Park episodes available to watch for free on the show 's official website , " South Park Studios " .

The episode was revisited twelve years later in the season 14 episode " 200 " , featuring a redesigned Mecha @-@ Streisand . During a duet with Neil Diamond , Mecha @-@ Streisand lets out a green cloud from her groin that disgusts the people of South Park . The original Japanese theme song for the creature also plays in the episode . The Mecha @-@ Streisand featured in " 200 " is designed with more sophisticated computer imagery than the original , as the animation quality of the series has improved over the years in general .