SIGMUND ROMBERG'S
The Student Prince
(Lyrics by Dorothy Donnelly)

Roberta Peters Jan Peerce
Giorgio Tozzi
and Anita Darian Lawrence Avery

The Merrill Staton Choir
New Orchestrations by Hershy Kay
Franz Allers, Conductor
In 1925—soon after The Student Prince opened in New York—a 20-year-old librettist named Oscar Hammerstein, 2nd, made the following observation in a magazine article: “The history of musical comedy has passed through a variety of phases, but the type that persists, that shows the greatest signs of ultimate victory, is the operetta—the musical play with music and plot welded together in skillful cohesion. These are the only kind that are revived years after their first presentation.”

There is no question that this was—and still is—a valid observation. For the past musicals that are constantly being produced and that receive the most frequent recordings are not the latest, moving, modern dress faces that flourished in the Twenties and Thirties. Rather, they are the operettas whose roots may have been in Vienna but which, when transplanted to American soil, have been accepted as a native product. The stories were unquestionably sentimental and far-fetched, and they often had the extra burden of requiring voices of operatic quality to do their scores full justice. Yet an audience will believe the most improbable tale provided that it is drenched with soaring, sweeping melodies that have the power to carry people into a never-never land of never-ending romance.

Few other composers for the Broadway stage were ever quite as successful in weaving a musical spell as was Sigmund Romberg. Born in Hungary, he grew up listening to the music of Johann Strauss and Franz Lehar, who were his early idols. When he came to America in 1909, however, Romberg found a different kind of musical theatre. There were many European-inspired operettas, of course, but what he brought with him was his most steady work for almost eleven years were the spectacular revues written to order for producer J. J. Shubert who turned them out with almost assembly-line precision. From Romberg’s first assignment, The Whirl of the World in 1911, to The Student Prince in 1923, the composer was given only occasional opportunities to create the kind of grandly emotional score and that he loved to write. Though Romberg had written such opuffettes as The Blue Paradise, My Time, and Blossom Time, Shubert always insisted that he spend most of his time turning out back work for the latest Posing Time, revue, Jolson vehicle, and other quickly forgotten extravaganzas.

The Student Prince may not have changed the direction of the Broadway musical theatre, but it did change the direction in which Romberg was heading. It established him as a composer of such distinction that he could now afford to give up writing the meretricious scores that he had been his bread-winners, and concentrate on the kind of work to which he was best suited. The Student Prince enabled Romberg to break with Shubert, thus paving the way for other associations that produced The Desert Song, My Maryland, The New Moon, Rosalie, May Wine and Up in Central Park.

Of all Romberg’s memorable works, The Student Prince had the longest Broadway run (608 performances). It remains a genuinely moving score, possibly the composer’s finest achievement. Its collection of songs is not merely a succession of beautiful melodies. There is a style and dramatic cohesiveness about the entire work that puts it far above most contemporary scores of the genre. Tasteful, imaginative, and well-crafted, it is a true masterpiece in the Student Prince role of the operetta.
Sigmund Romberg's

The Student Prince

with Roberta Peters Jan Peerce Giorgio Tozzi

1. Golden Days (Peerce, Tozzi); 2. To the Inn We're Marching (Men's Chorus) Drinking Song (Men's Chorus) Kathie's Entrance (Peters, Men's Chorus) Come, Boys (Peters, Men's Chorus); 3. Entrance of Prince and Engel (Peters, Peerce, Tozzi); 4. Deep in My Heart, Dear (Peters, Peerce); 5. Finale Act 1, Part 1 (Peerce, Tozzi, Men's Chorus) Come, Sir Guadameamus Igitur Drinking Song (Reprise)