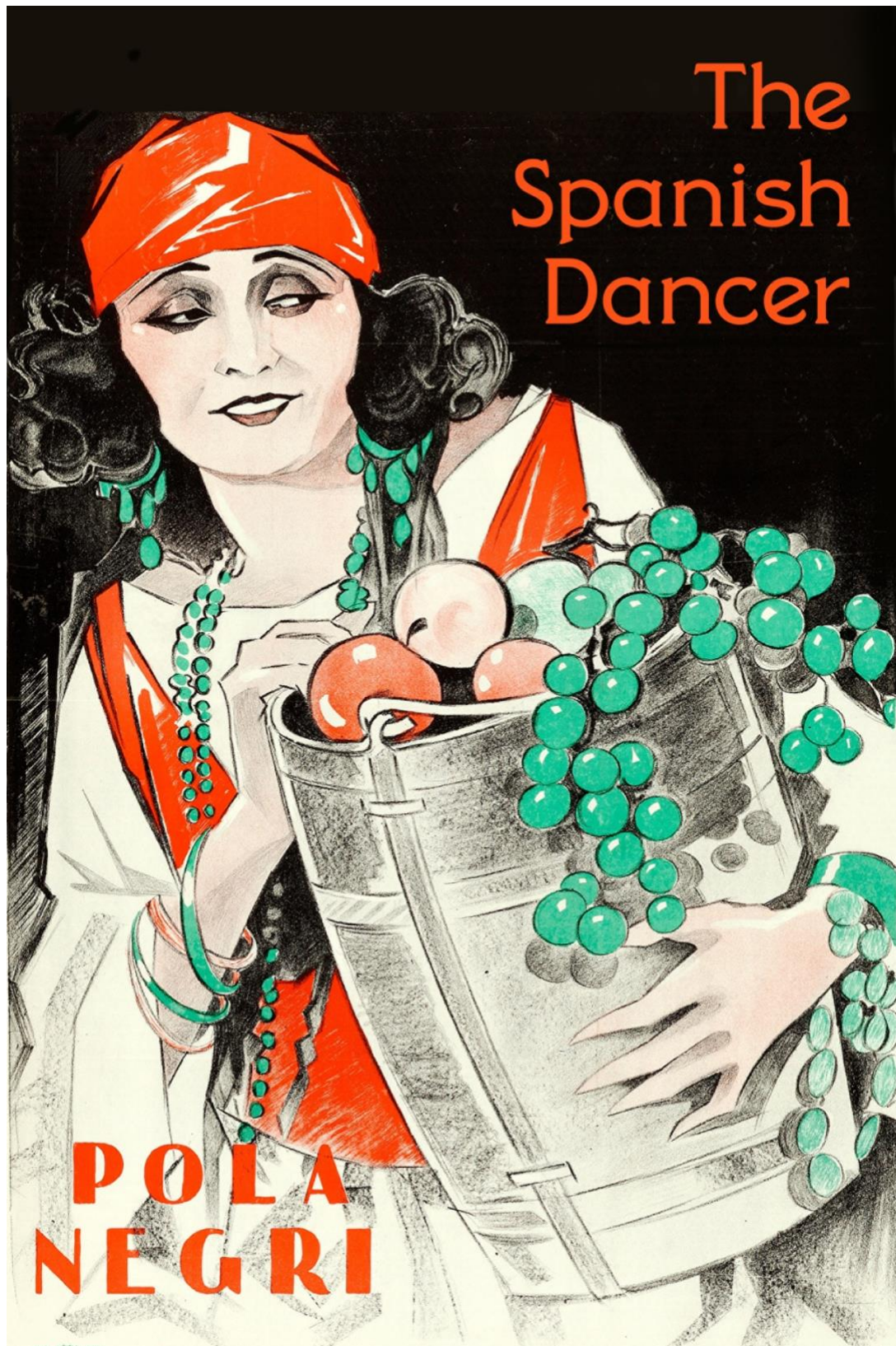


MILESTONE FILMS AND THE EYE FILMMUSEUM PRESENT



Credits

Cast

Pola Negri Maritana, a Gypsy dancer
Antonio Moreno Don Caesar de Bazan
Wallace Beery King Philip IV
Kathlyn Williams Queen Isabel of Bourbon
Gareth Hughes Lazarillo, a prisoner
Adolphe Menjou Don Salluste, a courtier
Edward Kipling Marquis de Rotundo
Dawn O'Day (Anne Shirley) Don Balthazar Carlos
Charles A. Stevenson Cardinal's ambassador
Robert Agnew Juan, a thief
Henry Vogel Olivares
Virginia Moon Grandmother

Production

Production Company Famous Players-Lasky Corp.
Distribution Paramount Pictures
Director Herbert Brenon
Producers Adolph Zukor and Herbert Brenon
Script adaptation June Mathis and Beulah Marie Dix
Editor Helene Warne
Photography James Wong Howe
Costume Designer Howard Greer
Choreographer Ernest Belcher
Based on the play "Don Caesar de Bazan" by Adolphe Philippe D'Ennery & Philippe François Pinel
Based on the play "Ruy Blas" by Victor Hugo

Release Date: November 4, 1923
New York premiere October 7, 1923
Copyright Claimant Famous Players-Lasky Corp.
Copyright Date October 17, 1923
Copyright Number LP19503

Length 2353 meters
Restored Length 2185 meters
Running Time of Restoration 106 minutes

2021 Score Composed, engineered and mastered by Bill Ware
Engineering Advisor: Hugo Dwyer

History and Restoration of The Spanish Dancer

The August 18, 1923, *Motion Picture News* reported that 2,500 players were used the previous week “on one of the largest sets constructed in recent years on [the Goldwyn Studios] lot” in Culver City, CA. The set was a reproduction of the “Square of the Galloping Charger” in Madrid, Spain.

- Another film adapted from the same source was also released in 1923 under the title *Rosita*. That film was a United Artists release, directed by Ernst Lubitsch and starring Mary Pickford.
- The restoration of *The Spanish Dancer* is based on film material from four different sources:
 - A tinted 35mm nitrate print from EYE Film Institute Netherlands (1700m.) With Dutch intertitles
 - A black & white 35mm nitrate print from Cinémathèque Royale de Belgique (1690m.) With Russian intertitles.
 - A 16mm print from Photoplay Productions (570m.) With English intertitles
 - A 16mm print from Lobster Films (625m.) With French intertitles.
- Each one of these prints were incomplete and of varying pictorial quality. Inspection of these elements revealed that even the most complete version that survived (EYE print) only contained 64% of the original film, when compared to the original Paramount continuity script. The print from Cinémathèque Royale de Belgique contained about 62% of the film. The 16mm prints represent a re-release version that was dramatically shortened to contain only around 60% of the original version.
- Close comparison made it obvious that despite missing reels in the Dutch and the Russian language version, the surviving scenes in these films were complementary to each other, bringing back most of the story line. Despite the obviously inferior pictorial quality, 16mm sources were used for several unique scenes that were necessary for the plot development.
- All the available material was scanned, digitally restored and re-edited, reinserting the English intertitles as indicated by the script. The resulting digital intermediate was then printed back to 35mm film, using the Desmet method to reproduce the tints.
- The final version now contains 95% of the original script and doesn't miss a single scene.

Synopsis

A costume drama set in the Spanish court of King Philip the Fourth, *The Spanish Dancer* follows the adventures of the beautiful Maritana, leader of a Gypsy band. We are first introduced to the members of the court: the boorish and dissolute King; his favorite painter, Velasquez; his son, the young prince; the lovely French-born Queen Isabelle; and an assortment of ladies in waiting, jesters, fools, and lap dogs. When the French Cardinal Richelieu arrives to plead for the King to sign a treaty between the two countries, the Spanish Prime Minister Olivarez and his henchman, Don Salluste work to foil this accord. When the Queen intercedes on behalf of the Cardinal, they decide that Don Salluste should woo her away from the King.

Performing at a sumptuous feast at the castle of the handsome and spendthrift Don Caesar de Bazan, Maritana reads the nobleman's fortune in the cards and predicts poverty, marriage to a masked bride, prison, and a duel. Smitten with the lovely dancer, Don Caesar offers her a pouch of gold, which she refuses. He then places his own jeweled pendant around her neck, explaining that it symbolizes the motto of his family: “For these three things the House of Bazan will ever fight — the cross, the crown, and the heart.” While they are speaking, one of the Gypsy musicians steals the pouch of gold coins. Interrupting the festivities, the sheriff's men enter the castle to arrest the bankrupt Don Caesar. Although his guests had pledged loyalty to their host, all beat a hasty retreat.

The next morning in the Gypsy camp, Maritana sees the thief holding the stolen purse and the two fight with knives. Victorious, though wounded, she rides off on horseback to return the nobleman's gold. At the same time, the sheriff's minions haul off all of Don Caesar's possessions, leaving him only with the nightshirt on his back. When

the military arrives with a warrant to arrest and send him to debtors' prison, the nobleman hastily dons a suit of old clothes he had given discarded and given to his valet. Escaping through a secret passage, he sets off on foot. Maritana finds him and dismounts — only to have Don Caesar accuse her of theft. She hands him his purse and shows him her wounded arm. Hearing the approaching soldiers, the two ride mount her horse and ride to the safety of the Gypsy camp. Encountering one of his disloyal friends, they lead the Gypsies as they stop the man's coach and steal back Don Caesar's coat and hat, leaving their victim quite naked. With the troops approaching, Maritana gives her lover her horse and they pledge to meet in Madrid at the Square of the Galloping Charger on the feast day of the Madonna at high noon.

Days before the feast, the Queen of Spain rides with her attendants in the forest of Aranjuez. The young prince's horse, startled by a rabbit, bolts and gallops away. Maritana, gathering wood, sees the runaway horse and rushes to the rescue, stopping the steed and comforting the frightened child. Taking her son in her arms, the Queen asks the Gypsy how she can repay her. When Maritana demurs, shaking her head, the Queen hands her a scarf, telling the girl that she can return it and ask any favor.

On the day of the feast of the Madonna, the grand Square of the Galloping Charger is filled with hundreds of people: soldiers, townspeople, and a solemn religious procession of white-garbed nuns and priests in elaborate vestments. Nearby, in the royal armory, the captain of the city guard dismisses his officers, but harshly orders Lazarillo, a poor apprentice, to stay on the job. At 11:00, the carnival begins, turning the worshipping crowd into a sea of dancing revelers.

The King, taking advantage of the wild festivities, dons a mask and sets out to find pleasure safe from the eyes of his Queen. Soldiers ride through the crowd, proclaiming: "By Royal Decree, he who draws sword on this, the Feast Day of the Madonna, dies by hanging." Meanwhile, the masked King puts a gold coin in the Gypsy dancer's tambourine... and tries to claim a kiss from the fleeing Maritana. When the captain of the guard sees that Lazarillo has climbed a chair to watch the wrestling match between a man and a bear, he threatens to beat the boy with a leather strap. Terrified, Lazarillo runs away.

Maritana leads the King and his companion, Don Salluste on a merry chase, escaping them by barring the gate to her grandmother's garden. Undeterred, the King tells Don Salluste to find the Gypsy and order her to dance for him. The courtier delivers the message but tells her that it is the Queen who requests that she perform. Outside, the terrified Lazarillo cries out as he is about to jump into the canal. Maritana rushes out and helps him flee into the wild mob in the square. When they are accosted by the Captain of the Guard, she stands in front of Lazarillo and protects him. Don Caesar sees the two and rushes to their rescue. When the Captain refuses to doff his hat, the nobleman knocks it off and the two men draw swords. As the Captain falls, soldiers surround and arrest the victor, tearing Don Caesar away from Maritana.

Don Caesar is found guilty of breaking the Royal edict and sentenced to hang at 8:00 that evening. Lazarillo will receive fifty lashes and his ears are to be cut off. After dancing on the great lawn outside the Palace, Maritana approaches the Queen, shows her the scarf, and begs for Don Caesar's life. The Queen promises she will try to intercede and will send her answer within the hour, with the scarf. Meanwhile, Don Salluste and the King scheme his seduction of the dancer. When the Queen asks her husband to pardon the nobleman, he agrees, but turns away from her kiss — pressing her hand to his lips instead. Rebuffed, she returns to her chamber to write to Maritana.

Don Salluste proposes a scheme to the King: if Maritana were a countess, he could romance her without public scandal. All he must do is to arrange her marriage to the doomed Don Caesar. As for the King's pardon... that can be "delayed." Unaware of his treachery, the Queen asks Don Salluste to take her scarf to Maritana and tell her the good news. The courtier kisses the Queen's hand and professes his love for her, reminding her of the King's indifference. Just as they are about to kiss, the young prince arrives to show his mother a Velasquez sketch.

Visiting Don Caesar in his prison cell, Don Salluste offers to grant him one last request. The doomed man asks to die like a gentleman and not on the gallows. Pressed to ask for another favor, Don Caesar requests that Lazarillo be spared to attend him during his last hours. The price for these indulgences, Don Salluste tells him, is that he must agree to marry. "Not if I had a thousand lives," replies Don Caesar. But when they threaten to continue whipping the weeping Lazarillo, the nobleman relents. "Ah, but there is one I had hoped to make my wife," he says. Don Caesar

requests that he be dressed as a bridegroom and that the musketeers who are to execute him be invited to the wedding feast. Before he leaves, Don Salluste tells him that his bride will be heavily veiled.

Don Salluste returns the scarf to Maritana with the announcement: "He dies tonight." However, he tells the weeping girl, if she marries Don Caesar, perhaps the Queen can help. She is to dress in the finery they have brought and come with him. The Queen, he tells her, has also arranged that they will celebrate their honeymoon at the royal hunting lodge.

At the prison, the marriage feast is celebrated. The doomed man toasts the King and dines and wines with his musketeer guests — who are to perform his execution. Veiled and unrecognizable, Maritana is brought in and while the wedding ceremony is performed, Lazarillo, sitting by the muskets, idly eats some bread. As the watchman calls eight o'clock, the bride is led away. Don Caesar tells Don Salluste: "Find Maritana, tell her I died with her name on my lips, and her image in my heart." Lazarillo begs to be able to stay with his friend until the end. Don Caesar stands before the firing squad and tells the tipsy musketeers to aim well, lest they bungle the job. Getting into the coach bound for the royal hunting lodge, Maritana hears the gunshots, but Salluste assures her that the musketeers are taking target practice.

As the firing squad files out, Lazarillo hurries to rouse the fallen Don Caesar who asks, "Am I in heaven or hell?" The young man assures him that he is alive and shows Don Caesar how he replaced the firing squad's musket balls with bits of bread. When they come to take the "dead" man's body, Lazarillo accompanies them. Back at the castle, Don Salluste attempts to woo the Queen. When she rejects him, saying that the King might come in and find them, he tells her that she need not worry — the King is otherwise occupied this night — betraying her with Maritana, the Gypsy dancer. She replies that if he can prove this is so, she will no longer be wife or Queen and that "my own France shall square accounts with Spain." He tells her that the lovers are rendezvousing at the king's hunting lodge.

Disguised, Don Caesar goes to Maritana's grandmother's home and learns from the old woman that the dancer has just married a great nobleman: Don Caesar de Bazan! What's more, she is on her way to join her husband at the royal hunting lodge. There, the Gypsy dancer readies herself for her bridegroom, but instead finds a stranger who tells her he admires her and can give her wealth and high position at court. When he locks the door and refuses to let her go, she calls out for help. "No one dares disturb the King of Spain," he tells her. When she protests that she loves her husband, Don Caesar de Bazan, he asks what she would say if he were dead. "I would still love him," she replies. Told he was shot at 8:00 — the pardon arrived too late — Maritana faints. She walks into the adjoining bedroom and falls on the floor in front of an altar. She prays to die rather than live without her husband or face the King's advances.

While the King unbuckles his scabbard, Don Caesar climbs the ivied wall of the lodge and enters the window of the King's chamber. In the adjoining bedroom, Maritana stands on the balcony and contemplates leaping. The nobleman notices the Queen's scarf on the chair with the King's sword and tells him: "I warn you — there are three things for which the House of Bazan will ever fight — the Cross — the Crown — and the Heart." Hearing his words, Maritana rushes in. While Don Caesar duels with the King to avenge her, Maritana sees the Queen's carriage approach. Maritana saves the day — and the kingdom. Instead of discovering her husband with another woman, the Queen walks into a room where the newlyweds are kneeling before the King as Maritana thanks him for restoring her husband to her. The King promises to welcome the couple at court and to restore Don Caesar's titles and estates. Richelieu's treaty with France will be signed. And Don Caesar repeats the words he had said in jest to his veiled bride minutes before his "execution" — "To you Countess, I devote the rest of my existence."

The Jazz Odyssey of Bill Ware
by John Pietaro

Harkening back to a violinist whose freedom from slavery was bought in performance, Bill Ware's place within American music is best described as a proud lineage. Vibraphonist, bassist, composer, pianist, educator and creative adventurer, Ware's genre-bending career, well into its fourth decade, has been nothing short of riveting. A founding member of the Jazz Passengers and Groove Collective, he's also collaborated with Steely Dan, John Zorn, JD Parran, Marc Ribot, Bobby Sanabria, Deborah Harry, the BBC Concert Orchestra, Chico Mendoza, Bobby Previte, Joe Henderson, Jerome Harris, the Buffalo Philharmonic, the Minnesota Symphony, Elvis Costello, Arturo O'Farrill, Andy Summers, Marshall Crenshaw, Pink Floyd's David Gilmore and many more.

Born in Orange, New Jersey, in 1958, young Billy didn't have to look back as far as his violin playing distant uncle for musical inspiration. His father, who'd experienced childhood poverty, became a musician as a youth and encouraged his children to study music as a means towards discipline and success. By age five, Billy already showed rhythmic promise as he listened to music in the home and banged on anything he could get his hands on. When he was six years-old the family moved to a house in the suburban community of Maplewood. As a bit of unexpected fortune, the house's prior owner left boxes of records for the taking, an odd mix of pop-rock, lounge singers, big band and light classical. And amidst this, a recording of *Leap Frog* by Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie with Thelonious Monk, Tommy Potter and Buddy Rich, proved a lasting influence. Soon, the family also bought a piano and Ware's musical pursuit became active and visceral.



For the budding musician, formal drum lessons as well as studies of the bass, created for him a unique double which soon bore fruit in acquiring jobs. "My first gig at the age of nine was a local production of *the Pajama Game* where I played drums. My father sat to my side and helped me follow the chart", he explained. Bill also found inspiration in two uncles. James Dowdy was a pianist and Ron Warwell, an artist and drummer, was also Art Director at Columbia whose record collection was extensive, offering the aspiring

musician yet another palette from which to draw. By age 13, after discovering Alice Cooper's *Billion Dollar Babies*, Bill decided to form a hard rock band. "We only did one gig and were paid a pizza. The band didn't even have a name!", he recalled. Later, playing drums in funk horn bands, he explored soul covers with a band named Soularized Experience. Thelonious Monk wasn't far off.

Everything else grows from this. As a senior in Columbia High School, Ware was focused on classical marimba, as he prepared for his studies at Montclair State University. "I practiced all of the scales for a year, up and down and in different patterns and then intervals. I was very technically agile on the instrument" but he moved to vibraphone to play in the jazz ensemble he'd founded. "I directed from behind the vibes a la Hampton". Once at Montclair State, "I was being groomed for orchestral work, but they didn't know what to do with me. There was so much racism and I was so tired of it." Soon, he'd switched his major to theory/composition and began a stint teaching at Jazzmobile, while practicing six hours per day, performing in a lounge band and playing a wealth of street gigs throughout New York City.

His studies at the Harlem Jazzmobile Workshop were instrumental. "I went from life as a very unhip suburban kid to being around top-notch pros," he recalled. "In a three-hour Barry Harris seminar, I learned everything. Harmony is simple, only two chords: V and I. All the others are color." After graduation in 1982 came a period of serious illness, hospitalization, and bed rest for months. "I drew a set of vibe bars on a cloth which I spread across my bed to practice different rhythmic patterns and develop my four-mallet technique". After recuperation, Bill began working in and writing for Latin jazz bands as a bassist or pianist including that of Bobby Sanabria. In this period, he also

become a faculty member at William Patterson College and in 1986, formed the recording and touring band AM Sleep with master Cuban drummer Roberto Borrell. It was just when his career path seemed headed for a rich future in Latin music when, in 1987 he got the call inviting him to join the newly formed septet, the Jazz Passengers, a New York City avant-garde jazz group founded by saxophonist Roy Nathanson and trombonist Curtis Fowlkes.

“I was hanging out in Jazzmobile as that scene developed downtown. A lot of those musicians loved jazz but really didn’t play it, so when Roy Nathanson left John Lurie’s Lounge Lizards, he made certain it leaned more to jazz.” Joining the ensemble, initially called Attention Shoppers!, thrust Ware into the heart of the thriving avant-garde/experimental scene on the still raw Lower East Side. “I was just a straight-ahead player”, he recalled. “They were into Ornette and Coltrane’s *Om*. There was a serious scene downtown so our first gig — at the Kitchen — was packed. I’d had little experience in New York clubs, and I thought we were going to be playing in the kitchen of some restaurant. I didn’t know it was a club!”

After their triumphant debut, the Jazz Passengers performed often at the original Knitting Factory, a location that fortified the Passengers’ legendary status and hosted several of its record dates. The band, which also featured guitarist Marc Ribot, rapidly developed an international following, attracting vocalists Mavis Staples, Elvis Costello, Jimmy Scott, Cuba Gooding, Bob Dorough and others. But among those greats, it was Deborah Harry who officially joined the band, performing with them on the *Conan O’Brien Show* and *Late Night with David Letterman* and touring widely with them for seven years. Between 1987 and 2000 the Jazz Passengers recorded eight albums. But even with this success, during downtime its members sought outside projects. For Ware, this began with his trio, Vibes, a house band of the Knitting Factory’s Late-Night Hang. In various iterations Vibes has been an ongoing project and released several albums over the years including 2010’s *Played Right*, lauded by *All About Jazz* as brandishing “...the touch of a resilient, serpentine stylist, a master of quiet spectacle.”

The 1990s were a busy and varied period, starting with an invitation for a three-month residency at Club Bird in Yokohama, Japan. The ensemble, Bill Ware’s Club Bird All-Stars, would later perform widely and record the album *Long & Skinny* which remains a classic of the genre. Bill also delved into the burgeoning acid jazz scene as an original member of Groove Collective, the seminal acid jazz band dominating the Giant Steps scene in New York City. While with Groove Collective, Ware explored the use of an electronic effects system for the vibraphone, an enhancement of the instrument following in the footsteps of legendary vibist, Mike Mainieri of Steps Ahead. Early on, Groove Collective was discovered by renowned Steely Dan producer Gary Katz who signed the band to the major label, Warner Brothers Reprise, and produced their debut album, *Groove Collective*. Their international tours were extensive, and they later released three albums under the Shanachie label’s Guise.

