

1951

Marguerite Piazza (front cover), soprano star on Max Liebman's *TV Show of Shows*, made her debut at the Met this season as Rosalinda in *Die Fledermaus*.



Marguerite Piazza

This marked the high point—to date—of a career that began with vocal lessons at age 9 in Marguerite's home town, New Orleans. There she sang in high school, in church and on the air before joining the N. Y. C. Center Opera in 1944. Engagements followed with other opera companies across the country, and in operetta, Broadway shows and many radio programs. Today, Marguerite Piazza's eye-filling beauty and dramatic flair, plus a voice of unusual caliber, bring a new, much-needed quality to big-time opera.

has been a notable success. Injecting his virile, witty personality into the entire Met operation, Bing introduced new, young, good-looking singers (such as Marguerite Piazza, above), gave several operas a completely fresh production through the use of Broadway directors, intelligent lighting, new sets.

American Language for American Public

The most successful Bing innovation has been a revival of Strauss' naughty, tuneful *Die Fledermaus* with new English lyrics. *Die Fledermaus* will be the prime attraction of the Met's forthcoming U. S. tour, during which its fund-drive directors hope to get the rest of the much-needed \$750,000.

Besides Rudolf Bing, two other men have been



1951



Laszlo Halasz

responsible for injecting U. S. opera with new life: Laszlo Halasz and Gian-Carlo Menotti.

Halasz, as director of the N. Y. C. Opera Company, has been pushing Broadway-caliber opera at low admission prices for a number of years. He feels other cities can do the same. His company has fostered new American singers and operas out of the ordinary rut of repertory.

One of his hits was *Tales of Hoffman*, now made into a British film (below) with two Halasz

singing discoveries: Ann Ayers and Robert Roun-



In the film, *Tales of Hoffmann*, Moira Shearer dances as a serpent (above) and as a doll that falls apart (r., with Robert Rounseville).

54



Gian-Carlo Menotti

seville. Another forthcoming opera in English on film is Gian-Carlo Menotti's *The Medium* (below), which was a Broadway success and now is in Halasz's regular repertory. Menotti's more recent Broadway-opera success, *The Consul*, also will be made into a movie. Films such as these should do much to stimulate U. S. interest in opera.

Laszlo Halasz best sums up the new U. S. attitude in opera. Says Halasz: "I hate grand opera. What the young American audience wants is *musical drama*, written and staged so that it would be exciting theater even without the music.

"Every U. S. city can build its own audience for low-price opera as we have done. America has now gained artistic superiority over Europe. Let's keep it!"



In *The Medium*: Marie Powers, Leo Coleman (above), Anna Maria Alberghetti (l.).

55

