



OLD HEIDELBERG (The Student Prince)

MGM 1927

directed by Ernst Lubitsch

Cast

Prince Karl Heinrich....Ramon Novarro
Kathi.... Norma Shearer
Dr Jüttner.... Jean Hersholt
King Karl VII....Gustav von Seyffertitz
The young Karl....Philippe de Lacy
Kellerman.... Bobby Mack

Scenario: Hans Kraly

Photography: John Mescall

Settings: Cedric Gibbons and Richard Day

Editor: Andrew Marton

Titles: Marian Ainslee & Ruth Cummings

Duration: 105 minutes

Projection speed: variable

Aperture: full

B/W with tinted sequences

Score by Carl Davis (43 player)



LIVE CINEMA

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Old Heidelberg is a glorious example of what became widely known as 'the Lubitsch touch.' With perfect comic timing and virtuoso visual wit, Lubitsch transformed the romantic operetta, *The Student Prince*, into a universal story of love, duty and the irrevocable loss of times past.

Karl, a crown prince, is studying in Heidelberg and falls in love with Kathi, the daughter of an innkeeper. His romantic idyll is shattered when he is summoned to the king's deathbed. His world upside down, he returns to Heidelberg in search of the happiness he once knew. All that remains is a faded memory, his rank now sets him apart from the real world. Only Kathi is as vibrant as ever. But she knows their love can never be - Karl must marry a princess in accordance with his royal duty.

Lavish reconstructions of Heidelberg and expansive crowd scenes made the film one of the costliest of its day. But these are merely a backdrop for an intimate human story. MGM chose two of its biggest stars for the leads. Ramon Novarro is bright and charming as the Prince and Norma Shearer is sweet and sincere as Kathi. Their courtship is pure and joyous, Lubitsch conjuring delightful scenes of their stratagems to be together. Karl's other important friend in his isolated life is Dr. Juttner, played by Jean Hersholt. A great character actor, Hersholt, is wise and affectionate, the dependable father figure Karl lacked. We are as heartbroken as Karl when he dies.

Carl Davis eschewed Sigmund Romberg's famous operetta, writing an original and evocative accompaniment. Lantern-lit beer gardens, moonlit apple blossom and starlit nights, the film is bathed in the rosy glow of young love. Carl Davis's score echoes this as well as the revelry of student life in Heidelberg.