During this period, Ware also formed the band Groove Thing, with saxophonist Jay Rodriguez from Groove Collective and featuring Debby Harry on two albums: *The Adventure* and *This is No Time*. It was Gary Katz who introduced Bill to Steely Dan, and from 1993-95, Ware toured with the band for its first live dates in a generation, recording the album *Alive in America* along the way. By mid-decade, he was also teaching in New York’s LeAp Program — Learning Through Expanded Arts — which used the arts in elementary schools toward the learning of academics. This was Ware’s initial foray into the community teaching experience however, it was halted when, in 1997, he received the frightening diagnosis of a tumor on his spinal column. With financial help from the Jazz Foundation of America, he was able to successfully complete treatment and maintain his thriving career.

Never one to idle, the vibraphonist continued in a series of projects in the new millennium including his Y2K Quartet which recorded *Keeping Up with the Jones*, also recording the Duke Ellington tribute *Sir Duke* as a duo with Marc Ribot. He also worked as a sideman on albums by Roy Nathanson, Lee Feldman, Janis Siegel, Jerome Harris, JD Parran, Mario Pavone, CeCe Peniston, Andy Summers and Elvis Costello. Further, Ware has independently produced Deborah Harry and extensively taken the helm for his own studio projects including for his full electric band. He joined Bobby Previte’s New Bump Quartet from 2010 – 2013 and developed an important presence at Puppet’s Jazz Bar in Brooklyn, ultimately forming a quartet with Arturo O’Farrill, Alex Blake and club owner Jaime Affoumado, the Puppeteers, in 2014. In 2009, Ware joined the Rez Abbasi Acoustic Quartet, whose debut release *Natural Selection* earned four stars in *Downbeat*, among other accolades. After thrilling audiences at the 2010 Newport Jazz Festival, the Quartet embarked on international tours and later released their second album, *Intents and Purposes* in 2015.

Beyond performance, Bill has made important inroads as a composer in both contemporary classical music and film scoring. His orchestral adventures began with a request for orchestrations of the Deborah Harry – Jazz Passengers songbook for performances with the Buffalo Philharmonic, which were also later performed by the BBC Concert Orchestra and the Northern Sinfonia Chamber Orchestra. To date, he's composed three symphonies, multiple concerti, numerous soundtracks and other works. Among the victories on this front was the 2004 performance of his "Das Juengste Kind, Symphonie der Familien" by the Minnesota Orchestra. Ware also has collaborated with cellist Sara Wollan on several hybrid classical/jazz projects of various iconic composer's works by way of Ware's jazz orchestrations.

Ware's film compositions, alone and in collaboration with Roy Nathanson, include scores to *Martin and Orloff*, *Raising Victor Vargas*, *Undeclared*, *Excess Baggage*, *Singularity*, and Hal Wilner's *A Tribute to Harold Arlen*. He also arranged the Jazz Passengers' music for their live performances set to the Universal cult classic, *the Creature from the Black Lagoon*.

In 2010, the Jazz Passengers found each other once again after a decade apart, with their acclaimed album *Reunited* and a series of tours, including a triumphant performance at Austria's Saalfelden Jazz Festival. In 2012, the band continued their theatrical pursuits with a theatre workshop residency at Bric in Brooklyn of a new work by Roy Nathanson and Lloyd Miller entitled *Trashed Out*, a powerful statement on the financial crisis of 2008 based on Paul Reyes' book, *Exiles in Eden*. The Jazz Passengers' thirtieth anniversary recording *Still Life with Trouble* was released in 2017, featuring two Ware compositions and many of his arrangements containing references to Paris, Lennie Bruce, Louis Armstrong, R&B and pop culture. Described by Nathanson simply as "...nine musical stories about trouble and the passage of time...", it received a 4.5 star review in *Downbeat*.

In 2019, Bill moved to the Hudson Valley, New York and began shifting his focus towards film scoring once again. He composed an original score for the animated German, silent film by Lotte Reiniger, *The Adventures of Prince Achmed* (1926) to be performed with his quintet (The Achmedians) that includes Steven Bernstein (Sexmob) on slide trumpet, Sam Bardfeld (Jazz Passengers, Bruce Springsteen) on violin, Philip Mayer (*The Band's Visit*) on percussion and much sought after gimbri player, John Murchison who also plays bass. The World Premiere took place at MassMOCA in August 2020, with another performance at Roulette Intermedium in November 2020. US and international touring will be planned for 2022 and beyond.

Bill also serves on the Artistic Advisory Board of the nonprofit organization, Jazz Passengers Music Projects, Inc. (JPMP), which is fiscal sponsor for the "social justice oriented artistic, theatrical and educational projects" that come from members of the Passengers.



For more information visit BillWarevibes.com and Facebook.com/billwarevibes

Composer Notes on The Spanish Dancer Score *by Bill Ware*

In creating the score for *The Spanish Dancer*, I found myself with a rare opportunity to create a musical composition that provides the complete sonic palette for a full-length feature silent film. I wanted to bring a modern movie sensibility with multiple layers of sounds woven into my score. The sound palette for the score was created by combining period instruments like harpsichord, and exotic instruments like the oud, with Romani-gypsy themes and elements of jazz that surprise the audience and enhance the comedic drama of this wonderful film.

I began my effort by first watching the film in silence with no prior research. My wife, Dana and I watched and took notes, chuckling at the comic elements and riveted by the strong female characters and the male roles as buffoons. After the first viewing, I began researching the film and learned that the dominant female roles may stem from the contributions of co-screenwriters Jane Mathis and Beulah Marie Dix. I also read how the original concept of the film was to feature Rudolph Valentino, but he was suspended by Paramount Studios because of contract disputes, and the film was reimagined to feature Pola Negri as the lead instead.

According to film reviewer Jason Day, the Eye Filmmuseum collected several disparate prints from around the world, of varying lengths and quality, and after locating the original treatment script, they discovered that what they assumed was a poor and fairly standard costume drama was actually a saucy comedy. In his review on [Cinesocial](#), Day wrote:

Whether painter Velazquez valiantly tries to capture the King's portrait with increasing desperation as the monarch's concentration is increasingly interrupted, or when Moreno jokes about impending death after his nuptials or Beery's merry monarch satirizes his own insatiable lustings, the film is peppered with a bawdily sarcastic wit throughout

My score attempts to articulate the humor, drama, suspense, and action, all through musical instruments, song, themes, and accents.

I approached the score to this silent film with the concept of four layers to the composition. First is the underscoring, which includes the songs and pieces of music that enhance the emotions and drama playing out in the video. The second layer is the source music, which represents the music heard as an element of the scene, (such as the eight guitar players playing music in the first dance scene). On top of those two layers are the sound effects, or the sonic representation of actions or motions taking place in the film, such as wind, animals, body movement, doors opening and closing, etc.... Then finally, the fourth layer is the music representing the dialogue of the characters when they speak to each other on screen or through intertitles.

As I worked on these layers, I became conscious of the intensity of it all, and to be mindful of the audience's capacity to absorb the score without losing the visual elements, I began to adjust the mix to provide ducking during the inter-titles (screen narrations) and in the transitions between indoors and outdoors, and from scene to scene.

The Music – underscoring and source music alike — are built upon a set of my compositions from my archive. To set the right tone for the music, I immersed myself in study of baroque music of the 1600s and arranged my compositions in this style. I also explored Romani music, listening to a variety of inspirational examples, such as the Gypsy sounds featured in *Latcho Drom* (1993).

In my experience, all films have a rhythm or pulse — and *The Spanish Dancer* is no different — as I had learned that the editing was done to the rhythm of music. To ensure that my music respected the rhythm of *The Spanish Dancer*, I carefully watched and measured the film numerous times to create a tempo map that I could use to mold my songs into the rhythm of the film without suffering any damage to the musical lines or form of each song. I let the movie tell me what to write, by considering the hints in the story. For example, like the eight guitarists, there were other numerical cues that guided my writing. Eleven chimes open the festival party which occurs at eleven o'clock — and the twelve bullets in Lazarillo's hand after Bazan is shot are represented by twelve bells. I also looked for elements in the film that I could have fun with by inserting musical quotes from the American songbook.

One such quote being “Smoke Gets in Your Eyes” when the king attempts to “blow smoke” by lying to Bazan in the closing scene.

For source music, where musicians appear on the screen, I wrote parts in the score to represent the music I imagined they were playing. I then thought about how each dominant character could be represented in the score, both in terms of the underscoring and the fourth layer of dialogue between the characters. The orchestration is created to represent the characters on the screen, and the dialogue between characters is represented by those dominant instruments trading lines in the arrangement, as would two jazz improvisers trading lines in a solo.

To decide upon the instrumentation for *The Spanish Dancer*, I referred to my score for the 1926 silent animated film, *The Adventures of Prince Achmed*, which features my quintet that I call the Achmedians (with yours truly on vibraphone, and Steven Bernstein (trumpet) John Murchison (gimbre), Sam Bardfeld (violin) and Philip Mayer (percussion)). My *Achmed* score was centered around John Murchison’s performance of the gimbre, a three-stringed hollow-bodied bass lute common in north Africa. Similarly, the score for *The Spanish Dancer* score features John’s masterful playing on the oud, an ancient stringed instrument similar to the lute. I chose the oud, with its exotic and mellow tone, to evoke the strength, beauty, and independence of Maritana, the Gypsy band leader, fortune teller and star of *The Spanish Dancer*.



Bill Ware and the Achmedians performing his score to *The Adventures of Prince Achmed* at Roulette in Brooklyn in 2021

Steven Bernstein on trumpets represents the voice of Bazan with a variety of timbres, using slide trumpet and occasionally mute. The court characters are represented by a grouping of virtual woodwind instruments (plugins by Native Instruments) that are intentionally piercing and annoying. In some scenes, Steven and Sam Bardfeld on solo violin give a voice to the young apprentice, and Sam and Sara Wollan on cello are used, along with additional virtual string instruments to portray drama in emotional and suspenseful scenes. John Wechsler’s flute is a dominating instrument in the source music, and Rez Abbasi’s electric guitar provides an out of worldly vibe in occasional scenes, as my nod to Ennio Morricone’s iconic spaghetti westerns scores. Philip Mayer’s middle eastern percussion provides an exotic flavor throughout the score, and Bobby Previte’s drum set provides swing for the bizarre baroque jazz set at Bazan’s castle and action throughout the festival of Madonna scene. Rhythmic clapping and a sample of Kazu Kumagai’s tap dancing represents the gypsy band and brass choirs are used for the royalty in entry calls.

I am truly grateful to my dear friends Dennis Doros and Amy Heller for the opportunity to create a musical score for Milestone Films and Eye Filmmuseum’s *The Spanish Dancer*.

Credits:

Composed, engineered and mastered by Bill Ware
Engineering Advisor: Hugo Dwyer
Bill Ware, vibraphone, midi orchestra and acoustic bass
Rez Abbasi, electric guitar
Sam Bardfeld, violin
Steven Bernstein, trumpets

Curtis Fowlkes, trombone
Philip Meyer, percussion
Bobby Previte, drums
Sara Wollan, cello
John Murchison, oud
David Wechsler, flute
Kazu Kumagai, tap dance sample

The creation of The Spanish Dancer

“Twin films” is a term Hollywood uses for movies on the same subject coming out at the same time. Some examples are: *The Rise of Catherine the Great* and *The Scarlet Empress* in 1934; *Young Mr. Lincoln* and *Abe Lincoln in 1940*; *Dr. Strangelove* and *Fail Safe* in 1964; *The Howling*, *Wolfen* and *America Werewolf in London* in 1981; *Dangerous Liaisons* and *Valmont* in 1988/1989; *Capote* and *Infamous* in 2005; and *Darkest Hour* and *Dunkirk* in 2017.



So, it should be no surprise that in 1923, *The Spanish Dancer* (starring Pola Negri from Paramount) and *Rosita* (starring Mary Pickford from United Artists) came out at the same time. What is interesting is that the play *Don Caesar de Bazan* centers on a male protagonist — Rudolph Valentino was to star in the film for Paramount before his contract dispute with the studio — and that both films decided to change story to focus on the Romani girl instead. Also, curiously, *Rosita*’s director was Pola Negri’s favorite filmmaker, Ernst Lubitsch. Their work together in Germany made them world famous and had brought them both to Hollywood only the year before. Herbert Brenon was chosen to direct Paramount’s version, and he was fortunate in having Negri as the star. The Canadian-born Mary Pickford, an incredible actress

and comedienne, was perhaps still the most popular star in the world, but she was badly miscast as the fiery *Rosita*. Pola Negri, however, had the European flair, passion, exoticism, and formal ballet training that made *Maritana* flesh and blood. Their love interests also had the same revealing differences. George Walsh, who played Don Diego in *Rosita*, was a fine actor — but an Irish Catholic born in New York who exuded American athleticism and conventional romance. (Their kiss in *Rosita* marked Mary Pickford’s first “adult” kiss in a feature film. The handsome Antonio Moreno, Don Caesar in *The Spanish Dancer*, spent his first fourteen years in Spain and was a screen “Latin Lover” even before Valentino. His grace, humor, and talent were perfect for the role.



Along with Negri and Moreno were the excellent actors Adolph Menjou, Wallace Beery and the sadly forgotten but extremely talented Kathlyn Williams. *The Spanish Dancer* also had one of the greatest creative teams of the silent film era behind the camera, including Brenon, cinematographer James Wong Howe, costume designer Howard Greer, screenwriters June Mathis and Beulah Marie Dix, and choreographer Ernest Belcher.

James Wong Howe was very early in his legendary career when he worked on *The Spanish Dancer*. His favored use of foreground in his shots (including the use of silhouette) worked to great advantage in a film with such a large cast, outdoor scenes, and expansive sets.

“Mr. Brenon and I worked together a lot. He liked me and I respected the way he prepared. We became very close. He was an interesting director to work with. He treated me like a young kid, which I was, like his son; and you know how a father can get after his son. He used to get after me that way, and I didn’t like it. He was wonderful with actors; he could do any kind of scene. He was an actor himself before he became a director, and he used to go and act out all the scenes, so the actors would know what he had in mind. That was quite interesting... I learned a lot from watching him.” — James Wong Howe: *The Camera Eye, A Career Interview* by Alain Silver, Pendragon Books, Santa Monica, 2010

What Howe found interesting, Negri was less impressed with — notably, the domineering director’s style of instructing his actors. In an instance of the pot calling the kettle black, she wrote in her memoir: *“Brenon was a volatile and fastidious man who insisted that things be done only in his way. I could not help seeing certain scenes as Lubitsch would have directed them. This resulted in many flare-ups that often held up work for an entire day.”*

Despite this, or perhaps because of it, the film turned out so well that when both *Rosita* and *The Spanish Dancer* were released, it resulted in a complete artistic and financial victory for Negri and Brenon. Whatever the case, after coming to America and two starring roles in *Bella Donna* and *The Cheat* with middling director George Fitzmaurice in 1923, Maritana was Negri's first great performance in America.

The Literary Origins and Screen Versions of The Spanish Dancer

The screenplay for *The Spanish Dancer* has a long, convoluted, and surprising literary genealogy. According to film historian Rob Byrne, who worked on the Eye Filmmuseum restoration of the film, Pola Negri's studio, Famous-Players-Lasky, in search of a film that would establish the Polish actress as an American screen star, "settled on an adaptation of 'Don Caesar de Bazan' ... by Adolphe Philippe d'Ennery and Philippe François Pinel, which had been originally purchased as a vehicle for Rudolph Valentino."

Curiously, at around the same time that Herbert Brenon was filming *The Spanish Dancer*, Pola Negri's former director Ernst Lubitsch was making *Rosita*, a film also based on the d'Ennery and Pinel play, with Mary Pickford in Negri's role.

Pinel (also known as Dumanoir) and d'Ennery's 1844 play was a five-act melodrama — a commissioned work, derived from performances of the stage tragedy "Ruy Blas" by Victor Hugo (1838), a work which had many subsequent imitators and adaptations. In this case, a secondary character in "Ruy Blas," named Don Caesar de Bazan, had been played for years by Frédéric Lemaître. The actor then commissioned a new melodrama with that title, written to provide him with a lead role of his own. D'Ennery and Pinel wrote the play in 1844 and Lemaître produced it on July 30, 1844, at the Théâtre de la Porte-Saint-Martin.

Subsequently, the play was translated into English by Gilbert A. A'Beckett and Mark Lemon and was performed at the Princess's Theatre in London on October 8, 1844. The performance of James W. Wallack in the role of Don Caesar was described in a letter by N. P. Willis: "*The high-born Spanish gentleman, in pride and rags, indomitably gay in his worst perils and extremities, and preserving his elegance through all his trials and tatter, could never be represented with more admirable truth and attractiveness. The abandon with which Wallack plays, seemingly carried away by the gaiety of the part, yet always true to nature and to the poet's meaning, give his performance, to me, a charm irresistible.*"

Two other versions of the play were produced in London around the same time: Dion Boucicault's staging at the Adelphi and another entitled "A Match for a King," produced by Charles Mathews. "Don Caesar de Bazan" premiered in the United States at Mitchell's Olympic Theatre in New York City on December 9, 1844.

On February 26, 1864, President Abraham Lincoln attended a performance of "Don Caesar de Bazan" at Grover's National Theatre (at the junction of E Street and Pennsylvania Avenue) with actor Edwin Booth in the lead. A year later, on April 14, 1865, the star's younger brother John Wilkes Booth shot and killed Lincoln during a performance at another Washington, DC venue, Ford's Theatre.

Edwin Booth continued to perform the play. On October 19, 1869 the audience at the Walnut Street Theater in Philadelphia (where Booth was in his fifth week onstage) was exhorted to: "remain seated till the close of the Play, as the noise occasioned by the impatient few, mars the pleasure of the more intellectual portion of the audience, that wish to witness the completion of the performance...., The performance will commence at 1/4 to 8 o'clock, with Overture — 'L'Roi D'Yvetot,' Adam, After which will be presented Kotzbue's 'Pathetic Play, of the Stranger, or, Misanthropy & Repentance' to conclude with the Drama, in Three Acts, of 'Don Caesar de Bazan.'" In 1878, Francis Hart & Company published William Winter's editions of Edwin Booth's Prompt-Books (scripts) of many famous plays, including "Ruy Blas" and "Don Caesar de Bazan."

In 1872, composer Jules Massenet, working from a libretto by D'Ennery, Pinel, and Jules Chantepie, wrote a four-act comic opera also called “Don Caesar de Bazan,” which was first performed at the Opéra-Comique in Paris on November 30, 1872.



The play was adapted for the screen many times. The earliest version seems to be the one-reel *Don César de Bazan* made by Éclair in France in 1909, directed by Victorin-Hippolyte Jasset and starring Harry Baur. In 1912, the Reliance Film Company in Los Angeles released the twenty-minute-long *Don César de Bazan*, directed by Theo Frenkel and starring Irving Cummings, Isabel Irvine and Frenkel himself in the role of Don Jose. In 1915, the Kalem Company in Germany produced a 40-minute version entitled *Don Caesar de Bazan*, which was directed by Robert G. Vignola and starred Lawson Butt, Alice Hollister, and Robert Walker. Wiener Kunstfilm in Austria released *Don Cäsar, Graf von Irun* in October 1918, an adaptation by co-directors Luise and Jacob Fleck and starring Max Neufeld, Grit Haid, and Karl Ehmann.



(1912 version by Reliance)

In 1942, the Italian production company Artisti Associati made *Don Cesare di Bazan*, directed by Riccardo Freda and adapted for the screen by Sergio Amidei, Vitaliano Brancati, and Freda. This 78-minute “adventure comedy” shot at Pisorno Studios in Tuscany, starred Gino Cervi, Anneliese Uhlig, and Paolo Stoppa. There have also been several television productions of the film, including a 1957 Soviet production (*Don Sezar de Bazan*) directed by Iosif Shapira and starring Vladimir Chetnikov; a French version in 1976, directed by Jean-Pierre Marchand and starring Robert Hirsch, Hélène Calzarelli, and Robert Rimbaud; and even a 1989 Russian musical comedy adaptation directed by Yan Frid with Mikhail Boyarskiy and Anna Samokhina.

Victor Hugo’s “Ruy Blas” has spawned even more screen versions, including a 1912 Italian version starring opera diva Francesca Bertini and a 2002 French TV movie with Gérard Depardieu.

“Some Remarks That Become Motion Pictures” by Glendon Allvine
Forward to The Spanish Dancer Photoplay Novelization

The storyteller nowadays does not necessarily write with one eye on the screen, but, on the other hand, he cannot shut out from his mind’s eye all images of his characters as the camera might reveal them. A very few creative authors still refuse to recognize the films as a new medium of expression.

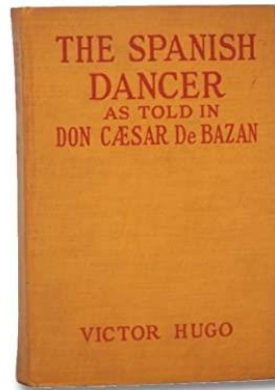
Some authors today are actually writing in front of the camera — devising their plots and characterizations right in the moving picture studio. Most of them, however, are doing their creative writing with only slight concessions to the technical demands of motion pictures.

Homer Croy insists that he wrote “West of the Water Tower” with no thought whatever that it might make good screen material. When Jesse L. Lasky tried to buy the picture rights of the novel of small-town life the author insisted there was no picture in his story a judgment he revised some months later when he saw the picture in the making at the Paramount studio on Long Island.

“The Covered Wagon” came from the pen of the late Emerson Hough without any thought, on the author’s part, of its picture possibilities. Mr. Hough had had one unfortunate experience with a lesser producer who filmed one of his earlier stories. And as a result, he was “off” all picture producers. Yet James Cruze took this novel of the winning of the West and gave it an epic sweep which will make this story live forever, giving the world a better understanding of the hardy pioneers who pushed over the Oregon trail to establish a new empire of the Pacific Coast. Mr. Hough lived to see his story hailed as one of the great pictures of a decade and died with a kindlier feeling toward film folk.

This one picture revived the interest in all of Mr. Hough's writings and caused "The Covered Wagon" to leap again into the six best seller class of novels.

In his experience with the films Mr. Hough reached the depths of despair and the heights of triumph. Few other authors have run such a gamut from failure to success in the screening of their stories. Some authors have only kind words for the movies; others are loud in their denunciation. Their readers likewise go to extremes in their attitude toward film versions of books. Readers of popular fiction sometimes complain that their entertaining novels have been ruined by the people who make motion pictures. No sooner do I finish reading a novel that gives me a definite idea of intensely human characters I have visualized from the author's words than along comes a movie director and mangles the pictures I have built up in my own mind. He seems to have no respect whatever for the image my mind has devised, and the chances are that his ideas do not coincide with the mental images worked out by any of the many thousands who have read the novel.



