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TALES OF HOFFMANN

1951 134 min. Color

Written, produced and directed by Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger; adaptation of the opera by Jacques Offenbach. With Moira Shearer, Leonide Massine, Robert Helpmann, Pamela Brown, Robert Rounseville, Ludmilla Tcherina, the Sadler's Wells Chorus, Sir Thomas Beecham and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. (United Artists).

Jacque Offenbach's greatest work in its complete form (prologue, three acts and epilogue), performed by the world's leading opera and ballet stars. Producers Powell and Pressburger, already famous for such films as RED SHOES, STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN, EDGE OF THE WORLD and COLONEL BLIMP, have here teamed up to produced what they consider to be their greatest achievement.

To put Offenbach on the screen was not easy. With an Offenbach operetta "the music is the thing" and a visual interpretation of the airiness and grace of its libretto must harmonize perfectly with the luxurious music. Every conceivable device of the motion picture medium was used to achieve the desired result: new methods of lighting, unusual and lavish costume design and make-up, pre-recording of the music for the utmost in quality.

The story of TALES OF HOFFMANN is the story of the poet Hoffman and his three loves: Olympia, Giuletta and Antonia. It is told entirely in terms of opera, ballet and pantomime—no dialog as such is used. For those who like opera and ballet, it offers the talents of the finest artists; for those with no particular appreciation of these arts, it is a lavish and breath-taking spectacle of color and music.

"Bedazzled the eye! A rare and thrilling fusion of pantomime, music and dance. Decor of incredible magnificence. TALES OF HOFFMANN is splendid . . . a rich and inventive use of the motion picture medium . . . you'll live long before you see a picture more grandly and luminously produced."
—Bosley Crowther, New York Times

"A grandiose pageant! . . . strikingly beautiful scenes . . . a wedding of the arts . . . this is a rare achievement."—Guernsey, N. Y. Herald Tribune

"A magnificent memorable motion picture. I never expect to see anything finer on the screen . . . this is the screen supreme . . . a veritable fairyland of color. You feel as if you were wafted out of your seat and floated to some heavenly body."—N.Y. Journal American

"It is the most beautiful thing pictorially ever seen in any entertainment medium."—United Press