



THE WEDDING MARCH

Paramount 1928
Written and Directed By
Erich von Stroheim

Cast

Prince Nicki Erich von Stroheim
Prince von Wildeliebe-Rauffenburg
....George Fawcett
Princess von Wildeliebe-Rauffenburg
....Maude George
Mitzi Schrammell Fay Wray
Martin Schrammell Cesare Gravina
Mrs. Schrammell Dale Fuller
Fortunat SchweisserGeorge Nicholls
Cecelia Schweisser Zasu Pitts



Producer Pat Powers
PhotographerHal Mohr
Technicolor cameraman
....Ray Rennahan
Art director....Richard Day
CostumesMax Ree

Fully restored print with
Technicolor sequence
Duration: 109 minutes
Projection speed: single
Aperture: full



Score by Carl Davis
(49 players)



LIVE CINEMA



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Despite its 'happy-ever-after' title, Von Stroheim's film depicts a society on the edge of a disaster: the Viennese haut-bourgeoisie during the last days of the Hapsburg Empire. We survey the remnants of a royal marriage. Distorted by greed, alcohol and artifice, the von Wildeliebe-Rauffenburg's set an unprincipled example to their only son, Nicki. A playboy, he romances Mitzi, a serving girl. Something in her purity and sincerity conquers his heart, but not enough to break him of his dissolute habits. Nicki has little more than his title to live on, so submits to a marriage with a wife who can provide for him. Cecelia is the daughter of a rich industrialist. Privileged but lame, she is a pure and sensitive soul and is heartbroken by the prospect of the very public life her marriage will entail. Also heartbroken is Mitzi when her boorish fiancée taunts her with news of Nicki's marriage.

Von Stroheim ran wildly over budget in recreating the very fabric of Viennese life: from the stolid magnificence of the Corpus Christi Parade to the delicacy of fluttering apple blossom on the banks of the Danube. The production included a replica of St. Stephen's Cathedral, Emperor Franz-Josef's carriage, ex-officers from the German and Austrian armies, a real orgy with real prostitutes and an estimated 500,000 wax apple blossoms. He was equally diligent in directing his actors. Fay Wray remembers that working with him was 'not so much a question of acting, but of living a feeling.' As Mitzi she glows with first love which, when extinguished, we know will leave her depleted for ever. Many of the other players were regulars in Stroheim films: comedienne Zasu Pitts, who plays the angelic, pitiable Cecelia, was the obsessive Trini in his film *Greed*; Maude George, elegant and manipulative as Nicki's mother, had found success in *Foolish Wives*. His old favourites Cesare Gravina, George Fawcett and Hughie Mack are the very essence of debauchery. The film leaves us with a sense of pity for every character. Von Stroheim said, 'Let others make films about gay old Vienna, I will make films about sad old Vienna, not because Vienna is sadder than any other city, but because the world is sad.'

In creating his score, Carl Davis contrasts Von Stroheim's sense of portent with the joyous dynamism of the Viennese masters. Primarily using music of the Strauss family, he also quotes Schubert, Mozart, Wagner and Beethoven. In this version, Photoplay has restored the film in accordance with Von Stroheim's final thoughts including the early Technicolor sequence of the Corpus Christi parade.