And yet how do I know that I am completely right? Perhaps he does have a right to his own ideas even as I have a right to mine and there may possibly be good and sufficient reasons why a story comes through the picture mill in a form so different from the story I got from the printed page.

My contempt for the movies was second to none when I emerged from college weighted down by two degrees. What puerile, childish efforts these movies were! What silly, stupid things the picture people perpetrated!

Yet such was my curiosity about the mysterious ways of the makers of photoplays that I set about to learn, as best I could, how they got that way. A motion picture has so many ingredients that the process of devising film entertainment is most complex. It may not be inappropriate to discuss here some of the problems involved. Perhaps some reader whose feelings have been outraged may at least understand some of the mental processes that went into the translation of a novel into a film.

Nobody ever wrote a motion picture in the sense that Booth Tarkington, for instance, writes a novel. Even Mr. Tarkington, perhaps the foremost of living American novelists, feels his own inadequacy in reconstructing his story as a stage play and usually calls in Harry Leon [Wilson] to help him adapt it to the requirements of the theatre. Mr. Tarkington, in telling his story for the screen, likewise requires assistance from specialists in that medium, whose work is often evident on the screen. If there be less of Tarkington at least there is more of a photoplay.

A very few novelists, notably Rex Beach and Rupert Hughes, who have taken the pains to study the complexities of a motion picture production, have achieved considerable success in telling their stories in screen form. Yet either of these creators of fiction feels that a printed book bearing his own name carries over more of his personality than a motion picture, written, directed, supervised and edited by the author. There are actors and cameramen and bankers and audiences to be considered, and what they do to a story is often the despair of authors with paternal regard for a brainchild.

Even the title is often lost in the shuffle from the printed page to celluloid. Consider, for instance, Barrie's "The Admirable Crichton." That story, to the despair of the followers of the whimsical Scot, emerged on the screen as "Male and Female." That was many years ago, but people still cite it to illustrate the stupidity, not to mention the

cupidity, of picture producers. "Male and Female" is admittedly a box-office title, but the Bible is full of box-office titles. And who shall say that the Bible is not as good a source as Barrie from which to lift the quotation "Male and Female created He them." You can quote scripture even to sell a motion picture.

There is just one reason why "The Admirable Crichton" was a bad title for a film and that is that very few people, even now, are quite sure of how to pronounce Crichton. Let us imagine a young man taking his girl to the movies. On one side of Main Street the electric lights invite him to view "The Admirable Crichton" and on the opposite side the bulbs blaze out the admonition "Don't Tell Everything." Now he doesn't want to admit to the girl, who is perhaps smarter than himself, his hesitation about pronouncing the 'title of the one picture and so he avoids embarrassment by suggesting they go across the street to see "Don't Tell Everything." Just multiply that one incident by 100,000 you multiply almost everything by that number in the movies and you can appreciate that the earnings of "Male and Female" might have been very considerably less if handicapped in America by the name, which Barrie, in far-off Scotland, tacked on to his excellent narrative.

I am by no means contending that picture titles are always legitimate or in good taste, but in considering successful titles let us remember that the outstanding music success of a decade was "Yes, We Have No Bananas."

Avoiding a discussion as to whether or not that title means anything, at least we are reasonably safe in assuming that to an American audience "Don Caesar de Bazan" means nothing. Don suggests a Spanish person although Caesar, I believe, was a Roman; and Bazan sounds like a trade name some advertising man might devise for a depilatory. In my estimation, the Famous Players-Lasky Corporation displayed excellent judgment in assigning to this story, for American consumption, the simple yet dignified title, "The Spanish Dancer."

That title, I learned, was chosen from many suggested in New York while the film was in production in California. And throughout the months the studio people were laboriously grinding out the 387 scenes that blend into the nine reels of this celluloid entertainment, the advertising and publicity men were attempting to establish in the public mind that title, "The Spanish Dancer." On seeing "The Spanish Dancer" on the screen it is interesting to speculate how many minds have exerted their influence on the story that Victor Hugo imagined in France almost a hundred years ago.

It happened that an actor, Lemaitre by name, had set his heart upon playing the part of Don Caesar de Bazan, a minor character in Hugo's great dramatic poem "Ruy Blas." Victor Hugo had agreed to expand the role of Don Caesar so as to make it the starring part in a stage play suitable for the talents of M. Lemaitre, but Hugo had incurred the displeasure of both the monarchists and imperialists and so everything he had written or intended to write was banned.

Enter Adolphe D'Ennery and P. S. P. Dumanoir, who adapted the story to the needs of the Parisian stage. Both were dramatists of repute and D'Ennery's fame subsequently reached America as the author of that venerable opus known wherever stock is played, "The Two Orphans."

Enter now two other dramatic craftsmen, June Mathis and Beulah Marie Dix, who adapted the story to the screen and the needs of Pola Negri. For as Victor Hugo wrote the stage play to fit Lemaitre, who played Don Caesar, so June Mathis and Beulah Marie Dix wrote their screen story to put the emphasis on Pola Negri, who is the central figure in the Paramount picture.

Miss Mathis will be remembered as the author of the continuity of "Blood and Sand," which brought Rudolph Valentino to the peak of his popularity. In their collaboration on "The Spanish Dancer" they have developed a script which retells Victor Hugo's story in the most vivid fashion possible.

Their script so pleased Jesse L. Lasky, on whom rests the responsibility for the selection and production of Paramount pictures, that he assigned it to Herbert Brenon, who had previously directed many film successes. Mr. Brenon, realizing that neither he nor any living person had any first-hand information about the Spain of three centuries ago, began doing research work in the libraries of Southern California and Northern Mexico, but since he could not find there all the authentic historical data needed for the telling of his screen story, he crossed the continent to the Metropolitan Museum of Art where a week's work netted him excellent results. Finding that other data were available at the Smithsonian Institute at Washington, he went to the capital for further research work.

Photographs were obtained from old prints which served as the basis for the elaborate backgrounds, native customs were studied and blended into the plans for the picture, with the result that when Director Brenon actually began the shooting of his first scene in the picture he was thoroughly steeped in the atmosphere of Spain of the seventeenth century.

To play the part of Don Caesar de Bazan, Mr. Brenon selected a popular actor of Spanish parentage, Antonio Moreno. This was an almost inevitable selection since Mr. Moreno has many of the ingratiating personal qualities that Victor Hugo attributed to Don Caesar. For the role of that old reprobate, King Philip IV, the director chose Wallace Beery, a competent actor whose villainy on the screen is well known to theatergoers. Kathlyn Williams was assigned the part of Queen Isabel. Gareth Hughes, always good in juvenile parts, was chosen for Lazarillo. Adolphe Menjou, a 100% villain, was selected to create Don Salluste. For the part of the Marquis de Rotundo Mr. Brenon selected Edward Kipling; for the Cardinal's Ambassador, Charles A. Stevenson; for Diego, Robert Brower; for Dib he chose Robert Agnew. The part of Don Balthazar went to a girl, Dawn O'Day.

Meanwhile designers and architects had adapted from the many Spanish prints dug out of the museums and libraries a whole village which was built in the mountains of Southern California. Nowadays carpenters and plasterers and masons get big wages, and the labor costs in building a village are great, even though the village be an uninhabitable one for motion picture purposes. A studio statistician has figured out that these reproductions of old Spanish castles actually cost more than did the original castles in Spain from which the sets were modeled. Labor back in seventeenth century Spain was very cheap. Then you could build a castle in Spain almost as cheaply as you can dream about one now.

An interesting photograph is included in this book which shows, better than any words can describe, the size and beauty of the great old Spanish buildings grouped about the Catholic church. The hundreds of extra people who appear in this big scene are but specks on the picture compared with the huge sets built only to be photographed. In the foreground are seen the tents in which the actors lived while on location far from Los Angeles.

Out on this location most of the scenes for the picture were filmed, for it is essentially an outdoors story. But the elaborate garden fete in which four hundred ballet dancers appear was rehearsed and photographed in the famous Busch gardens in Pasadena. The colorful Gypsy encampment was established on the Lasky ranch near Hollywood.

When most of the outdoor scenes had been photographed Director Brenon retired to the huge stages of the Lasky studios in Hollywood where the interior scenes of the picture were photographed. Finally, after many months of activity, the actual camera work had been completed. There remained then the complicated and tremendously important work of cutting, titling and assembling the film for one finished print. Out of about 75,000 feet of film which had been exposed and developed it was possible to use only about 9,000 feet, or nine reels.

Each of the 387 scenes in the photoplay, it must be understood, were photographed several times and sometimes as many as a dozen times to get the best emotional effects properly lighted.

On Hector Turnbull, author of "The Cheat," Miss Negri's previous picture, rested the responsibility of editing the seventy-five reels of film down to nine reels. After several weeks of work, he got it down to 8,400 feet.

Then, for the first time, the director saw the net results of his months of work, and he was happy to learn that people with a viewpoint more detached than his considered it good. Some rate it Mr. Brenon's greatest achievement. Almost everyone ranks it as Pola Negri's best picture since "Passion" and the finest of her American work.

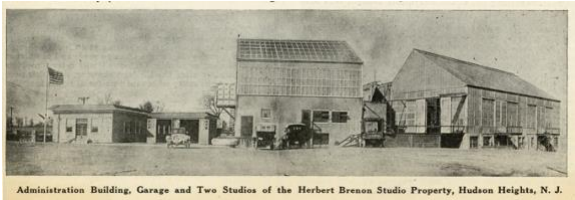
Maritana lives again, reincarnated in another generation by means of a new toy which Victor Hugo, with all his creative imagination, could not foresee.

Herbert Brenon: An American Cinema Odyssey

By Ian Graham

Herbert Brenon was born in Dublin in 1880 and was one of the most influential film directors and producers in the history of the American cinema. He had an output of over a hundred films and worked for most of the major studios. He was a unique film visionary, constantly experimenting, using his intelligence to push America to new heights of ambitious achievement in the world of motion pictures. At Universal, Fox, Paramount, United Artists, MGM, and RKO, he created evocative worlds. In the fields of fantasy and action adventure his movies became the prototype of their respective genres. He was particularly successful working with actresses, directing Clara Bow, Loretta Young, Betty Bronson, and Dolores Del Rio. Even famous stage actresses like Alla Nazimova and Dame Ellen Terry were persuaded to appear in his movies.

While working with the IMP company he was among the most globetrotting of the early film pioneers with film adventures in England, France, and Germany before the First World War. He continued in this vein with journeys to Bermuda and Jamaica to make fantasy pictures with the Australian swimmer Annette Kellerman. Closer to home at his studios at Hudson Heights, New Jersey he made several independent films, including *The Passing of the Third Floor Back* and *Empty Pockets*. *Picture Play* magazine described him during the making of the film. “Herbert Brenon sat before a sordid tenement room constructed in one corner of his Hudson Heights, New Jersey studios. A sliding door at the side of the studio revealed a sweep of New Jersey countryside, vivid with the browns and reds of the autumn in strange contrast with the wretched East Side room.”



However, it was at Paramount in the 1920s where much of Brenon’s reputation and fame rests. The public admired his film adaptation of *The Spanish Dancer*, the story of the romance of a Gypsy girl in Spain during the reign of Philip IV. It was an ambitious epic costume drama with actress Pola Negri and Antonio Moreno. It was the start of a memorable and successful collaboration between Brenon and cinematographer James Wong Howe. If his exciting star had a reputation as a fiery personality Brenon put this in context. “Pola Negri is temperamental, but she has her temper under tight control. An actor without temperament is like a violin without strings. You can’t play on either one of them”. Nonetheless, the filming was somewhat tense, and Pola would later describe working with him unfavorably. “A volatile and fastidious man who insisted that things be done his way” and she remembered there were “many flare ups that often held up work for an entire day.”



In 1926 he secured his action credentials by directing the masterful desert adventure *Beau Geste* filming for months in Arizona. In the 1950s Jesse Lasky acknowledged Paramount’s debt of gratitude to the Irish director. “Two of our cinematic landmarks of the twenties were directed by Herbert Brenon – *Peter Pan* and *Beau Geste*. Both pictures have been remade and to my mind fall short of Brenon’s inspired prototypes”.

[Ian Graham is a writer and filmmaker. He holds an M.A. Degree in Film Studies from University College Dublin and has lectured in Film Studies. He is author of Herbert Brenon: An American Cinema Odyssey available from Amazon.]

Pola Negri



"I have survived two wars, four revolutions, and five marriages."
— Pola Negri as Madame Habib in *The Moon-Spinners*, 1964

Although not entirely accurate, this fictional description very much described the life of the fabulous Pola Negri.

Barbara Apolonia Chalupec was born on January 3, 1897, in Lipno, Poland to Jerzy and Eleonora (Kelczewska) Chalupec, the youngest and sole survivor of three children. Beloved by her parents, she was very thin and often sick, which caused them great concern due to the fates of her older siblings. Jerzy was a tinsmith and though he was not wealthy, he was successful enough to be able to buy a house large enough for them, his mother, and his brother. As she grew older, her father started associating with Polish revolutionaries seeking independence from Russia. In 1902, he was arrested and sent to a prison in Warsaw. Faced with paying for her husband's defense (he later lost his case and sent to Siberia) and no foreseeable income, Eleonora was forced to sell the house and move to Warsaw.

Mother and daughter rented a small garret and with what little money they had left, Eleonora bought a small grocery store in the Leszno section of the city. She quickly went broke, but was soon employed by a wealthy Jewish widow, where Eleonora had to quickly learn the laws of keeping Kosher. Pola was a poor student, but she was artistically talented, and in 1911 was admitted to the Imperial Ballet School where her mother was very fortunate to gain the admiration of Casimir de Hulewicz, the director of all of Poland's state theaters. Energetic and charismatic, Pola was a rising star at the school and soon had lead roles. However, in her early teens, she was feeling more and more tired at rehearsals and finally, she realized she was too weak to perform. Doctors discovered she had tuberculosis. Hearing this, Hulewicz came to her rescue and sent her the Sanatorium Zakopane in the Tatra Mountains of Poland and paid for her three-month stay there. While recovering, she read extensively at the sanatorium's library and became an enormous fan of the Italian poet Ada Negri. It was there she adopted the poet's last name as her own stage name. It was there that Barbara Apolonia Chalupec became Pola Negri.



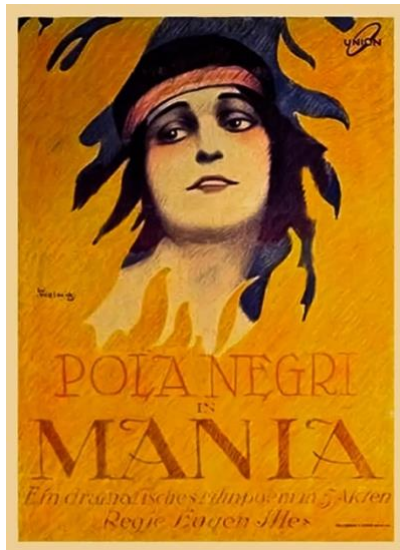
As her lungs were too weak to withstand the rigors of ballet, Pola entered the Imperial Academy of Dramatic Arts. Hulewicz continued to oversee her development and introduced her to the right mentors and directors. By 1912, at the age of fifteen, she made her professional stage debut. Her rise to fame was rapid and soon she was able to afford a two-bedroom apartment for herself and her mother. The future seemed bright, but 1914 saw the start of the Great War and Germany attacked Poland. The battle of Warsaw was fierce and for three days, Negri and her mother sat in the dark as bombs rained on the city and bullets riddled their apartment. During a break in the fighting, Pola and Eleanora raced around the apartment to gather their belongings and flee the city. As they were heading out of the building, a large blast shook them. The very bridge they needed to escape had been blown up. As all the theaters were closed during this time — and fearing the end of her stage career — Negri decided to focus her energies on acting for the cinema.

Her talent combined with good fortune as she was seen on stage by Alexander Hertz, the owner of the film production company, Warsaw Sphinx Share Society. Her first Sphinx film was *Niewolnica Zmysłów* (*Slave to Her Senses*, 1914), which also has the distinction of being the first feature film made in Poland. Her third film, *Czarna Księżka* (*The Black Pass*) is the story of a young Jewish woman in czarist Russia who, after her father's death, falsifies her heritage to become a doctor. Pola later appeared in a 1917 German remake of the film, *The Yellow Ticket*. Many of her appearances with Sphinx were short films, including a detective serial, one episode of which was rediscovered in an Italian archive in 2009. The feature that survives from that period, Hertz's *Bestia* (1917, released in the US as *The Polish Dancer*) shows an actress of extreme confidence and energy. Pola, a "wild" girl from a good family spends her time in the company of Apaches (hooligans), including her boyfriend Dimitri. After a fight with her parents, she runs away from home. In a hotel, she gets her boyfriend drunk, takes his money and abandons him. She begins a new, self-sufficient life as a model and dancer in a cabaret, where she meets a wealthy, married businessman. He decides to leave his family and marry Pola, but tragedy ensues when the boyfriend finds her.



BESTIA THE POLISH DANCER

Pola's big break came when she appeared as Die Tänzerin (the dancing girl) in a Polish stage production of "Sumurun" based on a story in *The Arabian Nights*. The role of dancer was a natural for Negri, who had studied ballet as a young girl. The play had been a major success for Max Reinhardt in Berlin's Deutsches Theater. Ryszard Ordynski, a Polish assistant director of Reinhardt's, saw the production and just as Reinhardt was considering a revival of the play in Berlin. Ordynski convinced Pola to travel to Berlin to appear in the role. Reinhardt helped



Negri immensely — making sure she received German lessons, finding her an apartment, and assigning an older woman, Lena, to be her companion and translator.

Not only was "Sumurun" a tremendous success for her, but in the production were two men who became major figures in the rise of German cinema in the 1920s — the star Emil Jannings and the director Ernst Lubitsch. Negri considered them complete opposites — the taciturn, humorless actor and the outgoing, irrepressible director. She and Lubitsch became best friends, perhaps because she would always laugh at his pranks and jokes, even when he chose her as the victim.

While living and acting in Berlin in 1918, Pola signed with Projektions AG Union (PAGU) where she appeared in a remake of *The Black Pass* now titled *The Yellow Ticket* (*Der Gelbe Schein*) and *Mania: Die Geschichte einer Zigarettenarbeiterin* (*Mania: The Story of a Cigarette Worker*). Both films exist and reveal that even before Lubitsch, Negri was an actor of immense talent and star quality.

Meanwhile, Lubitsch had already become a star in his own right, directing himself in a series of short film comedies as the Jewish character Meyer. He was at Universum Film AG (UFA) when the studio came to Negri in 1918 and offered her a contract. Recognizing the brilliance and talent behind the comedian and prankster, and knowing that he fully appreciated her talents, she demanded that only Lubitsch would direct her. Paul Davidson, the head of UFA, smiled at her request. They had already decided on Lubitsch to helm her next film.



The trilogy of costume dramas that came out of this collaboration — *Die Augen der Mumie Ma* (*The Eyes of the Mummy Ma*) with Emil Jannings, *Carmen* with Harry Liedtke, (*Gypsy Blood* in the US), and *Madame Dubarry* (*Passion*) with Harry Liedtke and Emil Jannings — were tremendous successes in Germany and around the world. (The demand for *Madame Dubarry* forced the US to remove its ban on German films that started during The Great War). The films helped establish Germany as a major force in world cinema.



It was during this time that Pola married Count Eugene Dambski. Returning by train after visiting her mother in Warsaw, Negri had been brought before the young, handsome commanding officer. After they parted, he pursued her with love letters and dinners. But after they married, the famous and glamorous star came to realize that Dambski was only interested in advancing his own ambitions and career — demanding that she retire and live with him in a remote town on the Polish-German border. She soon escaped her marriage and returned to work.

Negri and Lubitsch made three more films together in Germany after this, *Sumurun* (*One Arabian Night*, 1920), *Die Bergkatze* (*The Mountain Cat*, 1921), and *Die Flamme* (*The Flame*, 1922). Working on those three films further established their enormous talent in both drama and comedy.

It was the tremendous success of their collaboration — and because silent films were a universal language — that Hollywood studios began to seek out international filmmakers and actors. First, Mary Pickford hired Lubitsch to travel to Hollywood and direct her in her next picture, *Rosita*. Then Charlie Chaplin, after traveling to Europe and seeing their films, arrived in New York City — speaking often of his great admiration for Negri. Jesse L. Lasky, the famed head of Famous Players-Lasky, was intrigued, saw her films, and sent Negri an invitation to Hollywood.

She arrived in California on September 22, 1922. Her first films for Lasky were sadly mediocre. Both released in 1923, *Bella Donna* and *The Cheat* were pale imitations of the European sophisticated work she did with Lubitsch and were much less than the costume dramas starring Gloria Swanson at the same studio. In many ways, the studio spent more time developing Negri's costumes than her character. (Some of Swanson's films during this time had a similar problem). Perhaps because the two stars' films were so similar, shared the problem of anemic leading men, and vied for the talent on the studio lot, a very-public rivalry between Negri and Swanson played out in the press. How much of their feud was real and how much was fabricated by the studio and press to create headlines has been written about extensively by historians and in the stars' later autobiographies; without any real revelations.



With *The Spanish Dancer* later that year, Negri was fortunate to have a much better director in Herbert Brenon and, as importantly, a strong leading man in Antonio Moreno. Brenon also had a more talented crew working on the film. The film was a return to the star's fiery and wide-ranging abilities that had been shown to such great advantage in her German films. Although she won wide praise for her performance, critical acclaim for the film was muted by the fact that Lubitsch and Pickford's film based on the same play had come out earlier in the year. Although *Rosita* was well-directed and the sets were opulent, the magnificent Pickford was miscast from the very start for that role. Audiences who came to *The Spanish Dancer* were disappointed that they already seen the same storyline just a few months before. Neither film was successful.

When Pola wasn't working and having her well-publicized feud with Swanson, she was making headlines with the men she dated. Charlie Chaplin, smitten since seeing her films in Europe, met her literally by accident. Negri's car was involved in a collision going to the Hollywood Bowl — and who stepped out to help her but the world-famous comedian. Chaplin chased her and though he was not particularly her type, his all-out pursuit and ardor won her over. Their affair was intense and photos of the two together were splashed over the world's newspapers. However, the lovers' mutual jealousy, need for drama, and quick tempers doomed the relationship.

With the financial failure of *The Spanish Dancer*, Negri asked Lasky to borrow Lubitsch for her next film, which became the acclaimed *Forbidden Paradise*. A wonderful film, it was sadly, the last time the two would work together. It was on this film that Negri met the handsome and talented Rod La Roque. They quickly developed a friendship free of the tumult and stress of her previous relationships with Dambski and Chaplin. Soon they were an item, but this romance ended as well.



