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THE STUDENT PRINCE

M-G-M picture featuring Ramon Novarro and Norma Shearer. Adapted from the operetta of that name and directed by Ernst Lubitsch. John Mescall the photographer; Hans Kraly, continuity; titles, Marian Ainslee and Ruth Cummings. At the Astor, N. Y., for a twice daily run starting Sept. 21. Running time, 105 mins.

Prince Karl Heinrich.....	Ramon Novarro
Kathi.....	Norma Shearer
Dr. Juttner.....	Jean Hersholt
King Karl VII.....	Gustav Von Seyffertitz
Heir Apparent.....	Philip De Lacy
Lutz.....	Edgar Norton
Kellermann.....	Bobby Mack
Court Marshal.....	Edward Connelly
Old Ruder.....	Otto Harlan
Student.....	J. A. Peters

Lubitsch took his tongue out of his cheek when he directed this special. He had to, and in doing so he also took any kick right out of the picture, if any were there in the script for him. "The Student

Prince" was and is a nice little love story, should figure as a fair enough program undertaking, but where they're going to pay \$2 for it is a problem. Not at the Astor, where the picture will be doing very well if it's still in the house after the Christmas holidays. It will never be road showed and runs off as if it would be much more comfortable in the Embassy. The title of "The Trail of '98" alone makes it seem probable that the gold rush film will be in here, and soon.

It looks as though the director had been miscast. Not meaning that Lubitsch hasn't done well by Heidelberg. Quite to the contrary considering the paper material with which he had to work. It's not farce and it's not drama. Just a pretty love story of peaches and cream that may have put perfume in the director's cigars as he supervised. In toto, everything is okay except the story—and Novarro's makeup. The yarn isn't there for \$2, that's all. It's doubtful if the boys and girls are going to get excited about it in the program houses. They'll like it, perhaps, but they won't rave for the simple reason there's nothing in the unwinding to stir 'em. And a picture has got to slip under the skin to get over and stay there cross country.

This may be an instance where a song synchronized attachment would have helped plenty. The male chorus put over the operetta and the massed singing could have been an aid to the film. But there are no voices, and the Heidelberg student body isn't overly impressive as screened. A program describes the school's old dueling customs, yet there's no such affair in a picture that cries for action.

"The Student Prince" theme is no doubt familiar. If not it concerns an heir to a throne who is forced to give up his love for a tavern maid because of duty to his country. And on the point of the Prince marrying the Princess his dead uncle had selected, the film ends.

Lubitsch has cameraed the love scenes between Prince Karl (Mr. Novarro) and Kathi (Miss Shearer) with restraint, and to that extent

these hits will please the fastidious, although the tab readers may not think they're so hot. And neither has Lubitsch directed over anybody's head. It's all obvious and understandable. Fairly close to methodical.

The claim is that it took a year to make this feature, yet this doesn't show. Productionally there are some rich interiors counterbalanced by a sprinkling of back drops on exteriors. Mescall's camera work is average, with soft focus closeups of Miss Shearer not especially flattering. Still, she looks fair despite the dress of a generation ago, which puts the picture practically in the "costume" class.

But nothing can stand off Novarro's facial makeup. This is ghastly under certain lighting conditions and at no time allows him to completely spin the illusion of the character he is playing. Due to that makeup Novarro is always the actor here despite a performance that is creditable. Miss Shearer's personal efforts are a highlight and Jean Hersholt stands a good chance of outlasting both in the memory of fans on this release because of a sympathetic role plus a corking performance. Others in the cast are incidental.

Music from the show predominates in the score and a short prolog with a male chorus of 22 precedes the screening. There is no intermission.

"The Student Prince" isn't strong enough to stay at the Astor for any extended length of time on its merits. If it gets over with the program house public it will be due largely to the women, for men won't care for its emphasized sentimentality. And that appears to be its field, the major first runs, with the Shearer, Novarro and Lubitsch names to help.

As Loew's has a long lease on the Astor, M-G-M can force it if it cares to. But even under that consideration the picture doesn't impress as having the necessary vitality to make it a Broadway standout.

Sid.