Then came the most momentous love affair of her life. Rudolph Valentino has long been enamored of the beautiful Negri. They had been first introduced to each other in 1924 by the novelist Vicente Blasco Ibáñez, while both were staying on the French Riviera. At that time, Valentino was still married to Natacha Rambova. But when his marriage was ending a couple years later, he pestered mutual friend Marian Davies to introduce him to Negri. Davies kept inviting her to meet him, but for some reason, Negri kept canceling. She later wrote she had a premonition. Pola's reluctance only made him more intrigued. They finally met again at a costume party Davies gave at San Simeon. Valentino bent to kiss Negri's hand and spoke to her in a lovely melodic voice. She was dressed in a costume with a gold-encrusted jacket, and he came dressed as a matador. When they danced Valentino won her over. He was a magnificent dancer who treated the dance as an expression of love. She, of course, was also an accomplished dancer. He supposedly told her, "The unhappiness in you called out to the unhappiness in me." But Valentino had come to the party with actress Vilma Banky and insisted he take her home. It was rumored in the press that they were a couple.

Negri left for another trip to Europe and tried to forget her meeting with Valentino. Returning to Hollywood, she focused on her work. But at a party she was giving for author Michael Arlen at the Biltmore Hotel, she encountered Valentino, who was hosting another party. He asked her to dance. She found herself once more entranced and when he asked to take her home, he stayed the night — strewing her bed with rose petals. Their romance blossomed and once more, Negri's love life became headlines around the world.

By 1925, Negri's costumed dramas with their European-influenced opulence were wearing thin with the American audience, a situation she herself parodied in her starring role in Malcolm St. Clair's comedy *A Woman of the World*. Coincidentally, Valentino was also facing a waning career after some bad publicity following his break from Famous Players-Lasky and a couple of mediocre films. He quickly overcame this with *The Eagle*, a marvelous film that also took his own perceived glamor and fame with a wink and good cheer.

Famous Players-Lasky and Negri decided on furthering her image makeover by casting her in more proletarian roles. In 1926, she was excited to be acting as the chambermaid Anna in Mauritz Stiller's *Hotel Imperial*. It was a thrilling experience making the film.

In July of that same year, Valentino had another huge success with *The Son of the Sheik*. He was once again the toast of the cinema world and with Negri, he had the love of one of the most glamorous and beautiful women in the world. He was remodeling his home Falcon Lair so they could live together in this enchanted castle. His movie studio, United Artists, asked him to tour the country in a series of personal appearances to promote the film. When Negri kissed him goodbye as he boarded the train in Los Angeles, her premonitions of disaster returned. He called from city to city, however, telling her of the huge lines and enormous reception. There were rumors that he was burning the candle at both ends though whether Negri had heard them, is not known. Valentino said he was suffering from abdominal pain but dismissed any idea that it was serious and refused to see a doctor.

August 15, 1926. Valentino collapsed in New York's Ambassador Hotel and was rushed to the hospital. He was diagnosed with a gastric ulcer and appendicitis. It was not deemed serious, and he was expected to quickly recover. Negri wanted to rush to New York, but she was told it was a simple procedure and besides, she was still filming *Hotel Imperial*. Calling the doctors every day for progress reports, she was told all was well. But a week later, Valentino suffered a massive infection and died on August 23. It was a time when news traveled slower than it does today. She learned the news when a reporter called her to ask her reaction to Valentino's death. Marian Davies rushed to her house and together then drove to Falcon Lair. Negri was inconsolable wandering from room to room, calling out his name, crushed by her sudden loss. She believed her premonition was right, that she was destined to be alone. The doctor wrote her that his last words were: "Pola, if she doesn't come in time, tell her I think of her." The news of this young, beautiful star's death shook the world.

The next year saw Negri appearing as the French farmgirl Mona Moreau in *Barbed Wire*. Set during World War I, Pola's character falls in love with a gentle German prisoner of war. The film's antiwar message was of peace and understanding. It is perhaps her finest performance. It should have been a great success.



Negri and Valentino had attended the wedding of actress Mae Murray and oil-field worker (and former radio repairman) David Mdivani. What David had, along with his two brothers and two sisters, was an exotic past, good looks and charm. Their father was General Zakhari Mdivani from the country of Georgia which was annexed by Russia in 1810. The family moved to St. Petersburg when he was promoted to be aide-de-camp to Czar Nicholas II. The mother was supposedly a confidant of Rasputin. With the Russian Revolution and Georgian independence, Zakhary Mdivani became the governor of Batumi in Georgia. Their freedom was short lived as the Soviets laid siege to Batumi and the children were evacuated to Paris and then to the States. The children were reportedly Princes and Princesses, though

it was later said about them that "princes are almost as numerous in their native Georgia as colonels or judges in Kentucky."

David was the first to marry well with the marriage to Murray. Although Negri had married a Count ten years earlier, it only became a Hollywood fad when Gloria Swanson came back from France with the Marquis Henry de La Falaise in 1925. The mad rush was on to marry royalty. Interestingly enough, Negri warned Murray before the wedding, suggesting Mdivani was a gold-digger. Nevertheless, Negri threw a wedding party for the couple and

that's where she met his brother Serge. David and his brother Serge loved to swim in the ocean, and after the wedding, they started visiting Negri's house on the beach in Santa Monica every Sunday. She had no interest in Serge, but immediately after Valentino's death, Serge started courting her. Perhaps he was inspired by her money or perhaps it was sibling rivalry — Pola was an even bigger star than Murray. Perhaps it was — despite her temper and diva tendencies — that Pola was a beautiful, engaging woman. Negri resisted his advances at first despite his extreme good looks. She felt no attraction to him which she wrote, "certainly put me in a minority among the women of this world."

Pola had purchased the beautiful Château de Rueil-Séraincourt in Vigny, France, before leaving for America in 1922. It was a way to keep her mother safe at a time that Poland was still in political and economic turmoil. (At some point, Casimir de Hulewicz joined her mother and they looked after each other for years.) Pola went to France to visit her mother, and encountered Serge on the train to New York, and then again on the *Mauretania* to Europe. He took that time to court her. As they disembarked from the ship, surrounded by fans and press, Serge whisked her away to Hôtel Plaza Athénée... where his parents, brothers, and sisters were there to celebrate their engagement. Serge sent his father out to tell the press. It was an all-out attack and Pola succumbed, much to her own disapproval. The marriage shocked the world and movie fans saw it as a betrayal to her recently deceased great love. *Barbed Wire* failed because of the marriage.

Her career in the States would most likely have been over due to the scandal, if Mdivani hadn't sabotaged it himself. The honeymoon was delayed so Serge could frequent a casino in Vigny before their departure. "Each morning I would be presented with an affectionate smile from my new husband and an astronomical bill from the casino, where he apparently never won." When they finally did return from the honeymoon and Negri resumed work, Serge became angry that he was losing his place as man of the house when people called him "Mr. Negri."

When Negri discovered she was pregnant, they decided she would retire, and they would live in her château in France. She was at first very happy in France, but tragically she miscarried, and began drinking heavily. When he went to California to manage the real estate business she bought for him, she found herself alone and drowning. She saved herself by accepting a movie role in the French film, *Le Collier de la Reine* (*The Queen's Necklace*). Finding out on his return, Mdivani forced her to quit the production.



It was Eleanora who convinced her daughter that she had to go back to work. Negri's comeback film shot in the English area west of Cornell was Paul Czinner's *The Way of Lost Souls* (1929). It was her last silent film, and it is a much-underrated work. While shooting the film and living in London, she heard that Mdivani had taken a lover, an opera singer. It was a relief to her, and she felt a new sense of freedom. At a party in town, she was assigned a dinner partner. Glen Kidston was a famous navy commander and pilot known for his daredevil flights and surviving incredible crashes. He was known as "the man who cannot be killed." It was a very strange choice for Negri who had already once lost the love of her life too early, but they had a very passionate affair.

Going back to France to divorce Mdivani, she found the laws made it extremely difficult. Somehow, Serge convinced her to come back. The two temporarily reconciled. But when the stock market crashed and Serge discovered that his wife's enormous fortune was gone, so essentially, was he.

In 1932, Hollywood (in the form of RKO Pictures) called Negri back. The resulting film, her first talkie, *A Woman Commands* (1932) was not particularly good nor was it successful. However, a song she sings in the film, "Paradise," became a runaway hit, led her to a brief singing tour, and went on to become a minor standard for a number of years.

In 1934, she left for Paris and to star in a French film *Fanatisme*, directed by Tony Lekain and Gaston Ravel. In the only French films she ever appeared in, Negri proved to the world that she was still breathtakingly beautiful and

could dance, as showcased in several scenes. Better yet, the film was well-received by audiences and her career was once again on track. She returned to the US where she was offered a theatrical stage tour and she assumed that her life would remain in her adopted country.

Universal wanted to sign Negri to a long-term contract (it was the last year that the German-born Carl Laemmle ran the studio) and asked her to travel to Germany to do a film with their partner studio, UFA. She did not want to go back to Germany as her acquaintance Albert Einstein had recently warned her of the dangers of Hitler and Nazism. But the script for the film, *Mazurka*, was excellent, casting her as a nightclub chanteuse, which provided her many opportunities to sing. And frankly, she desperately needed the money. The 1929 stock market crash and her divorce from Mdivani left Negri in enormous debt. Willi Forst, the German director, had misgivings: he worried about Negri's age (38), her ability to act her lines in German, the Jewish friends she had worked with back in the 1920s (including Lubitsch). Plus, he had other ideas of younger actresses for the lead. However, meeting her in Berlin, Forst found her still gloriously beautiful and youthful. Her performance was hugely popular and unforgettable, which in some ways was tragic, as she became a huge favorite of the Nazi regime including Hitler and Goebbels. During one of the government-backed banquets to promote the film, she found herself sitting next to Emil Jannings, who was a major figure in the Ministry of Culture. She found him as boorishly unamusing as ever.

History has always found this era in German culture very problematic. For Negri, it was particularly difficult as (untrue) rumors flew about her affairs with Hitler and Goebbels. But she did stay in Germany for four more years making *Moskau-Shanghai*, *Madame Bovary*, *Tango Notturmo*, *Die fromme Lüge*, and *Die Nacht der Entscheidung*. While it was true that she had a long-term contract that forced her to work in Germany, many others broke their contracts during this time and fled the country. It also is true that much to the Nazi government's displeasure she had rehired her Jewish assistant from her earlier days, Paola Loebel, and smuggled her out of the country when it became too dangerous for Paola to stay.

In 1938 the situation had become intolerable for Negri. With three films still left on her contract, she was given permission to vacation in France for her usual hiatus. She traveled with only one suitcase to avoid suspicion, leaving everything else behind. She reunited with her mother in Nice where she joined the Polish Red Cross — only to find out that France was being invaded. Once more, twenty years after the Warsaw invasion, she and her mother sheltered in the basement while bombs exploded everywhere around them. When the armistice was signed, UFA demanded her return to Germany. She claimed she was too ill to travel and even had a doctor sign a certificate to that effect. UFA sent a representative to check up on her and wrapped up in a blanket with a nurse at her side, her performance convinced him. By now, Paris had fallen, and she needed to money for her mother, house, and expenses. The US seemed to be the only answer. She escaped by train to Lisbon, where she had to stay in hiding for four weeks until she could book passage to the States. The ship was small, overcrowded, and in real danger. Arriving in New York, she was hardly the glamorous star returning to throngs of fans. Just a few photographers and journalists showed up to greet her.

Paramount (formerly her old studio, Famous Players-Lasky) offered her the role of Pilar in Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, but she turned it down realizing she was not right for the part. Offers were few and far between as she was damaged by the rumors that followed her from Nazi Germany. And admittedly, she was getting older in a young person's field. She spent her time selling war bonds and giving some live performances. In 1943, she appeared in a rather unlikely film, a screwball comedy, *Hi Diddle Diddle* directed by Andrew Stone. But she had a good role as a diva-like opera singer and better yet, her husband was played by her old friend Adolphe Menjou. He had appeared in several films with her including *The Spanish Dancer* and working with him once again was like a wonderful homecoming. The film was a real success and she received wonderful reviews, but the parts offered to her were poverty-row comedies and she turned them all down. Marian Davies proved her lifetime friendship once again by offering Pola her Santa Monica guesthouse to stay in as long as she wanted. It was a much-needed rest after years of hard work and turmoil. After a revitalizing stay there, she moved to New York.

During this time, the war was raging in Europe, and she was unable to find out if her mother was safe. She had hoped that after the war, she could return to France, recover the assets she still had there, and continue to act. As Nazi Germany fell, she was relieved to find that her mother was alive and well. But with Europe in shambles and America helping in its reconstruction, it was impossible to get permission for her to travel abroad. She sold off her jewelry and faced a precarious future. These were difficult years, made worse by the death of Lubitsch in 1947.

In spring of 1948, Negri went to St. Patrick's Cathedral to offer a prayer of gratitude as she was about to reunite with her mother. Little did she know how her prayers would be answered. Exiting the church on Fifth Avenue, she heard someone yell, "Pola Negri! Pola!" It was Margaret West, an extroverted Texas heiress she had met fourteen years earlier when West had been an NBC radio star in the city. They chatted pleasantly for a half hour and Negri accepted West's invitation to lunch the next day. That lunch extended well into the late afternoon and bonded them together for the next fifteen years. Pola had planned to move to Europe to take care of her mother, but West convinced her to bring Eleanora to the States instead. West brought a house in Santa Monica for the three to live in and they were all best of friends. After Eleanora died in 1954, West took Pola to visit her old hometown of San Antonio. Pola fell in love with the area and the people and the two of them moved there in 1959. When West died in 1963, she provided for Pola to remain in the house for as long as she lived. While there has been much speculation about their relationship, we *do* know is that it was fifteen years of companionship, mutual respect, and extraordinary care for each other.



In 1963 at Walt Disney's urging, Pola returned to the big screen with *The Moon-Spinners* (1964), directed by James Nielson. Her character, Madame Habib, was extravagant, dramatic, and charmingly funny. In the script, it called for Madame to own a domestic cat. Negri suggested it would be much better to be a cheetah. Hayley Mills, who costarred with Negri remembered being anxious about meeting her and awed by older woman's reputation. "I was half expecting her to be remote and grand... well, she was dignified but she was also very sweet and funny, dry and ironic, which wasn't what I was expecting. She did things in the scene we had together that made me laugh. It was a

pretty silly scene, but she took it seriously and was completely truthful and committed." It was the last film role for the magnificent Pola Negri and a lovely tribute to the great star's legend.

Thanks to West's provisions in her will, Negri lived happily in San Antonio, Texas for the rest of her days, publishing her autobiography, *Memoirs of a Star* in 1970. On the 1st of July 1987, Pola Negri, weakened by a brain tumor, died from pneumonia at the age of 90.

Pola Negri, from Jeanine Basinger's Silent Stars
Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group
With permission from the author



Pola Negri may have been the most colorful star ever to appear in silent films. Her over-the-top antics off-screen seem to have totally obscured her actual career, and certainly her talent. She was an excellent actress, capable of playing with real passion and fire, but her shenanigans turned her into the fundamental caricature of a silent movie star, almost a real-life Norma Desmond. (It's rumored that Billy Wilder first offered the role of Desmond to Pola, who is said to have thrown him out. She took her career seriously, and to lampoon herself was unthinkable to her.) Although her remaining fans are still loyal, even fanatical about her, Pola Negri today is almost entirely forgotten.

One contemporary critic called Pola "all slink and mink," and another wrote, "You had the feeling that the back of her neck was dirty," by which he was making a clumsy attempt to say that Pola Negri seemed earthy, like an early Anna Magnani. Whatever she was, she knew how to sell it. She had a real talent for front-page publicity, and she represented, as well, that inevitable lure for Americans —the European sensibility. She was foreign, and that meant unencumbered by puritan ideals.

The story of Pola Negri, like its leading lady herself, is a colorful one. Her birth date, as with so many birth dates of female movie stars, is subject to negotiation. Some say she was born in 1894, others in 1899, but the general idea is that she was born during those last years of the nineteenth century. There are many versions of her story, and which of them (including her own) is true is hard to decide. Here's one of them: She was born with the impossible name of Barbara Apollonia Chalupec in Janowa, Poland. She studied at the Imperial Ballet School in St. Petersburg and at the Philharmonia Drama School in Warsaw and made her debut in Poland as an ingenue at the Rozmaitoczi Theatre. She received excellent notices, particularly for her performances as Hedvig in Ibsen's *Wild Duck* and the title role in Gerhardt Hauptmann's *Hannele*. These successful appearances led her to be invited to make films in Poland, and her movie debut is assumed to have been in 1914, in *Niewolnica Znyslow* (no American title). She became a top star quickly, and during this period she also appeared in Max Reinhardt's celebrated stage pantomime *Sumurun*, first in Poland and later in Berlin. Arriving in Berlin in 1917, she made a series of films there, some of them wonderfully comic shorts. For five years, she was at the very top of the German film industry, and also became a favorite stage actress. The most important thing that happened to her, however, was meeting the great actor/director Ernst Lubitsch. Together, Negri and Lubitsch made a series of films in Berlin that included *The Eyes of the Mummy* and *Carmen* in 1918; *Madame Du Barry* in 1919; the filmed version of *Sumurun* in 1921 (with both Negri and Lubitsch repeating their stage roles); *The Wild Cat* (also 1921); and finally *Die Flamme* (called *Montmartre* in the United States) in 1922.

Negri and Lubitsch found popularity with American audiences when three of these films were released in the United States: *Carmen* in 1921, retitled *Gypsy Blood*; *Madame Du Barry* in 1920, retitled *Passion*; and *Sumurun* in 1921, retitled *One Arabian Night*. When these imports arrived on American screens, audiences were bowled over by Negri's strong sexuality, her fearless portrayals of passion, and her animal magnetism. She was promoted as a descendant of Polish Gypsies, the implication being "and that means she's not bound by our rules." Pola Negri brought Americans her own kind of "new modern woman"—an openly sexual and sensuous creature who made absolutely no apology for it.

Negri's German films by Lubitsch represent her early years very successfully. Her talents are easily observable in *Passion*. She holds a viewer's attention, and she plays a fully developed character. In the silent era, glamour girls were usually one thing or another — good or bad. Stars were divided into those who scampered and those who simpered, the virgin or the whore; the girlishly attractive or the womanly seductive. Negri in *Passion* is everything. She is scintillating and extremely attractive, with the implication that men are drawn to her not for her decadence or erotic posturing but for her impulsive, hearty sexuality, which they long to experience. She's unafraid of sex, and makes it clear she wants it, too. (Negri will not be jumping off any balconies to avoid a "fate worse than death.") The men in her movies can't resist her. They drop like flies. Imagine the impact it must have had on audiences in 1921 when they saw Pola Negri, as Madame Du Barry, and Emil Jannings, as King Louis XV, enact the real thing in *Passion*. While Negri leans back sensuously on her luxurious bed, King Louis is seen slipping her little shoes on and off her feet. (She won't get up until she's properly shod, and properly shod means a king must do the job.) Louis kisses her feet and calves, licking one toe. Then he clips her fingernails for her ... and you didn't see that every day of the week (and still don't). When Dan Duryea paints Joan Bennett's toenails in *Scarlet Street* (1945), directed by another German, Fritz Lang, the scene is chillingly decadent, sinister in its implications. In *Passion*, Jannings playing with Negri's feet and nails may seem slightly besotted, or possibly hilarious, but it also seems like real love.

In the scene in which Negri first meets the king, bringing him a petition from her penniless lover, Louis presents his hand to her to be kissed in the traditional formal greeting. Negri takes one of his fingers, kneels down, then impulsively jumps up and kisses his cheek instead. He's so startled, he plops backward into his chair. Before he can get up again, she falls into his lap as naturally as anything, her bosom right beneath his nose. She has cleverly put the petition there, so he has to reach in to draw it out. He reads it carefully, signs it, and then, pretty clever himself, insists on returning it to its "envelope." As he slowly, very slowly, inserts the thinly rolled parchment down the front of her dress, she begins to giggle, twist and turn, and dimple at him. They kiss, the king with one hand on her breast and one on the petition, which is now once again snugly down her front. She seems to enjoy all this so much, as if it were the most natural thing in the world: All kings should have their hands down the front of her dress. It's such fun! It feels so good! It's so healthy for both of them! Let's all try it at home for similar results!

Passion is a well-directed movie, a model of what an epic film should be. It combines historical sweep with intimate portraiture, and there is no overestimating what having a good director can do for the later reevaluation of an actress's career. Lubitsch doesn't use reaction shots in *Passion*, nor does he use many close-ups other than at medium range. When he wants to emphasize Pola Negri—as when she appears in male garb to overhear her ex-lover plotting her death—he first shows her walking between her lover and the other patriots he's plotting with. Then he irises down onto her, shutting everyone else out of the frame. This gives Negri an almost superhuman quality and makes her supremely important in the image. (The advertisements for *Passion* said, "POLA NEGRI AND A CAST OF 5000 PEOPLE IN *Passion*, A Mighty Epic of the Screen. This is the story of a wonder woman—the world's most daring adventuress.") Ads also referred to *Passion* as "the acme of dramatic art." Today, it is known, if at all, as the chief film that made Negri an American star, and it is respected for its action scenes, its richly detailed sets and costumes, and its very sophisticated visual presentation.

In *One Arabian Night*, Negri plays "the dancer," and Lubitsch, who both acts and directs, plays "the hunchback." The movie is a comic farce, with characters running in and out of rooms, jumping in and out of trunks, and delivering such lines as "the marketplace is choked with the gaping rabble." It's a glorious tale about a hag, a hunchback, a juggler, and a dancer who are "wanderers out of the desert wilderness." Pola more or less plays it straight, allowing the comedy to swirl around her. It shows, however, what a range she had, as her most imaginative work was always done with Lubitsch, who saw more possibilities in her than most of her other directors did. (That would be true for other actresses who worked with Lubitsch; who ever got more out of Merle Oberon, Kay Francis, and Miriam Hopkins than he did?)

Gypsy Blood, the third of these German films, opened in the United States in spring of 1921. (*The New York Times* explained to the reader that “as in the cases of [the other] importations, its name has been changed to suit a supposed demand for a peppy title. Originally it was called ‘*Carmen*’ and it is a motion picture version of the story by Prosper Mérimée.”) Both Lubitsch and Negri are highly praised in the *Times* review: “Once more Mr. Lubitsch has made a motion picture that can hold the interest and excite the discriminating admiration of intelligent people and once more Pola Negri has endowed a character with the attributes of reality.” The role of Carmen gave Pola Negri everything she was best at—primarily the chance to be fiery, tempestuous, and passionate and to break through the boundaries of a woman’s ordinary life. She plays with enormous energy—a radiant and compelling figure on-screen. *Variety* stated it simply: “This Negri is amazing.”

After these films were released so successfully, Lubitsch and Negri were inevitably invited to come to America. Negri was canny and took her time deciding just which company she would sign with, thereby upping her financial offers. She finally chose Paramount and was said to have met Mabel Normand on the boat coming over. The two became fast friends, which might seem strange until one remembers that Negri, like Mabel, had once appeared in knockabout comedies. (Everywhere she went, Negri seemed to make friends. People liked her, although she was frequently described as a loner.)

When Negri finally arrived in Hollywood, she knocked ’em dead. She bought herself a white Rolls-Royce upholstered in white velvet and equipped with ivory door handles and dashboard. When she went for a ride, she placed an enormous white fur rug across her lap, and took along her two white Russian wolfhounds, one sitting on each side of her. Her chauffeur was dressed in an all-white uniform—unless it was raining, and then he wore black. She wrapped herself in ermine and chinchilla and mink and draped herself with diamonds and rubies and emeralds and sat up straight in the back, staring stonily ahead, drawing all eyes. (She also kept a pet tiger on a leash, and frequently paraded down Sunset Boulevard with him.) She had her dressing room decorated exclusively with Chinese furnishings, and insisted the floor be strewn daily with fresh orchid petals. Her wardrobe was dramatic, either black silk, black velvet, or sable, or the opposite—white silk, white chiffon, and ermine. She started the fad for toenails painted fire-engine red. Furthermore, she had the guts to chase a man, and once she caught him, she knew how to conduct a torrid love affair twenties-style, worthy of the plots of her movies. Both Charlie Chaplin and Rudolph Valentino became her lovers. Chaplin couldn’t take the heat and begged out as soon as he could, but Valentino could match her style, having had considerable training with other women who knew how to get attention. (For years, everyone assumed that the famous “woman in black” who showed up annually at Valentino’s grave was Pola Negri. Who else, they figured, would think up a dramatic scenario like that, and who else would have the nerve to pull it off, year after year? However, it wasn’t really her.) Among Negri’s other lovers was rumored to be Adolf Hitler, but this idea was put to rest by Negri’s wardrobe mistress, who scoffed, “Miss Negri is herself a dictator. She would never take orders from Hitler.” (It made sense.) And when it came to marriage, she was no slouch, either. She married and divorced three times—two counts and one prince. Pola Negri never went second-class.

Negri’s American film debut was in *Bella Donna* in 1923, directed by George Fitzmaurice, costarring her with three male actors, Conway Tearle, Conrad Nagel, and Adolphe Menjou. Her flair for publicity was already gaining wide attention, as *Variety* commented in its review that “Pola Negri seems to have some peculiar draw over here ... lately gained through publicity.” The review also points out that the novel the film is based on, by Robert Hitchens, “was to book readers what ‘*The Sheik*’ was to the flappers.” For the debut of the great European star, Pola Negri, Famous Players pulled out all the stops, giving her a very grand set of clothes to wear and placing her at the absolute center of the film. The story concerns a woman who leaves her British husband for an Egyptian tycoon, who cruelly spurns her after he has flirted with her like mad. Negri has to jump in a rowboat, row over to the desert, and stagger around in the sand, threatened by tigers and jackals. (As *Variety* snottily pointed out, “What a tiger or jackal or [Negri] was doing in that part of the desert just then is picture stuff, but the animal must have gotten [Negri] out there in her semi-evening clothes ... There must have been three or four barrels of sand used for the storm. Also one camel. And Pola knows how to get off a camel even if the picture doesn’t show her getting on.” The review also complains that Negri’s scheme for anguish seems to be a drop of glycerine under the left eye. “One-eyed criers are new over here.”) From the very beginning, Negri’s off-screen antics affected how reviewers saw her. They just couldn’t take her seriously, even though this negative review is forced to admit that although the story was “applesauce,” Negri would no doubt become a “star vamp” because the picture would give her “a big start.”

Pola's next American film was a remake of the Cecil B. DeMille success *The Cheat*, also directed by George Fitzmaurice. This time the cad who brands the straying society woman is a Hindu instead of a Japanese, but the plot is more or less the same. According to *Variety*, the audience at the Rivoli "laughed at it." Tribute was paid to the sets and clothes, which would "make the women talk," but Negri was said to "throw upon the screen a distinctly hard personality." She fared better with her final 1923 release, *The Spanish Dancer*, in which she was said to be "fiery and flashing" and could hold interest in "a straightforward tale." Negri was directed in *Spanish Dancer* by Herbert Brenon, and at the same time that her film was released, her friend and frequent coworker Lubitsch was releasing his first American film starring Mary Pickford, *Rosita*. Ironically this movie, long considered a flop and hated by Pickford, is compared favorably to *Spanish Dancer* in a *Variety* review.

In *The Spanish Dancer*, Negri plays opposite Antonio Moreno, with Wallace Beery as King Philip IV of Spain. It's the kind of movie in which the characters don't drink from a glass, they use a flagon. They don't gather twigs in the woods, they gather faggots. It tells a complicated but quite entertaining story about—a Spanish dancer. Or, as the opening title puts it, "This is the story of a great love—a tale of passion swift and romantic, that caught and held, through danger and high adventure, the hearts of a Gypsy lass and a grandee of Spain." The first sight of Pola shows her as the head of "a lawless, carefree band ... for her skill in dancing and her gifts as a teller of fortunes, Maritana, the Gypsy, was known the length and breadth of Spain." She is seen in medium close-up, laughing, her head thrown back, and wearing the traditional movie-Gypsy garb of peasant blouse, scarf around the head, big bangle earrings and strand of beads. Her first action consists of a merry shrug that allows her to lift her arm and show off an armful of bracelets.

It is easy to see that Negri had been a dancer, as she moves with grace and a specific physical eloquence. She is very beautiful in this movie, and her large eyes and expressive white face register a wide range of various feelings easily. The plot, which has enough complications for three movies, concerns the king of Spain, his French queen, the Infante, court intrigue, a downtrodden apprentice boy, and a "reckless, carefree noble" (Antonio Moreno) who spends all his money and falls in love with Pola. For authenticity, perhaps, they threw in Velázquez.

The Spanish Dancer is beautifully shot by the famous James Wong Howe (still being billed as James Howe) and is well directed, with rapid pacing, by Brenon. All in all, it was a first-class production, with large sets, hordes of extras, and wonderful crowd scenes, in particular one in which masses of people surround a duel that takes place with tons of confetti falling down over the crowd. It was not an accident that Pola Negri's early films found welcome. They were extremely well produced, and she was superb in them.

Negri's 1924 movies included *Shadows of Paris*, *Men*, *Lily of the Dust*, and *Forbidden Paradise*. In *Shadows of Paris*, she does the woman's film thing, rising from the underworld as a girl in an apache den in Paris to the heights of wealth as mistress of a mansion. Typically, she's first seen wearing a checked skirt, tight top, and a cheap hat covered in feathers. Later, she appears in the latest Parisian couture, with jewels at her throat and all over her arms and fingers. After her sweetheart is killed, Negri, as Queen of the Crooks, pretends to be a Polish countess who is a war widow, and she meets and marries a wealthy and powerful man. In the traditional language of women's films, it is her clothes that always indicate who she is. When she revisits the apache den, she dresses like an apache. As a rich wife at home, she's in silks and furs. When her lover returns (he was presumed dead, but like countless World War I movie casualties, he was alive all the time), she meets him dressed as the wealthy woman, jeweled to the teeth, to let him know immediately who she has become. Like the thief he is, he robs her, and she realizes he never really loved her.

In *Men*, which *Variety* called "Box office sure fire," she was reunited with Dmitri Buchowetzki, one of her directors from her years in Polish films. Obviously comfortable with her countryman, Negri played well and earned excellent notices. She first appears in the movie as a little country waitress, who, betrayed by one of her father's friends, naturally becomes the queen of Parisian nightlife, dressed in the most splendid costumes. Later, of course, she finds true love, but again Negri is playing first a poor girl, then a woman of clothes and jewels, with a touch of sex and wickedness thrown in. In *Lily of the Dust*, based on Hermann Sudermann's *The Song of Songs*, Negri was again directed by Buchowetzki, who, apart from Lubitsch, was her best director. Reviewers were now becoming more respectful, as she really could act. *The New York Times* commented on how quickly she could show emotions such as "anxiety, affection, nervousness, interest, pleasure and despair ... Her eyes are soft, and as usual, wonderfully expressive."

Negri's best work of 1924 is in *Forbidden Paradise*, which reunited her with Lubitsch. In this, she was on home territory, back in the safe arms of her first great director and in material that was European and sophisticated. She played the royal Catherine, a perfect role for her, and was supported by an excellent cast that included the handsome Rod La Roque as her lover Alexei, Adolphe Menjou as a suave chancellor, and Pauline Starke as the ingenue who loves Alexei. The material is a superb combination of comedy, romance, and intrigue, and Negri rose to the occasion, earning some of her best reviews. *Variety* said, "If ever a star did good work, Pola Negri does it here." Lubitsch earned raves: "If ever a director used his head and artistic sense, Lubitsch did." And, significantly, the production company got a rave, too, because "If ever a film company threw in the hot love scenes, Famous has."

The movie was expensively produced, with huge palace interiors and expensive gowns for Negri. She was very good at playing both "hot love scenes" and light comedy, and here she has a chance to do both. She's both flirtatious and autocratic, making it completely plausible that these two qualities might coexist in an empress. She looks lovely, and brings a clever, sly quality to the role of a woman who frankly likes men. She's earthy without becoming smarmy, and she makes everyone in the audience enjoy the fun without feeling the need to judge the morality being presented. One of her best scenes comes early in the action. She sits in her magnificent boudoir, dressed all in billowing white, and the moment is treated as high drama. Two ladies-in-waiting begin to weep. Is it the end of her reign, the death of a loved one? No. In a typical Lubitsch touch, it's revealed that the queen has decided to cut her hair! She solemnly inspects a series of young women, each one wearing a different style of haircut, and finally chooses the one she wants. The barber comes forward like an executioner, and as he cuts one hank of hair after another, he carefully hands each one to a lady-in-waiting, who, sobbing openly, places it gently into a special basket. The scene is presented almost religiously, as if showing a life-or-death operation. Negri knows exactly how to play it: she always responded to the Lubitsch touch.

Rod La Roque, her leading man, was a good foil for Negri. He was tall and handsome, and she has to stand on a little stool in order to give him the royal kiss. She is clearly indifferent when he first begins to explain to her that her troops have rebelled, but suddenly she gets a good look at him! After that, each item of information he presents earns him a promotion, and he heads for her ultimate accolade: a special decoration. (Everyone knows what it takes to earn that particular award.)

Forbidden Paradise earned Negri excellent reviews. Seeing her in it, and seeing how effective she is, gives credence to the theories expressed by film historians like DeWitt Bodeen, who felt that Hollywood actually destroyed Negri because it didn't give her enough material like this—sophisticated and intelligent—to showcase her range of abilities. When she had stepped away from such sophisticated characterizations in her earlier German films, she had found rejection from American reviewers. "Pola Negri does not shine in the 'sweet simplicity' roles," said *Variety* about her 1922 *The Devil's Pawn*. "Her work makes you think of Theda Bara playing Juliet." Regarding her performance in *The Last Payment* (also a 1922 German import), *Variety* went into detail:

When one takes into account her work in all the pictures in which she has been shown in America, the conclusion must be reached that Miss Negri shines in roles depicting her as a woman of no morals—an unmoral rather more than an immoral screen female. Hers is not the doll type of beauty we worship in this country, and her acting is of the kind that demands strong roles visualizing women of the people. This limits her characterizations and debars her from enacting modern society women, and as everyone knows, the pictures that draw the most money in America are those portraying our heroines residing in mansions.

What the review did not understand was that Pola Negri was creating her own special kind of modern woman, a heroine harder to pigeonhole, but who appealed in her own way to audiences. Never timid, Negri was totally unafraid to go all out with her emotions on-screen, but she was never unintelligent about it. She's grandiloquent, but she's in control. She dares, so she was right for an era in which the idea of women starting to let go, to have feelings and act them out, was a social triumph and an act of bravery.

In *Sappho*, one of her German films that had been released in America in 1921, she challenged conventional thinking. "But why this fear of love?" she asks a man who tells her that her brother is in an insane asylum because he is being rejected by a woman. She's very matter-of-fact ... love can make you crazy, so why not accept it? Later she gives an impassioned speech about what it has been like for her where men are concerned: "SOLD AND SOLD AGAIN! I WANT TO BE FREE!" She makes it clear that the idea that women have no choice but to give themselves to men in order to survive, and to go from one to another if necessary, is a kind of slavery. "I WANT TO

BE FREE!” Her fearlessness, her defiance, was her link to the women in her audiences. These qualities also helped her command the screen. She can hold the silent moment and she is prepared to appear evil and defiant. Swanson was willing to be unloved off-screen by the movie magazines, but Negri is one of those rare female movie stars (like Bette Davis) who are unafraid of having their characters go unloved by the audience.

The fan magazines jumped on Pola’s bandwagon early, because she was ready-made for them. In *Motion Picture* of June 1923, a long article by Henry Carr, entitled “Behind the Scenes With Pola Negri,” calls her “a wild wind ... who doesn’t calculate ... couldn’t tell you how she does it because she just does it.” The article says that Negri “walked into Hollywood with the hauteur of an empress” and that she has what few Hollywood American actresses have — “power.” *Photoplay*’s sober article on “character nose readings” said Pola Negri’s nose spoke of a “strong, domineering” person who was “vital and wild, with executive ability and a keen sensitivity to art,” and “bold and resolute.” (Gloria Swanson’s was said to reveal “strength of character, luxury loving, and a quick mind and ready wit.” She was “shy and suspicious.”) Another article called Pola “an exotic sorceress” who lived “a crepe-georgette existence.”

Negri was also hyped by studio ads in a highly dramatic way. She was called “the magnificent wildcat” and “a tiger woman with a strange slow smile and world-old lure in her heavy-lidded eyes—mysterious, fascinating, an enigma.” Much of this advertising material was directed at women, stressing how beautiful Negri’s costumes were, how romantic her love scenes were, but adding an important extra twist: her daring and independence. She was described as “all fire and passion that speaks of the perfumed Orient of smoldering passions and hidden storms.” The studio also released constant bulletins describing her temperamental outbursts, her tears, her hysterics. How many good girls and wives in her audiences were secretly thinking, “Go on, Pola!,” identifying happily with the fact she felt no pressure at all to behave well. If she didn’t get her way—well, look out, world. For the men, she was billed as “the most fascinating love actress in the world.”

Magazine articles on Negri carried such titles as “The Loves of Pola Negri” and “How Pola Was Tamed,” or stressing how exotic and enigmatic she was — “Who Is Pola Negri?” and “The Real Pola Negri.” She was no slouch in the quote department. For instance: “I do not believe in marriage. It is not for me. I am selfish, no, not selfish, for I have sacrificed everything for love. I am independent. Freedom comes before anything. I am a Gypsy, like my father.” Hedda Hopper repeated one of her good ones, and threw in the requisite Polish accent: “I am slave. We slaves loff to suffer. When I played a sad part on the screen, I leaved eet, and when I didn’t have anything to feel bad about, I invented something so I could soffer.” One of her very best quotes was her statement on her romance with Rudolph Valentino and how she would remember him: “He loved to make spaghetti and meat balls. He had his own special recipe. I never tired of it, and I will never share with anyone else the secret of his ... meat sauce.” Now that’s a quote for the history books. (And the idea of Pola Negri and Rudolph Valentino sitting around the house sharing a bowl of homemade spaghetti is a real showstopper, too.)

Much space in the magazines and newspapers was given over to Pola’s romances, in particular the celebrated affairs with Chaplin and Valentino. In her autobiography, Negri writes,

A great deal has been written about my relationship with Charlie Chaplin. Unfortunately, much of it was written by Mr. Chaplin ... Charlie shares something with a great many comedians—a total lack of a sense of humor about his private life. It was all so many years ago ... It impresses me as phenomenal that his vanity is still so wounded, that he cannot see some of the comic aspects of what happened between us.

Negri then assures the reader that her version of what happened will be the *absolute truth*.

One of the most amusing aspects of the Negri hype was the celebrated feud between her and Gloria Swanson. When Negri first arrived in Hollywood in 1923, both she and Swanson were under contract to Paramount. Naturally, the publicity department saw a ripe opportunity to create a feud. According to movie lore, it was natural to expect that two such women of the world would be enemies. Both were big stars and expected to be number one at Paramount. Both made women’s pictures, with glamorous clothes and jewelry. Both had affairs off-screen, and were famous for their independence. And both were exotic types, outspoken and colorful. The first news on the feud front was the mysterious “case of the studio cats.” Swanson disliked cats, and this fact had been well documented by the rapacious fan magazines that mined everything for copy. Negri, on the other hand, was promoted as a lover of animals (don’t forget that tiger on a leash). This was instantly translated into good feud material by the Famous Players–Lasky

publicity department. Pola was claimed to have unleashed a pack of felines of all colors, shapes, and sizes onto Gloria's set, driving Gloria home, ill and terrified. Swanson wasn't having any of that. "Me afraid of cats?" she snorted. "Didn't I let the King of Beasts rest a paw on my back in *Male and Female*? Really, they'll have to do better than that." They kept on trying, but neither Negri nor Swanson was dumb enough to get drawn into the fray personally. Although they never became friends, they were never really enemies, either. Friends always reported that they avoided comment on each other, and they were known to be very polite whenever they met. If asked, both women denied there had ever been a feud, and Negri repeated that fact more than once in her memoirs.

Years later, Swanson pointed out how silly most of this hype really was by saying, "I'm not a stupid woman and I hope I have common sense. Someone wrote ... that Pola and I always tried to see who could make a later entrance to a party. What did I do, sit outside in an automobile until she went in first? Or be in cahoots with the butler who would call me up and say, 'She's arrived, now you can come over'? I never heard such nonsense in my life." At the time, however, they seemed like perfect foes and it made great copy.

In 1925, Negri appeared in *East of Suez*, *The Charmer*, *Flower of Night*, and *Woman of the World*, and in 1926 *Crown of Lies* and *Good and Naughty*. Many of these movies were weak and silly stories that didn't allow her to use her very real dramatic talent. An exception was *Woman of the World*, directed in the elegant European style of Mal St. Clair. Based on Carl Van Vechten's novel *The Tattooed Countess*, the movie presents Pola as the ultimate example of such a woman—a countess with a skull and butterfly tattooed above her wrist, who walks around dragging a ten-foot chinchilla train behind her spangled gown. This was good enough for me, but there's more. Confronted with a faithless lover who more or less feels she should just accept his treachery, Pola announces, "I'm a woman of the world, but not the world's woman. I'm going far away, to the other side of the world." The other side of the world turns out to be a small midwestern town, Maple Valley, and the audience is treated to the sight of her, loaded down with pearls and diamonds, making her way amongst the porch swings and the church bazaars.

When Pola gets off the train in Maple Hill, she stands underneath a sign that says "127 miles to Des Moines, 210 miles to Davenport." Her clothes, demeanor, and black onyx cigarette holder with two diamond circles on it indicate that it's probably about six thousand miles back to her home base. The charming story that ensues might have been called "POLA COMES TO AMERICA." Every scene is a culture clash, as she lolls in a hammock, having her satin shoe put back on by a handsome young bumpkin who is overwhelmed by her glamour ... or as she reacts with horror to realizing that she is the main event at the fund-raising Water Works Bazaar ("Talk to a real countess for 25 cents"). Pola copes, telling the young man, "Remember me as half lover and half mother," which seems to successfully deter him, and cooperating with the townspeople despite her humiliation. The big crisis comes when she falls in love with the local reformer, and he with her. True to his rigid morality, he tries to drive her out of town, but the female relative she is staying with tells her how to handle him, handing her a long black whip! Pola interrupts one of his meetings and whumps the daylights out of him, leaving a bloody mark on his brow. Naturally, they immediately get married. *Woman of the World* is a perfect example of what Pola Negri had to offer: glamour, acting ability, and genuine charm and sophistication. It's marked by an attitude of tolerance and sympathy for all parties concerned, and the alliance of two women from different backgrounds over their outrage at male behavior is very modern.

In 1927, Pola Negri made two of her best films, and she is excellent in both: *Hotel Imperial* and *Barbed Wire*. (Her third film of 1927 was *The Woman on Trial*.) *Hotel Imperial* is directed by Mauritz Stiller (Garbo's Svengali), and is a beautiful film. Unfortunately, it doesn't tell a particularly interesting story. (Nevertheless, it was remade in 1939, formed the basis of *Hotel Berlin*, and was not dissimilar to the plot of *Five Graves to Cairo*.) It is no longer fresh or particularly involving, with its tale of a servant girl who makes a noble sacrifice for an aristocratic soldier. The best thing in it is Negri. She looks very beautiful, although physical beauty alone was never what she was about. (She was stunning, with large, dark gray eyes, a full figure, and the prerequisite white, white skin of 1920s movie women, and a magnificent head of thick, black hair.) She doesn't have the glorious face of a Barbara LaMarr, or the exotic looks of a Gloria Swanson, or the sweetness of the very pretty Mary Pickford, or the ethereal beauty of Lillian Gish. What she has is a face full of character, an expressive face that seems human and real. When she smiles, her face lights up, and her eyes are always full of a very specific response to her situation and her character.

To me, the face of Pola Negri is one of the great faces of the silent screen. In one of her luminous close-ups in *Hotel Imperial*, she is radiant, her eyes wide, her lips slightly parted, but what makes her fascinating is not the beauty but the ability to convey with enormous subtlety a flickering range of emotions from fear to love to uncertainty. When

the Russian general who has tried to seduce her hears her alibi for the Austrian soldier she loves—he was in her room all the time—he threatens to tear the clothes he purchased for her off her body. She stops him dramatically—she’ll do it herself! She goes into a frenzy, ripping, tearing, breaking her beads and rolling her eyes. This was Negri’s specialty: unbridled passion. (This was thought to be great acting.) But it’s her small, subtle emotions that make us believe her today. A comparison of her bodice-ripping scene to a later one in which, after the war is won, her soldier returns proves the point. She has helped the hero escape and has told her friend she will never see him again because “he is an aristocrat, and I am a servant.” As he rides past her in the parade, triumphant, she is shyly proud, slightly overcome with tears, but too happy to see him alive to break down. She runs along the street without him seeing her, full of joy and yet sadness. (Her soldier spots her, and in receiving his medals, brings her forward as a true hero of the war, honoring her and embracing her for a happy ending.)

Barbed Wire is well directed by Rowland V. Lee. Set in World War I, it’s a story of a French girl who is ostracized by her village when she marries a German prisoner of war. (The very British Clive Brook plays the German soldier.) The movie sets out to depict what happens to ordinary people’s lives and emotions when war breaks out. Before the war, the French farm peasants are happy—perhaps too happy—but when war overtakes their lives, they are slowly changed into people of grief and hatred. Their shock over one of their own consenting to marry an enemy prisoner is palpable, and Negri is at her finest, particularly in a scene when she walks slowly homeward after defending her husband at a French court martial. Her neighbors have gathered to revile her, but as she walks by the barbed-wire fences of the prison camp, the German soldiers line up to tip their hats to her.

Barbed Wire has the usual inexplicable plot complications of the World War I film. For instance, yet again a soldier thought to be dead—Negri’s brother—turns up alive after all, and of course he is blind. After the war, this character, convincingly played by Einar Hanson, gives an impassioned plea for everyone to realize that old hatreds must be abandoned. Negri shows a range of emotions—happy, energetic, and positive as a farmworker ... sad, listless, and discouraged as war comes and her brother is apparently lost ... touchingly passionate and tenderly in love as the German enters her life ... and finally, disbelieving and numb as her neighbors turn against her.

Barbed Wire is one of the strongest stories about World War I to be produced during the 1920s, and its antiwar message is effectively presented. Negri’s personal notices in it were not all positive, however. Perhaps offended by the somewhat pro-German sentiment of the movie, *Variety* panned her by saying, “The star does not convince in appearance or performance as the French peasant woman.” *Variety* also mentions one of the commonest criticisms leveled against Negri, and one that often appears in writing about her today, which is that not only is she “camera conscious” but “except under the guidance of certain directors, she is lost.” The idea was that Pola Negri, temperamental European diva, was out of control, an egomaniac, and a liability on the set unless someone dominant, like Lubitsch, had her in check. Her film performances, seen today, do not necessarily verify this point of view. Certainly she did some of her best work with Lubitsch, but then, who didn’t?

By 1928, the shadow of sound began to fall over the kings and queens of silent film. Negri, however, released four films: *The Secret Hour*, *Three Sinners*, *Loves of an Actress*, and *The Woman from Moscow*. These movies were more of the kind she had been making, and she then allegedly retired from the screen, making one “part talkie” in England, titled *The Woman He Scorned* in America and released in 1930, which was easily dismissed by critics. She was off the screen until 1932, when she returned to Hollywood to make her official talking debut in a movie called *A Woman Commands*. It was heavily publicized and promoted, and Negri appeared in New York City on the arm of Mayor Jimmy Walker for the premiere. She was spectacular, dressed all in stark white, with a fabulous tiara sitting atop her dark hair, but nothing could disguise the fact that the film was poor. One review called it an awkward combination of “a musicalized ‘Zenda’ and a weak stab at continental elegance and a flavoring of both ‘Peck’s Bad Boy’ and ‘Nellie the Beautiful Cloak Model.’” The bottom line was that the film was “confusing.” It presented a mishmash of torch songs, czarist revolution, hot romance, Ruritanian court intrigue, and low comedy.

Needless to say, Negri’s entrance into the world of sound showed that she spoke with a thick foreign accent, but so did Garbo, and Negri sang a snatch of a torch song well, revealing that she had an agreeable alto voice. Her voice was not the problem, but there was nowhere for her to go in sound in America. She was not young, and as with John Gilbert, her trademark type of passionate movie behavior was going out of style. Her lush image, her furs and jewels and silk shoes, her Gypsies and czarinas and apache crime queens, just didn’t work in the hardscrabble world of the 1930s. Compared to the tough working girls and gun molls of the period, Pola’s tantrums no longer seemed like much of a defiance, and certainly not a liberation. For all practical purposes, the American movie career of Pola

Negri was finished. However, the hype surrounding *A Woman Commands* ensured that she would go out with her usual flourish of publicity and glamour, keeping her forever associated with such nonsense. It's too bad that Pola Negri paid so high a price for her publicity. Over the years, it has tended to overshadow her genuine talent, as most books and articles write about her off-screen antics rather than her performances. Negri always gave all she had to her film roles, and she is unfailingly absorbing and entertaining even in the wildest junk.

After *A Woman Commands*, Negri received no offers, so she returned to Europe, making a film in France and going back to UFA in Germany in 1935. There she was starred in a series of solid movies, and she also found some success as a cabaret singer. When World War II threatened, she returned to the United States and remained there until her death in 1987. She made only two more films, a piece of nonsense called *Hi Diddle Diddle* in 1943 and Walt Disney's *The Moon-Spinners* in 1964.

The Moon-Spinners was a vehicle for the very popular young star Hayley Mills, and Pola was persuaded to come out of her retirement (in Houston, Texas, a place no one would expect to find a Pola Negri—Havana, maybe, Helsinki even, but Houston, no). She played a small but showy role as Madame Habib, a jewel thief who lives on a luxury-laden yacht called "The Minotaur." Pola's footage is brief, but she makes every moment of it count. She's seen only inside her salon, which is cavernous—not unlike an old silent film set. There are Egyptian and Asian artifacts all about, and a leopard sleeps on a large stool with a cushion on it. Pola is given a grand star entrance—sitting in an ornate chair with its back to the viewer, with only her hand visible. At first glimpse, she is busily cleaning her jewelry, dipping a large diamond necklace into a glass of champagne and then scrubbing it with a little brush. She wears gold brocade and a mink stole. Her thick black hair is arranged in a simple pageboy, with an elaborate braided chignon on top. At this point, Negri is at least sixty-five years old, possibly even seventy, but she looks literally twenty years younger. Her face is unlined but without that frightening look that face-lifts can give (the smooth, unearthly skin punctuated by two hot little holes for a pair of seemingly unrelated eyeballs). She is slender, and moves with the ease of a much younger woman.

Negri fully understands her purpose in *Moon-Spinners*—to be colorful and amusing for those who have never heard of her, and to touch base as her old self with those who do. She delivers her lines in a strong but not unintelligible accent, and she is expert with dialogue. Her large and expressive eyes are very much alive and alert, and she can still blaze fire out of them. She plays straight, rising above camp but putting a twist on the part that is cleverly comic without losing the dignity she obviously feels she is entitled to. Her performance was greeted warmly, but she felt she would not like to do any more film work. It was enough for her, seemingly too exhausting after years of retirement that involved no pressure.

Pola's final film gave her a very fine curtain speech, just before she and her leopard retire for a nap. After she has sold out the villain she was formerly in cahoots with, she calmly tells him, "Everyone lies when it suits their purpose ... even the stars." She then wraps up all the chaos of the story by saying: "I lived through two wars, four revolutions, and five marriages." It was a perfect self-referential salute to Pola's own life, her former roles, and her own unique personage.

Basinger, Jeanine. *Silent Stars* (pp. 238-258). New York: Alfred A. Knopf. ©1999 by Jeanine Basinger.

Pola Negri by Alisa Rosenbaum (Ayn Rand) 1925



When Ayn Rand died in 1982, her papers included four small booklets about movie stars. It was only some years later when Robert Mayhew discovered in a lecture given by Rand in 1969, that Rand herself had written the 1925 booklet on Pola Negri. It was one of her earliest published writings. Born Alisa Rosenbaum in 1905, at 19 Rand enrolled at the State Institute for Cinematography in Leningrad to study screenwriting. Sometime before she left for America in January of the 1926, she had written this booklet. Moving to Chicago, she attended movies daily at her cousin's New Lyric theatre on Chicago's South Side. In August, with a \$100 and several film scenarios in her possession, she left for Hollywood.

This translation of the first chapter of Pola Negri by Dina Garmong, appears in Ayn Rand: Russian Writings on Hollywood, edited by Michael S. Berliner, published by the Ayn Rand Institute Press in 1999.

“Movie star.”

Had a dictionary of movie terminology existed, the definition of this world would have been, approximately, the following: “A beauty with flawless taste in clothing, gay, lovely, attractive.”

Francesca Bertini is a prizewinning beauty; Pola Negri is unattractive. Gloria Swanson dazzles the eye with the sparkle and originality of her outfits. Pola Negri has not taste in clothing. Mary Pickford conquers hearts with her childlike tenderness, simplicity, naiveté. Pola Negri is a gloomy, intense, cruel woman.

But Pola Negri is currently the world's leading movie star.

She is a woman with dark, tragic eyes, which are narrowed in a wearily derisive way, and a mysterious contemptuous smile even in the most joyful screen moments. She is a woman who did not struggle for her fame, who did not walk the slow and difficult road of a movie actress establishing her name. She came and she conquered.

What is the secret of her success, rare even among the greatest names in cinematography?

Every famous actress falls into one of the established types.

Pola Negri is atypical, she cannot be stereotyped. She is Pola Negri only. Among the mass of tender, smiling, syrupy-sweet little faces of the American and other movie heroines, each identical to the next like lozenges from the same box, the gloomy, cruel face of Pola Negri stands out and imprints itself in one's memory for a long time. Her type is not the fragile, virtuous maidens, not the empty stereotypes of sentimental American dramas. Her type is the proud woman-conqueror, often a tragic one, but powerful even in her suffering. Her heroines exemplify everything in a woman's character which is strong, insolent, occasionally crafty, and always victorious. Pola Negri always portrays the strong, powerful woman. Her heroines are scattered around the globe: Pola Negri is international. She is able to portray every social class and nationality equally colorfully and convincingly. A Spanish woman, an ancient Egyptian, a modern-day Frenchwoman, a child of the people, a worldly noblewoman — this great actress is equally good at each of these roles. This is one of the reasons for her universal success.

Pola Negri does not copy, does not imitate. She has her own style, is hers alone.

Even the American petty bourgeois, who demands a movie actress with the face of an angel from a cheap postcard, kneels before this strong, energetic talent.

“The public will never tire of watching Pola” — they write about her in America. “Pola is a tiger, a stranger to everyone, graceful and dangerous.”

It would be more precise to say: Pola is the only human being amidst empty mannequins, the only woman amidst sentimental dolls, one of the few major real actresses amidst modern movie stars.

“Pola Negri, a Vamp of the Silent Screen, Dies at 88”
New York Times, Aug. 3, 1987, Section D, Page 11

Pola Negri, a tempestuous green-eyed vamp of the silent screen who tantalized audiences with her on- and off-camera romances, died Saturday at Northeast Baptist Hospital in San Antonio. She was 88 years old and lived in San Antonio.

Miss Negri was admitted to the hospital with pneumonia last week, hospital officials said yesterday. Her physician, Dr. Houston Wade, said she had been diagnosed two years ago as having a brain tumor. She decided not to undergo treatment, he said.

There were believed to be no survivors.

Most Exotic of Stars, by Albin Krebs, *New York Times*



The 1920's and 30's were the Age of the Vamp in the movies, and of all the screen vamps, Pola Negri was, unquestionably, the most colorful, the most exotic, the most mysterious.

The Polish-born Miss Negri was a startlingly beautiful woman, with skin as delicately white as fine porcelain, jet black hair and flashing dark-green eyes.

Her off-screen life was more tempestuous than any role she ever played and, although she often insisted that she wished only to be left alone, she could shrewdly maneuver her love affairs and feuds into avalanches of personal publicity.

Men found her fascinating. She married two noblemen and divorced both. She was the mistress and fiancée of Charles Chaplin, whom she jilted in a whirl of headlines. She was living openly with Rudolph Valentino, the romantic idol of millions of women the world over, at the time of his death in 1926. And Adolf Hitler was so taken with her that he personally intervened to countermand an order, issued by the Nazis on the ground that they thought Miss Negri was part-Jewish, forbidding her to work in Germany.

The temperamental star flourished in the long-gone era of the flamboyant screen siren, competing for roles and popularity with such other stars as Gloria Swanson and Theda Bara. Festooned in Diamonds

Whenever she appeared in public, she was festooned in diamonds and pearl brooches from her \$1 million collection, acquired cut-rate from Hapsburgs and Hohenzollerns who could no longer afford them. She popularized painted toenails in the mid-20's, and when she took to wearing turbans, or appeared in high boots, thousands of American women slavishly copied her.

She maintained a mansion in Beverly Hills, a villa on the Riviera and a chateau north of Paris, and just before the crash of 1929 her personal fortune was estimated at \$5 million. She lost most of her money and possessions, however, and spent her last years living in elegant simplicity in San Antonio.

In "Memoirs of a Star," published in 1970, Miss Negri wrote that she was born in Lipno, Poland, on New Year's Eve, 1899. (Other sources, however, give the date as three to five years earlier.) Her mother was the former Eleanor de Kielczeska, from a family of impoverished nobility; her father was Jerzy Mathias-Chalupec, a Slovak immigrant.

Miss Negri's two sisters died in childhood. Her father was arrested by Czarist troops in 1905 for revolutionary activity in what was then Russian Poland. He was sent to prison and, although he was ultimately released, he did not return to his wife and daughter.

Miss Negri's mother had to go to work as a cook to maintain a one-room apartment in a Warsaw slum and earn enough money to send Pola to the Imperial Ballet School. Pola's first public performance was in the role of a cygnet in "Swan Lake," with the Imperial Ballet. *Illness Ended Dance Career*

Her dancing career ended when she was 13 years old, however, because she contracted tuberculosis and had to be sent to a sanitarium. Pronounced cured a year later, she returned to Warsaw and was admitted for study at the Imperial Academy of Dramatic Arts after falsely stating she was 17. It was at that time that she adopted her stage name - Pola, the diminutive of her given name, Apolonia, and Negri, after Ada Negri, an Italian poet whom she admired.

She was one of Poland's leading actresses when she was 17, at which time she made her first movie, a two-reeler called "Slaves of Sin." In 1918 she went to Berlin to perform a leading role in Max Reinhardt's pantomime "Sumurun," which was later filmed as her third full-length movie.

Miss Negri's roles in her first two pictures, "The Eyes of the Mummy Ma" and "Carmen," typed her as the man-ruining vamp. She took time out from her career in 1919 to be the wife, briefly, of Count Eugene Dambski, a Polish army career officer, then returned to Berlin to make films. "Madame Du Barry," released in the United States under the title "Passion," won her a Paramount Pictures contract and she was brought here in 1922.

During the Atlantic crossing, Miss Negri's agent scolded her for spending most of her time in her cabin. "Make a few appearances," he said. "Think of the publicity."

"I am thinking of it," she replied. "We will get more publicity this way. I have already learned that the fewer appearances you make, the more they will talk about you. All you have to do is to say you want to be alone - and the whole world thinks you are exotic and glamorous. It never occurs to them that you are simply tired." *Feud With Swanson*

In Hollywood, while carefully limiting her public appearances, Miss Negri, with equal assiduity, cultivated several headlined feuds, most notably with Gloria Swanson, her rival at Paramount. (The leading ladies once had a cat fight using real cats.) Miss Negri's Hollywood films were not artistic landmarks, but most were extremely successful at the box office. Among them were "Belle Donna" (1923), her first American movie; "The Cheat" (1923); "Men" (1924); "The Spanish Dancer" (1923); "Shadows of Paris" (1924); "East of Suez" (1925) and "Forbidden Paradise" (1924). At the height of her popularity, she was so much in demand that she ground out five pictures in a single year.

However, she always seemed able to find time for romance. Her first big headlined Hollywood affair was with Charlie Chaplin, who in 1964 wrote in his autobiography that the relationship was essentially one of the pursued (Chaplin) and the pursuer (Negri). In her own memoirs Miss Negri observed tartly:

"A great deal has been written about my relationship with Charlie Chaplin. Unfortunately, much of it has been written by Mr. Chaplin. Still less fortunately, what he wrote was largely untrue. Rather than say he behaved in less than a gentlemanly fashion, I would prefer to excuse him on the grounds that all clowns live in a world of fantasy."

Miss Negri went on to say that her relationship with Mr. Chaplin had been intimate and stormy, that he was an inept lover, that he proposed marriage and that finally she ended the affair, over Mr. Chaplin's tearful entreaties. *Her Greatest Love*

According to Miss Negri, the greatest love of her life was Rudolph Valentino. On their second meeting, she wrote in her memoirs, she found him so passionately overpowering that on that very night they became lovers and remained so for nearly a year, until his death in 1926.

Valentino, called by his adoring public “The Great Lover,” was indeed the great lover, she wrote, capable of making such romantic gestures as sprinkling rose petals on the bed before they retired. He could also be quite prosaic. For example, he often wept because he was losing his hair, and sometimes the sex symbol of American women preferred making spaghetti for Miss Negri to making love to her.

After collapsing at Valentino’s funeral in New York, Miss Negri took his body back to California by train, stopping at dozens of stations along the way so that hysterical Valentino-worshippers could pay him tribute. She was accused of using the cortege to garner personal publicity, and, true or not, soon afterward her popularity at the box office waned. When her contract came up for renewal, she found she was no longer wanted at Paramount.

Her standing with the Valentino cult was forever shattered when, in 1927, less than a year after Valentino’s death, Miss Negri was married to Serge Mdivani, an impecunious Georgian prince, and took him to live in her chateau in France. They were divorced in 1931, after Miss Negri had lost the bulk of her fortune through, she later wrote, her husband’s mismanagement of her affairs during the stock-market crisis. Went to Berlin in 1935

After the indifferent reception to her first talkie, “A Woman Commands,” Miss Negri in 1935 fled Hollywood for Berlin, where she made pictures until the outbreak of World War II. For a time she was prohibited from working by Joseph Goebbels, the Nazi propaganda minister, who put her name on a list of suspected “non-Aryans.”

Hitler, who was said to be so fond of her German-made movie about mother love, “Mazurka,” that he had it run weekly so he could have a good cry, personally overruled Goebbels. Shortly after, newspapers in Europe and the United States printed reports of a romance between Hitler and Miss Negri. She sued the French magazine that initiated the reports and won a 10,000-franc judgment.

Miss Negri, who was living on the Riviera when Germany invaded France, returned to the United States in 1941. Two years later she played a featured comedy role in “Hi Diddle Diddle,” but no other film offers were forthcoming.

By the end of the war, she was reduced to living in one room in a small hotel in New York and selling off her jewelry to survive. Ultimately, she recovered some money and property tied up in Europe during the war.

From 1948 to 1963, Miss Negri lived in California and Texas with Margaret L. West, who bequeathed her property in San Antonio. In recent years Miss Negri lived in a duplex apartment in San Antonio, attended by a maid, a chauffeur and a secretary.

Miss Negri made her last attempted comeback in “The Moonspinners,” a Walt Disney film released in 1964. As production on the movie began in London in 1963, she proved she had not lost her knack for finding a bizarre gimmick sure to give her headlines. For her first press conference, she entered the room with a frisky cheetah on a leash.

Antonio Moreno: The Spanish star who had IT
A personal discovery by Mar Diaz

In June of 2014 I arrived at the Cinematic Arts Library of the University of Southern California and there I met archivist Ned Comstock. He told me that I was the first person to ask about Antonio Moreno. This was not the first time I had heard that. Ned had prepared 7 boxes for me and told me that no one had opened them until then. When I



saw their content, I was overcome with tears: there were the original scripts of *The Benson Murder Case/El cuerpo del delito*, *The Bad Man/El hombre malo*, *The Cardboard City/La ciudad de cartón*, *The Cat Creeps/La voluntad del muerto*, *Those Who Dance/Los que danzan*, *The Price of a Kiss/El precio de un beso*, *Primavera en otoño*, *Rosa de Francia*, *Storm Over the Andes/Alas sobre el Chaco*, *Asegure a su mujer* and *Señora casada necesita marido*. All lost movies, except the last two.

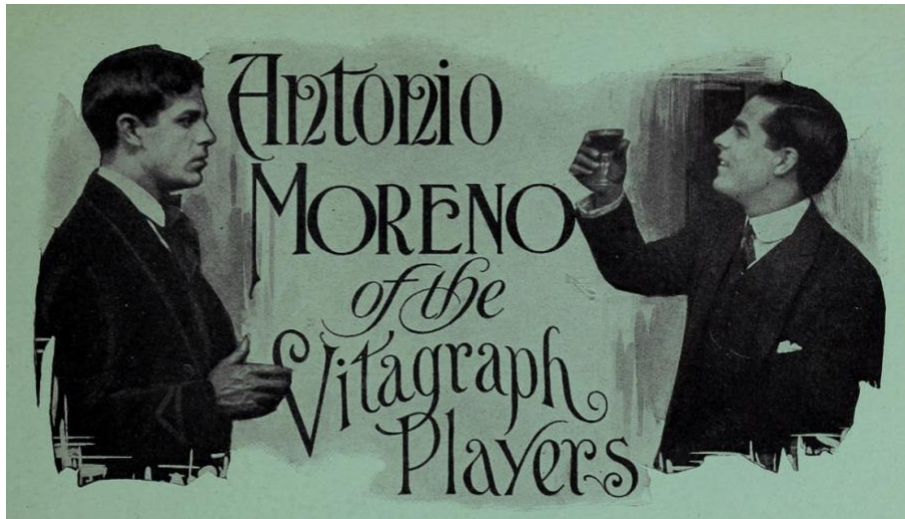
Also, there were the scripts of the first two Mexican sound films, directed by Moreno: *The mythical Santa*, starring Lupita Tovar and *Águilas frente al sol*, which was soon forgotten. The headquarters of the production company suffered a fire soon after and, as far as I know, they are the only originals that exist. Also, I found the script of *Maria de la O*, film shot in Spain in 1936 with which Antonio worked in his country for the first time. The production company was also burned, and I never found original materials from this film. They were his personal scripts, pointed, underlined, with notes on costumes, drawings, his paper marks made with envelopes with his address. Why had no one ever asked for Antonio Moreno?

Why in Spain has there never been the slightest interest in knowing his life and career? How is it possible that this professional with five decades of work in the cinema, 150 films shot, a true pioneer who participated in the history of the seventh art since its first steps has been buried in oblivion for so long? Maybe his career was mediocre, and he did not deserve it? Let's check:

Antonio Moreno began acting in theater repertoire companies that toured throughout the United States in 1910. He was 23 years old, had been in the United States for 8 years, was very attractive and did well in small roles. He learned fast and from the best: he performed alongside Maude Adams, Leslie Carter, Constance Collier, Tyrone Power, Sr. and many more. He even played Shakespeare with Sothorn and Marlowe. But one day Antonio had a problem with a director because he mispronounced a word. He was unable to say it well and was fired. Antonio then tried his luck at the movies, a new medium that started in New York and would not require an impeccable accent. His looks were perfect for the camera that clearly fell in love with him. He started as an extra, and his director was David Wark Griffith, no less. Among his first shorts, filmed in 1912 are *The Musketeers of Pig Alley*, considered the first gangster film, and *An Unseen Enemy*, a horror film starring the Gish sisters. In both, we can distinguish the handsome Antonio perfectly well among the extras. In 1915 he was already a



leading man in dozens of films at Vitagraph and he became famous: *The Island of Regeneration*, a lost short, made him a star and he began to occupy much space in the movie magazines. At the end of the decade, he starred in several serials, the most popular genre, and kept an incredible rhythm of work. Rolling at full speed, doing totally irrational risky scenes, playing the most varied characters, exotic and non-exotic, Antonio grew in popularity.



In 1921 he was fed up with the serials and wanted to star in feature films. He demanded that Vitagraph release him from his contract, got his release, and decided to work freelance forever: he would never again be tied to a studio by a contract. He would direct his career. He was also a pioneer in this. The fight with the Vitagraph was tough and his support in the negotiations came from one of his best friends: director William Desmond Taylor. In fact, the last person Taylor spoke on the phone, just before he was murdered in his home was Antonio Moreno.

Taylor's murder is one of the most mysterious in film history because the culprit was never discovered.

The 1920s were, quite simply, impressive. Antonio was the first Latin-lover, the romantic heartthrob who played sophisticated Europeans, rude cowboys, mocking swordsmen, and melancholic aristocrats with equal mastery. His Latin origin did not limit his roles, but it did fascinate the press, which loved to write about his deep black eyes and olive skin. Stories about the actor had headlines like: "'Tony Moreno' Bullfighter," "The Modern Don Juan," "The Spanish Cavalier," "Tony Toreador", etc.



He starred in *My American Wife* with Gloria Swanson, *The Spanish Dancer* with Pola Negri, *Mare Nostrum* with Alice Terry, *The Temptress* with Greta Garbo, *Beverly of Graustark* with Marion Davis, *Madame Pompadour* with Dorothy Gish and in 1927 Elinor Glynn, the writer who invented the term IT, said that the only actors who had IT in Hollywood were Clara Bow and Antonio Moreno. Paramount quickly produced a film with that title starring the charismatic couple.

On the personal side he could not do better: In 1923 Antonio married an older woman, Daisy Canfield. Heiress of an oil magnate, she was educated, sophisticated, divorced, and had three children — and a member of the California jet set. Together they built a mansion high on Silver Lake and rivaled Pickford and Fairbanks as hosts of Los Angeles's most best parties. Antonio was at the top. What could go wrong?

I spoke at the beginning of the oblivion that Antonio Moreno has suffered in cinematographic historiography. I have come to the conclusion that one of the reasons is the way in which his story has been told — the reductionist and simplified way in which his career has been written — a form of “journalism” based on the “copy + paste” from the Internet. And so, in his biographies two concepts are repeated, and both are simplistic and false: One, Antonio Moreno was one of many “Latin lover” types imitating Rodolfo Valentino and Two: his career was over when sound came due to his accent.

Regarding the first, we have seen that when Valentino became famous in 1921, Antonio already had many years of fame and dozens of films behind him. With regard to the second, there is much to say, and it concerns the period of time that concerns us today. There are many factors that come into play: his age at that moment, his professional motivations, the accent (but for the opposite reasons), his unfulfilled dream, the enormous changes that the industry suffered and, of course, the arrival of the cinema spoken in Spanish. Let’s see how a career solidly established in the cinema from its foundations changes in just five years in such an absolutely convulsive, vertiginous and definitive way.

In 1930 Antonio turned 43 years old. His appearance had changed. He had been in front of the cameras for 18 years. He had made all sorts of characters and needed new challenges. Antonio was never characterized by being conformist. He was ambitious, creative, always sought to overcome, to experiment, to grow. He was very much a perfectionist, and this carries with it a load of dissatisfaction. Tired of being the romantic lead, he wanted to go deeper. He wanted to play characters with layers, to be the evil antagonist, to explore new ways of interpreting. He was aware that the young actors were proving themselves as protagonists and he was soon going to play secondary characters. But there was something else, something very important: Antonio had a dream: to direct. He felt that he should appear less before the cameras and express his creativity in another way. Directing was his next goal. In a magazine of 1927 already announced that he was negotiating with Warner to realize the ambition of his life. That agreement, like so many in his career, did not materialize.

Is it possible that, as it is said in several places, Antonio had a Spanish accent so strong that he condemned his career? I do not think so. Let’s see: Antonio was born in Madrid in 1887 and lived in Andalusia during his childhood and adolescence. It is true that the Andalusian accent is more closed and characteristic than the Castilian, but Antonio went to the United States when he was only 15 years old, so he had been speaking in English for 28 years.

As a boy, he lived in near Gibraltar, where he tried to get jobs working for the American and English tourists who spent the summer there. At polo matches, golf outings and horse races, Spanish children earned coins by caring for the animals and carrying the sticks and luggage of the tourists.

Two Harvard students met him, offered to buy him a boat ticket to New York, and offered him a place in a school. Antonio claimed to have been a dreamy, poor boy, who looked at the great ships that were leaving for America and wanted to travel in them to new adventures. He could not have been more fortunate: his benefactors were Benjamin Curtis, nephew of the mayor of New York, and Enrique de Cruzat Zanetti, a Cuban who later became a diplomat in Geneva. With Zanetti he could speak in Spanish, so the arrival in New York must have been smooth. He studied for a year in a public school and when Zanetti had to leave, he left Moreno in the hands of a friend, an exceptional woman, Adelene Moffat, who lived in Northampton, Massachusetts, home to Smith College, a prestigious woman’s school. Adelene introduced him to Charlotte Morgan, a widow who had lost a son Antonio’s age and was running a hotel next to the University. Charlotte adopted Antonio and gave him a job at the hotel as a bellboy, enabling him attend classes organized by Moffat. Antonio grew up helped by strong, independent, and exceptional women and I think that marked him forever.

Morgan, who was a true mother to him, died and Antonio had to stay in the YMCA and find jobs in one of the area’s silk factories and at the electricity company. As he told it, one day he had to fix a breakdown at the Northampton theater where the company of Maude Adams was rehearsing. He left there with a small role in the play. He went on tour with the company and fell in love with the theater. He ended up working on Broadway very shortly thereafter.

In all this time I doubt very much that he had the opportunity to speak in Spanish. And his theatrical training required him to perfect English. In his early movie years, in the 1910s, he lived in New York and worked with

Americans. In 1919 a Mexican journalist interviewed him and began speaking Spanish, but Antonio soon asked him to continue in English because he found it difficult to follow the words.

The subject of the language is especially suggestive in the case of Antonio in the 1930s. In such an important period of his career, in which his decisions could mark it forever, he decided to participate in productions in Spanish. Why? Antonio was a poor immigrant who triumphed, an illiterate child who fulfilled the dream of becoming a Hollywood star before that dream existed. He embodied the American dream, self-made, self-educated, surrounded by the right people, taking advantage of opportunities. A person who had everything, as I said before. But was there something missing? The immigrant always, inevitably has a certain nostalgia that never goes away. Did Antonio have it? I am absolutely sure that he did — his persona exudes a melancholy that I fully grasp but cannot explain. A melancholy that became clear when I made a documentary about him and began to assemble the images. I was not looking for it, at all, and there it was; that melancholy showed up in the film. Antonio brought it with him.

He had already tried sound cinema before making the Spanish-language film: some of his movies of the late 1920s already incorporated some spoken scenes and in 1929 he filmed *Romance of the Rio Grande*, a total talkie directed by Alfred Santell for Fox with Mona Maris, Warner Baxter and Mary Duncan. Antonio was the third in the order of the credits. He proclaimed that he was delighted to play the bad guy at last, that he was sick of playing romantic leads. The film is spoken in Spanglish, it is a total mixture. What I can say of Antonio is that his way of speaking Spanish of Spain is unequivocal: he is the only one who pronounces the c, says little girl instead of *mija* and says the phrase “If I catch you, you’ll find out,” which is pure Spanish. Here Antonio made a very radical bet on a change of image. He not only appeared dressed in charro costumes, but he made pure parody of the bad guy role — proof of his willingness to take risks.

In 1930 he filmed *Rough Romance* also for Fox, totally spoken in English with George O’Brien and Helen Chandler. He is also the villain and the third in the credits.

I think that Antonio could have continued his career creating juicy and interesting characters. But then came the second-language versions. Between 1930 and 1932 more than 100 films were filmed in Spanish in Hollywood. That required a large number of Spanish speakers at all levels of production and there was a migration of people interested in the cinema from Spain and different Latin American countries. Antonio Moreno played a crucial role at this stage because he knew directors, photographers, American actors, and the few Latino actors who were already working in Hollywood. He played a fundamental role as liaison to this group.

At the same time, Antonio’s fame made him a made him a box office draw for these early films. He was also bilingual and could interpret the same role in both the English and Spanish versions. Antonio received the offer to star in the first Spanish-version production for no less than four studios: Warner, Fox, Universal, and Paramount. For the last, he filmed *El cuerpo del delito*, the Spanish-language version of *The Benson Murder Case*, in March 1930. A film set in New York at the time of the recent stock market crash it was based on one of the Philo Vance detective novels. Antonio played the murderer, and his role was portrayed by William Boyd in the English-language version. The film was very popular, but although Antonio was criticized for speaking Spanish with a strong American accent, his performance was highly praised.

In the first Fox dual language film, Antonio had a great opportunity. It was *One Mad Kiss*, with a script by Dudley Nichols based on the story of Lola Montes and filmed in April. The musical film was successful, Jose Mojica in the lead role and Antonio again the third in credits in the role of the villain. The important thing is that Antonio, according to *Cita en Hollywood* by Juan Heinik and Bob Dickson, also worked as adviser to director Marcel Silver. According to Mojica in his memoirs, *I, Sinner*, “the chosen director was incompetent and dreamy.” Filming was suspended when Mojica left to fulfill his contract as a singer at the Chicago Opera. The director was fired, and Fox waited for the return of Mojica to re-shoot again months later with another director, James Tingling. It was a tremendous blockbuster. The English version was filmed with the same actors, which allowed them to take many shots in both versions and reduce costs. But the critics hated the difference between the accents. The war of the “Z” had begun, and it was fierce.

Baltasar Fernández Cué, who was preparing to film of *El hombre malo*, which he had adapted into Spanish for Warner, wrote about Antonio in *World Cinema* in July 1930: “His debut in Spanish-language cinema has just been worth a few applause. Some demanding critics have preferred to note that he releases some words in the Andalusian style here and there, but in spite of everything, Moreno is today one of the most attractive figures among all the actors who work on the screen in Spanish. According to him, however, that debut was one of the hardest tests of his artistic career: “Do you want to believe that I was afraid to speak to the microphone in my own language?,” naively told me Antonio Moreno. “I mean how difficult it is for me to speak without an Andalusian accent. Imagine: from the age of 10 to 14 I had to work for my poor mother as a baker, you know. Then they brought me to America. Everything I have learned since then, was taught to me in English. And now, suddenly, I have to speak like in the Spanish theater! I assure you that if those who hear me there realize the effort I had to do to tame my Andalusian language, I would very easily forgive each of the words that have gone wrong.”

At this point of linguistic neurasthenia, with Antonio studying his own language with Spanish advisers, in *The Bad Man* Antonio must interpret a Mexican bandit dressed as charro. Fernández Cué takes the opportunity to explain, aware of the controversy created by the silent film, that “I made the bad man speak in a language that, while revealing the humble origin and the Mexican character of the role, presents him in a form that cannot but please the sensible Mexicans and will not displease non-Mexicans. Antonio Moreno approves these theories because he does not want to offend Mexico or displease the rest of the Spanish world. And, as he says he is very satisfied, he has already put himself in the hands of a Mexican instructor to learn the accent with which he must say his role”. The story was a very popular play that had already been filmed in 1923 by First National. That film had caused the studio serious headaches: not only was it banned for a time in Mexico for its insulting portrait of Mexicans, but so were the rest of the films of the production company.

In *Cinelandia* July 1930, the filming of *The Bad Man* was announced: “First National was busy in the filming of *El hombre malo*, that the company insists on translating *Bad Man*, a children’s title, when it should be “a bad man”. The film relates in a certain way an episode of the life of the Mexican caudillo Pancho Villa and occurs in the border with the United States. In spite of the statement made that when the subjects were regional, interpreters from the country of the subject would be used, for more truth and to maintain the regional flavor of the language, the distribution includes almost exclusively names of interpreters coming from Spain, which we consider absurd. The protagonist, Antonio Moreno, whose marked Andalusian accent was one of the flaws of *El Cuerpo del Delito*, will now play a Mexican bandit. And this is the occasion to establish a beautiful feature of Antonio Moreno, who convinces us of the excellent opinion that, as a gentleman, we had of him. First of all, when he was called to this role, he declared that he did not think he deserved it, with Mexicans giving him greater local character. The company insisted that it was him, eventually convincing him. Two days later he was told that he must wear certain costume — certainly one of the many fantastic creations that are made in Hollywood to dress the Spaniards — and Moreno refused to do so. “If I make the film” he said, “I will do it as it should be, without absurdity and without ridicule to Mexico. And if not, here is the contract.” And saying that, he broke the document he had signed and went home.”

Despite all the warnings, *The Bad Man*, directed by William McGann in May 1930, Warner’s first Spanish-language film with First National was a sad example of how little Hollywood producers understood the market at which they were directed with these films, according to Lisa Jarvinen in her book *The Rise of Spanish-Language Filmmaking* — and with it they succeeded in offending all the cultural sensitivities.

In July and August, the first Spanish-language production of Universal was filmed: *La voluntad del muerto* (*The Cat Creeps* in the English version). Directed by George Melford at night simultaneously with the English version directed by Rupert Julian. The couple is mythical – Antonio Moreno and Lupita Tovar – and marks the beginning of a very close and historical relationship between the two and between Lupita and the producer of the film, Paul Kohner, who would be her husband. Lupita recalls in her memoirs that “I was especially excited to meet Antonio Moreno, the leading Spanish actor and matinee idol in Hollywood. He was not that young, he was 44, but he still looked very handsome with his flashing black eyes. I never imagined meeting him, and now I was going to act with him! He had not practiced his Spanish for a long time and always looked at me when his dialogues were difficult. He was charming, always looking out for me. *La voluntad del muerto* is one of the lost films of Antonio that fans of horror and mystery cinema would most like to appear. It was the precedent for the Spanish *Dracula* that starred Lupita and turned her into a super star.

The next film was from the Warner-First National and titled *Los que danzan* (*Those Who Dance*). Directed again by William McGann with Spanish dialogue again written by Baltasar Fernández Cué, filmed in August–September of 1930 simultaneously with the French and German versions. It is pure noir cinema starring gangsters and cops. Antonio got very good reviews.

Here we come to a turning point in Antonio's career and in his life. Juan de la Cruz Alarcón, distributor of the Universal films in Mexico, decided to produce the first Mexican sound film. His choice was to adapt the novel *Santa*, by Federico Gamboa, which had already been filmed in a silent version, and went to Hollywood with the project. The Hollywood studios were not interested in Latin American countries producing their own films, they wanted to be the suppliers, so he found no support. Together with journalist Carlos Noriega Hope and others, he founded the National Film Production Company and asked Lupita Tovar to star. She accepted and when they talked about finding a director who had experience in the cinema and spoke Spanish, the name of Antonio Moreno came up, and Lupita approved it. Antonio was very popular in Mexico, so much so that his serials were released with the title *The Adventures of Antonio Moreno* and that was a great promotion for *Santa*.

The proposal he had been waiting for had finally come — it was a good moment. It seemed that Hollywood was never going to give him that opportunity and he said yes right away. But the conditions were a challenge: Antonio did not intervene in the script, which was written by Noriega Hope, nor in the casting. When he arrived in Mexico City, on his first visit to the country, he found that the studio where he was to shoot was an old silent film studio with glass walls and ceiling and without any soundproofing that had to be lined with mattresses and blankets to cushion the outside noise and echo. The sound equipment, since no American company wanted to rent any of them, was a prototype designed by Mexican engineers, the Rodríguez brothers that finally gave very good results, there was no budget for props or costumes and each actor brought what they could from home. What they did have was a dream. Everyone on the team knew that they were making history: the first film shot with direct sound. Antonio was under a lot of pressure and his bad temper became famous. He was often angry, and people called him “the old tiger.” It could not have been easy for him to forget the opulence of the Hollywood studios. He had to shoot at full speed, in a record time — less than a month — and with many human and technical limitations. For example, he could not mix dialogues with music in the same soundtrack, he had to choose one or the other.



Santa is a poor young woman living in the countryside, who is seduced and abandoned by a soldier, expelled from her homeland ends up working as a prostitute in the brothels of Mexico City but is able to expiate her sins with a pious death. The film was a great success, supported by an immense promotion campaign orchestrated by Carlos Noriega Hope, who was the director of the newspaper *El Universal*'s cultural magazine. It premiered on March 30, 1932, with the assistance of the President of the Republic. Many factors helped make this film one of the greatest achievements of Mexican filmmaking: the novel was a true bestseller of the early twentieth century with a subject was considered morbid; the production boasted a magnificent artistic and technical team, including composer Agustín Lara, who wrote the precious theme of *Santa*; and the press exalted the film for patriotic reasons. It was called “the first national film” and the anniversary of the birth of Mexican cinema is celebrated on the day the *Santa* premiered. It was also the beginning of a whole subgenre in Mexican cinema: films of fallen women. This very popular archetype continues to be handled in telenovelas and stories of very different nature. In fact, the story of *Santa* was adapted more times over the years —Orson Welles even wrote a treatment to be starred by Dolores del Río that sadly was never made.

Antonio could not enjoy this success because he immediately began to shoot another film that was the opposite of *Santa*. The title was *Las águilas frente al sol* (*The Eagles Face the Sun*) and was written by Gustavo Sáenz de

Sicilia, one of the owners of the National Film Production Company. The plotline of followed the example of *Mata Hari*, which had recently premiered, and other American films set in and exotic locations with plots that revolved around the exploits of brave and sexy international spies. To achieve this, the film counted on actors from very different origins: the Mexican Jorge Lewis, the Cuban Hilda Moreno and Spaniards Conchita Ballesteros and Jose Soriano. The cosmopolitan atmosphere, mixed with touches of nationalism and cabaret scenes in Shanghai, did not attract attention and the film, which was also made very quickly and released on July 13, failed at the box office.

In addition to his touches of high comedy and efforts to imitate the Hollywood blockbusters, Antonio introduced very personal details: there is a scene that takes place during a polo match and, I suspect, is a recreation of his adolescence in Campo de Gibraltar. A person points to a name on a paper and in the close shot we see that the name pointed out is W. Griffith. They are small details, memories of his life that I find exciting.

Before the premiere of *Las águilas frente al sol*, Antonio had already returned to Hollywood. He was in Mexico for only six months and left a great mark. The return should not have been easy because Antonio took with him Hilda Moreno, the star of *Eagles*, with whom he was said to have lived a love story.

Antonio did not work in Hollywood until December of that same year. He then worked at Fox, which had decided to try movies shot only in Spanish. During the years 1933, 1934 and 1935, a new Spanish-language film was released in New York every week. The Hispanic machinery was working at full speed. Antonio chose *Primavera en otoño* (*Spring in Autumn*), in which Hilda also had a small role. The script was by Gregorio Martínez Sierra and José López Rubio, based on a 1911, and the female protagonist was Catalina Bárcena. They would shoot more movies together.

In February of 1933, Daisy and Antonio decided to separate for a time and five days later Daisy died in a traffic accident. Rumors of all kinds circulated, including one that Antonio (who was not in the car) had killed Daisy to keep part of her inheritance before she asked for a divorce. Others hinted that Daisy wanted the divorce because Antonio was homosexual or bisexual. None of this has been proven. But the most extravagant story was this: The accident took place after a dinner organized by Daisy to celebrate the six-months anniversary of her youngest daughter, Beth. Daisy had invited René Dussaq, a young man who had arrived in Los Angeles a few days earlier from Cuba with a letter of introduction from Enrique de Cruzat Zanetti, the Cuban who brought Antonio to the United States, who was apparently his uncle. Daisy could not drive because she had an injured arm and asked René to drive on Mulholland Drive to show him the sights of the city. It was a foggy night, René wanted to turn on the car's high beams, but accidentally turned off the headlights. The car crashed down the hillside, Daisy died and René survived, although he had to spend a lot of time in the hospital recovering. Two years ago, a book was published that concluded that Rene became a secret agent years later and, after a lot of adventures, was the brain and executing arm of the assassination of Kennedy. I leave it there.

Returning to Antonio, he was greatly affected by Daisy's death. Spanish actor Julio Peña said that he was never the same again. Antonio had a good relationship with the Spanish artists in Hollywood, although there are not many group photos in which he appears. Nevertheless, Ernesto Vilches told of the parties that he gave in his house, where he had a hidden wine cellar, and they had a great time. Peña said he was charming and very cordial, not cocky. Pepe Nieto also spoke with affection of how he presented Antonio as a bullfighter and not as an actor in an act in Santa Barbara and was forced to make several passes with an imaginary capote before the audience. He did not return to work until October for *La ciudad de carton* (*Cardboard City*), also for Fox with plot by Gregory Martinez Sierra, adaptation by Jose Lopez Rubio, and again starring Catalina Bárcena. It's a shame that this movie is lost because the cardboard city of the title is Hollywood, and the plot is about the hypocrisy and hardship of life in the movie mecca. It had very good reviews in the *New York Times* and *Cine Mundial* magazine in Spain. The Fox films of these years are remarkable as it was the only studio that still trusted their Spanish department and fought for it a long time, even with difficulties. However, Antonio had to be fully aware that at some point the Spanish films would end, and he tried to rejoin the American cinema. He dedicated almost a whole year to a project with Kay Francis for Metro Goldwyn Meyer entitled *The Keyhole* and another one titled *Moulin Rouge*: neither finally featured him: his attempt to simultaneously working in films in Spanish and in English did not go well.

The two films that he made next with Fox are the only ones that survive of all of Antonio's films made in Spanish. They are high comedy, without Latin connotations, elegant cinema of escape. The first is *Señora casada necesita*

marido (*Married Lady Needs Husband*), with the same team as always. It is very amusing to see Antonio speak in Castilian in comedies that share the sets and situations of the “white telephone” films of the time. Seeing it and then hearing the purely Madrilenian expressions makes a delicious contrast. Antonio was described as an “excellent actor” in *Cine Mundial* and the film was highly praised.

The second was adapted by Jardiel Poncela and was titled *Asegure a su mujer* (*Insure your wife*), which is a delight, imbued with the freedom that was breathed in Spain with the Second Republic and that would last just a little longer. So much so that in 1941, under Franco’s dictatorship, its projection throughout Spain was banned by the commission of censorship.

At the beginning of 1935 Fox cut its payroll in half, according to Lisa Jarvinen. The studio had plans to make six more films, but the Spanish department was eliminated that summer when, due to financial problems, Fox joined Twentieth Century. The adaptation by José López Rubio of *Rosa de Francia* (*Rose of France*) was the last film in Spanish made by Fox. According to *Cita in Hollywood*, López Rubio managed to control almost totally the production of *Rose of France*, starring Rosita Díaz Gimeno (Luisa Isabel de Orleans), Julio Peña (Luis I Prince of Asturias) and Antonio Moreno (King Felipe V).

When Fox ended the production of films in Spanish, there were still other attempts. Universal made its last double-language version: *Alas sobre el Chaco* (*Storm over the Andes*), a film set in the war between Paraguay and Bolivia in which Antonio worked again with his friend Lupita Tovar. She played his wife, who fell in love with his partner and best friend: Jose Crespo in the Spanish version and Jack Holt in the American. In this movie Antonio played the same character in both versions.

Finally, Spanish cinema came to an end in Hollywood. Antonio got a part in a movie starring Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy. It is titled *Bohemian Girl* (*A pair of Gypsies*) and misfortune followed the production. Before finishing the filming, the female lead Thelma Todd died in a car in a garage (another unsolved crime). The film shows very clearly that her disappearance affected the narrative especially with her character and Antonio’s. In the Margaret Herrick Library, there are many pictures of both in scenes that are not in the movie. When the producers called Antonio to return to the studio to shoot new scenes to try to save the film, he could not and his role in the film was damaged. Why couldn’t Antonio help save *Bohemian Girl*? He had important plans. His work with the Spaniards had paid off and Spain had offered him a film.

Producer Saturnino Ulargui and director Francisco Elías had a great project to shoot at the Orphea Films studios in Barcelona, the first to have sound. Elías was determined that Spanish cinema achieve international rank and he hired López Rubio to write the script of *María de la O* with José Luis Salado, based on a play that was based on a very popular song of the same title. They decided to hire a Hollywood star and Antonio said yes. The role was perfect for him: an Andalusian painter who fell in love with a Gypsy and married her. The Gypsy family killed her, and he killed the murderer and disappeared. Years later he became an elegant man who had made his fortune in the United States. This was the only character in Antonio’s career whose accent was exactly his.

Shot in Andalusia, Antonio enjoyed the bullfights, visited his mother, and befriended the incredible dancer Carmen Amaya, who played his daughter. His stay in Spain was an event — starting with arrival in January 1936, the press followed him wherever he went. But the filming was a disaster, with misfortune again affecting work. On the first day of shooting important scenes in Barcelona, a fire destroyed the studio. When they arrived in Seville the river overflowed and the city was flooded, Antonio suffered an attack of appendicitis and returned to the United States in May. Filming wrapped just a few weeks before the beginning of the Civil War. The film could not be released until November of 1939, and it did not have good reviews. Antonio arrived in the United States on May 28, 1936, and never returned to Spain. But Hollywood had changed, and nothing was as he knew it. He felt displaced and did not work for a while. In 1938 he worked in a semi-Hispanic film for Monogram Pictures titled *Rose of the Rio Grande* or *El nuevo Zorro*, which premiered in Spain eight years later. He was again the villain who dies at the hands of the hero.

Antonio’s decline can be counted by watching the evolution of his wages during the five years he made films in Spanish in Hollywood: for the first, *El cuerpo del delito*, he earned \$6,000 for less than two weeks of work, while

his colleagues earned \$300 per week. For *The Bad Man* he earned \$2,000 a week for 4 weeks of filming and the next actor on payroll earned \$650 per week. In the mid-1930s in the original productions made for Fox, his salary already was below \$1,000 (*La ciudad de cartón* and *Rose of France*). And in the last, *The Rose of the Rio Grande*, he earned \$750 per week. In the Margaret Herrick Library, there is a 1939 unemployment insurance notice. He had two employers that year: 20th Century Fox paid him \$666.67 and Paramount \$750, totaling \$1,416.67.

According to Lisa Jarvinen in *The Rise of the Spanish Language Filmmaking*, Antonio made his transition not from silent actor to talking actor, but from silent actor to Spanish films actor. And this transition almost ended his career.

In 1938 he went on vacation to Hawaii and on the return declared to the *San Francisco News* on August 18: “I’m through with cinema, Hollywood has thrown me out.”

His roles in the films he made between 1939 and 1944 are forgettable. In most he had a line or two and usually played a Mexican or an Indian. In some, his character disappeared at the editing room like in *Tampico* and *Notorious*.

In 1945 he returned to Mexico and proclaimed in the media that he had signed a contract with Clasa Films Mundiales for five films: three as an actor and two as a director. He even said that one of them was written by himself and told the life of his friend Carmen Amaya, who was his neighbor in Los Angeles and who invited him and Gilbert Roland to flamenco parties in Los Feliz. I don’t know what happened, but his plans were frustrated again: he only made *Sol y sombra* (*Sun and Shadow*), in which he played an old Andalusian bullfighter turned into a cattleman in Mexico.

He returned to Hollywood to work as a supporting actor in better projects – good adventure films like *Caribe* (*The Spanish Main*), *Captain of Castile*, and *Dallas*.

The 1950s came and with them, the rebirth of Antonio’s career. The good films returned and the most interesting directors in Hollywood asked for him: Richard Brooks in the magnificent *Crisis*, in which he reunited with Ramon Novarro and Gilbert Roland, Anthony Mann in *Thunder Bay*, Jack Arnold in *The Creature from the Black Lagoon*, Raoul Walsh in *Saskatchewan* and John Ford in *The Searchers*.



These were all small but important roles, almost all of them Hispanics or Indians, and they all benefitted from Moreno’s performance. Antonino never lost his elegance and aged well on the big screen — white hair gave him a distinguished look and he conveyed a certain wisdom. These did not go unnoticed. A 1951 news piece about the filming of *The Mark of the Renegade* reported that Antonio kept the whole cast fascinated during the filming with his memories. He also told them “There are no real lovers in the movies now. The male stars only talk about love, but they don’t know how to do it.” A review of the 1953 film *Thunder Bay* story noted: “Older viewers will be thrilled to see Antonio Moreno, the beloved idol of the silent screen, playing his role with real authority. Moreno is

still handsome, still a great actor and one wonders why he has not been seen more often on the screen.” Wow, they had not forgotten him.

In John Ford’s *The Searchers*, his penultimate film. Antonio is Emilio Gabriel Fernández y Figueroa, in clear homage to two important Mexican friends of Ford’s and is the crucial character that takes Ethan to the Indian Scar. Antonio and John Wayne meet in a bar and share a toast in Spanish. The dialogue is not in the script so it’s easy to imagine that they improvised the lines.



The same toast is said in his last film by his best friend, Gilbert Roland. It is a movie that is not lost and can be seen in two American archives, but it is almost as if it did not exist. It was filmed entirely in Cuba in 1958 by a production company that went bankrupt before it could be released. The title is *Catch Me if you Can* and it’s a very special movie because Antonio plays the mentor of Roland, the man who taught him everything and Gilbert has a dialogue in which he tells how grateful he is to Antonio’s character for helping him achieve his dream, as was the case in real life.

Antonio did not act again and died in 1967 in his house of Beverly Hills at the age of 79.

As I said at the beginning, Antonio Moreno has never received the attention of historians. During the silent era, there were dozens of interviews with him in which he told his life story — with some ornamenting. But when sound came, and Antonio recovered his voice on the screen, he lost it in the media and interviews were very rare. In the history books his name appears, but always as a minor, unimportant, marginal note. But if we collect all the mentions of Antonio and join them patiently, one by one, putting them in place, as in a puzzle, the result is impressive. Sometimes you have to get off the beaten path and stop talking about the same actors and directors and look at what and who have been left in the margins of the history of cinema. There are many treasures to discover, adventures like those of Antonio Moreno.

The presentation intertitle of his character in *The Spanish Dancer*, shot in 1923, said: “Spain knew Don Caesar as a reckless, carefree noble, to whom gold was made for gaming, and life but a stage for rash adventure.”

I like it for Antonio. His life was really a great adventure, he was a pioneer in many different facets, he made his way through the dead ends that arose in the complicated path of the cinema, where he himself was trapped several times and managed to escape. And finally, if we look at his career from a distance, with perspective, I think it is an

important one, that runs through the history of cinema from 1912 to 1959 and I think that the history of cinema could be told by telling Antonio's career. And, if we analyze it, we can see that it has two very different parts and the cause of the change, the hinge, is situated in the moment when his land returned to him and brought him his own language again, the one language of his childhood. And he, an immigrant who missed his land, could not help but accept it with all the consequences.

Mar Diaz is a Spanish journalist who has worked for 27 years for RTVE (the Spanish Public Broadcaster) as film specialist in movie programs. Some time ago she became interested in Antonio Moreno and her 13-year research culminated in a feature-length documentary called The Spanish Dancer (2015) for which she followed his steps in Spain, the United States and Mexico and found many unpublished materials. The film won the Best Documentary of Art Award at the Festival de la Memoria 2016 in Morelos (Mexico) and the Second Imagenera 2016 Award for Documentary Creation in Seville (Spain). She also commissioned a retrospective on Antonio Moreno at the Filmoteca Española (National Film Archive) in Madrid. Afterwards, she directed the documentary José Luis Gómez: The mask and the word for RTVE. Now she is an executive producer of drama series also at RTVE. She is writing a biographical book about Antonio Moreno.



Wallace Beery
Los Angeles Times obituary, April 17, 1949



Wallace Beery, the “lovable old rascal” of many a Hollywood film, is dead. He died Friday night at his home, 816 N. Alpine Drive, Beverly Hills.

The veteran actor succumbed to a heart condition. He had suffered from the ailment for several months and had been confined to his home for the past two weeks.

“Mr. Beery seemed fairly well Friday,” said the nurse who attended him. “He was up and dressed and seemed in an optimistic and pleasant frame of mind.

Collapses Without Pain

“He ate a fairly large dinner and afterward was reading the papers and magazines. Then at 10 p.m. he collapsed.

“It happened so last. There was no pain, no suffering.”

The nurse summoned Dr. Myron Prinzmetal, the actor’s physician, and members of the family. He was dead before help arrived.

Those who gathered at his bedside included his adopted daughter, Carol Ann; his divorced wife, Mrs. Arleta Beery; his brother and sister-in-law, the Will Beerys; his nephew, Noah Beery Jr. and several friends.

Mr. Beery known to millions of motion picture fans as the hard-boiled, clumsy but kindly character he loved to play, was a veteran of more than three decades in films.

Said L.B. Mayer, head of MGM, where the actor was under contract for almost 20 years: “With the passing of Wallace Beery, the screen loses one of its most lovable figures, who brought pleasure to millions for many years.”

He played a variety of roles. He started by enacting a Swedish maid in a slapstick comedy. One of his most powerful roles was that of the industrialist in “Grand Hotel.”

Born in Kansas City

But he was best known to the American public as a rough-hewn character with a sentimental streak, a lumbering hulk of man who would run his hand over his massive face and mutter. “Aw, shucks!”

Mr. Beery was born in Kansas City, Mo., on April Fool’s Day. The year varied in various recountings. The family yesterday set the date as 1885 and the actor’s age as 64.

But Mr. Beery himself gave his birth year as 1886, and through the years motion-picture press agents have listed it as 1888 or 1889.

His father, Noah, was a city policeman and his mother, Margaret, had her hands full with three boys, William, young Noah and Wallace.

William completed high school and went to work with a circus as a concession manager. Noah’s education ended at the seventh grade, and he went to New York to find a job as a chorus boy. Wallace stopped his studies in the fifth grade.

Elephant Handler

Books put aside, the gawky adolescent started to work wiping railroad engines. Then his brother William got him a job tending elephants in a circus. The salary was \$3.50 a week and an extra \$1.50 if he remained all season. He stayed many years.

In his teens he became one of the best elephant handlers in the business. Alone he trained the pachyderms to stay in line, trunk to tail. His reputation got him a big job with Ringling Bros.

Finally, New York lured him. Brother Noah was doing well, earning \$25 a week as a singer. So Wallace decided to give up elephants for the footlights, and Noah got him a job in the chorus of "Babes in Toyland." He spent his winters in New York, his summers in stock.

Mr. Beery was in his early 20s when he received his first bid from motion pictures. He was asked to report for work with the Tannhauser studios at New Rochelle, N.Y. It rained the day he was to start to work and so he gave up pictures temporarily.

The next year, however, he signed with Essanay studios in Chicago and played his first film role.

In 1915 Mr. Beery moved to Niles, Cal., to direct motion pictures. The outfit he worked for closed down after three months. Then he was hired by Keystone at \$125 a week.

Beery 'in' Again

Shortly afterward, he organized a troupe to make films in Japan. World War 1 disrupted those plans, and Mr. Beery returned to acting. He was cast most frequently as a heavy, playing roles in such pictures as "The Unpardonable Sin," "Behind the Door" and "The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse."

(Wallace Beery in Spanish Dancer on right)

It was Douglas Fairbanks who started him in the humorous, tough parts that he loved so well. Fairbanks saw the qualities in the homely actor which later distinguished him and, accordingly, cast him in lighter roles. There was a contract from Paramount.



Sound pictures temporarily shelved Mr. Beery. His name was placed on the "not adaptable" list. Then Irving Thalberg chose him for the role of "Butch" in "The Big House."

Beery was "in."

In 1930 he was teamed with Marie Dressler in "Min and Bill," and the two constituted one of the greatest screen teams in film history. The following year he made "Hell Divers" with Clark Gable.

In the two decades that followed, he made more than 50 major pictures, including: "The Champ," (which won him a special Academy Award), "Dinner at Eight," "Tugboat Annie," "The Bowery," "Viva Villa!" "China Seas," "O'Shaughnessy's Boy," "Stablemates," "The Mighty Barnum," "A Message to Garcia" and "Thunder Afloat."

The actor once said that he estimated he had made more than \$50,000,000 (net) for MGM. He also accumulated a sizable fortune for himself.

Attitude on Acting

In later years he limited his screen work to one or two films a year. His last picture was "Big Jack," described by the studio as "the story of a lovable, pre-Civil War bandit."

Mr. Beery relied on his face, not his acting, for his fortune.

"Acting?" he said once, "I gave up the acting business years ago. Now I just put on dirty clothes and am myself."

He liked to tell a friend who once urged him to have his face lifted, warning him that time would make his face "look like an old squash."

"I consulted a plastic surgeon who asked \$500 for the operation," the actor would relate. "I had only \$100. See, suppose I'd had the \$500. Where would I be now? A once-pretty has-been!"

Mr. Beery attributed his long popularity to his appeal to men and youngsters. He was well fitted for his rough roles. Towering above six feet, he had a bulky figure and a booming voice.

The boisterous screen roles, however, were in sharp contrast to the real Beery. He was soft spoken, unexcitable and entirely lacking in temperament at home. He would even disregard his aversion to “dude duds” to don evening clothes whenever his adopted daughter wished him to escort her for an evening.

Mr. Beery knew boy’s problems from his own experience. He gave assistance to many youths off on the wrong foot; obtaining jobs for them and helping mold them into worth-while citizens. He never liked to discuss that activity, dismissing questions about it in embarrassment.

Flying was Hobby

Hunting and flying were his hobbies. Years ago, he obtained a transport pilot’s license, and even when plane travel was unusual, he was flying his own craft on his hunting junkets.

It was at his ranch at Jackson Hole, Wyo., that he suffered the heart strain that led to his death. He was cranking an outboard motor when he was first stricken.

The actor held a reserve commission as a lieutenant commander in the Navy and was a lieutenant colonel in the Wyoming State Militia. He will be buried in his Navy uniform.

Beery was married twice. His first wife was actress Gloria Swanson, whom he met while both were working for Essanay in Chicago. They were divorced in 1918. His second wife was the former Arleta Gillman. In 1932, they adopted Carol Ann, daughter of Mrs. Beery’s cousin. The second marriage ended in divorce in 1939.

Adolphe Menjou

Adolphe Jean Menjou was born on February 18, 1890, at 75 Elm Street in the Lower Hill District of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania to a Catholic family. His father was Albert Menjou, who was originally from the village of Arbus in France. His mother, Nora Joyce was from County Galway, Ireland. His brother Henry Arthur Menjou was born a year younger. Albert came to this country when he was eleven or twelve and a few years later started working in hotels and restaurants in cities around the US. Albert was managing the Hotel Duquesne where the Joyce Family were working. The youngest daughter, Nora, gave him the most trouble, but they were amused by each other’s accents. They fell in love and married in 1889. Albert and Nora worked to save money for a place of their own which eventually became the Café Royal. According to the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette’s obituary, Albert was renowned for his French delicacies and a courtly manner; and the Café thrived. Adolphe was frail in his early years, so his French grandmother nursed him while his parents took care of the restaurant. But in the panic of 1897, the Café failed and Albert took his family to Cleveland. There he opened the Casino Restaurant in 1900 and it quickly



became one of the finest in the city. Shortly after it opened, Albert also went into the film business by renting a projector and screen and showing films to his roof-garden customers.

It was walking back home from East High School in Cleveland that he and his brother saw a help wanted sign at the Euclid Avenue Opera House. They were hired as extras in *Ben Hur* and started skipping school to perform. In 1906, Albert, disapproving of his son’s actions (Menjou later said that his father claimed that most of the deadbeats at his restaurants were actors and musicians), sent him to the Culver Military Academy in Indiana for his senior year of high school in the hopes of setting a different path for the young man. After high school, he went to Cornell University for a degree in mechanical engineering but after a year of struggle, he switched to the Liberal Arts department and theater. In 1912 he left Cornell to work for his father’s new restaurant (Berghoff) in Cleveland.

While working at his father's next venture, Maison Menjou on Broadway and 91st Street in New York, he met a patron named Robinson who was a theatrical scene painter for the Vitagraph Studios in Brooklyn. He introduced him to their casting director Arthur Cozzine. By 1915, he found himself in New York City working as an extra for the Vitagraph, Edison, Biograph film studios. In June 1917, he enlisted with the US Army Ambulance Service. He started off as a Corporal but rose quickly to Captain by May 1918. He was honorably discharged on May 10, 1919, and was awarded the Italian War Service Ribbon.

Menjou moved to Hollywood, and, after a couple of years in nondescript roles in various films, he broke through in 1921 with a number of prominent parts in *The Faith Healer* with Milton Sills, *The Sheik* with Rudolph Valentino, *Through the Back Door* with Mary Pickford, and *The Three Musketeers* with Mary's husband, Douglas Fairbanks.



From the beginning, he cultivated his sophisticated, sartorially elegant, and debonair style. His *New York Times* obituary claimed that Menjou was responsible for the use of suave as a noun.

"I started this best-dressed-man business as a deliberate stunt when I first came to Hollywood in 1920. In the early days everyone was typed. Bill Hart was the big, Western he-man. I couldn't compete against him. Rudolph Valentino was the handsome sheik. The only type left that I could fill was the debonair habitue of the drawing rooms."

The next year continued his rise with a number of films with Famous Players-Lasky. It was in 1923 where his supporting (some would say scene-stealing) role in the Charlie Chaplin directed *A Woman of Paris*, starring Edna Purviance, placed Menjou in the eyes of the American public as a well-groomed sophisticate. It was also that year that he appeared in Pola Negri's first American film, *Bella Donna* and in *The Spanish Dancer*. They quickly became lifelong friends. Famous Players-Lasky took advantage of Menjou's popularity by casting him in several roles as a sophisticated playboy.



The 1920s saw Menjou in a number of notable films including Lubitsch's *The Marriage Circle* and *Forbidden Paradise* (once again with Negri), Herbert Brenon's *The Shadow of Paris*, and films with directors Harry d'Abbadie d'Arrast and Malcolm St. Clair.

The turmoil of the new talkies era, the stock market crash in 1929, and his stalled career all conspired to end his long association with Famous Players-Lasky (now Paramount). However, Menjou was quickly hired by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM). His knowledge of French proved to be an advantage and he made four quick films in that language for the studio, which was eager to sell talkies to the French market. But 1930 and 1931 saw his rise in popularity again with von Sternberg and Dietrich's *Morocco* and an Academy Award Best Actor nomination for his role of the ruthless editor Walter Burns in *The Front Page*. Never a leading man, he remained in the public spotlight with supporting roles in *A Farewell to Arms* (1932), *Morning Glory* (1933), both *A Star Is Born* and *Stage Door* in 1937, and *Golden Boy* in 1939.

During WWII, Menjou spent a lot of time overseas entertaining the troops and working for the Office of War Information making broadcasts in French, Italian, Spanish, German and Russian. He appeared in a lot of light comedies during this time, such as his appearance with Pola Negri in *Hi-Diddle-Dee-Dee*, and in some fine films like *Roxie Hart* (1942) and *State of the Union*. In 1948, Menjou published his autobiography, *It Took Nine Tailors*. It was during the late 1940s that his conservative politics took on a much darker turn as a "friendly witness" at Joseph

McCarthy's House Un-American Activities Commission hearings — bringing him in direct conflict with Katherine Hepburn, with whom he appeared with in three films. He was a leading member of the Motion Picture Alliance for the Preservation of American Ideals, a group formed to combat communist influence in Hollywood, and was later an unwavering member and supporter of the infamous right-wing John Birch Society.

Ironically, Menjou's last leading role was in the 1952 film *The Sniper*, which was directed by Edward Dmytryk, a member of the Hollywood Ten and a victim of HUAC's blacklisting. In the following years, Menjou appeared in a number of television productions, before finishing his career with Stanley Kubrick's *Paths of Glory* (1957) and Disney's *Pollyanna* (1960) where he played the town curmudgeon who is charmed by Hayley Mills. (Mills later starred in Negri's last film, *The Moon-Spinners*.)

Menjou first marriage to Kathryn Conn Tinsley in 1920 ended in divorce. He married co-star Kathryn Carver in 1928 and they divorced six years later. That year, he married actress Verree Teasdale which lasted until his death on October 29, 1963, from hepatitis. He is buried beside Teasdale at Hollywood Forever Cemetery.

“Kathlyn Williams” by Mark Garrett Cooper
Courtesy of Women Film Pioneers Project & Columbia University Libraries



Kathlyn Williams began work in motion pictures as an actress with Biograph in New York. “I was playing in stock,” she recounted to *Photoplay* in 1917. “One week when I was not working someone called me up from the Biograph studio and asked if I would work two days for them. I was dreadfully insulted at first, but I went out of curiosity expecting to be offered about fifty cents a day.” To her amazement, D. W. Griffith paid her ten dollars for each day's work. Williams told *Photoplay* that she performed in three Biograph titles, but in combination, Paul Spehr and the American Film Institute catalog credit her with a total of five, with release dates beginning in 1909. Sources agree that she joined the Selig Polyscope Company in 1910 and quickly became the company's leading actress. From the start, she played an action heroine, although she was also featured in dramatic roles. In 1913-14 she starred in the *Adventures of Kathlyn*, generally regarded as the first serial with “hold-over” suspense. While with Selig, she wrote scenarios for at least five titles, one of which, *The Leopard's Foundling* (1914), written by Maibelle Heikes Justice, the Selig release notes credit her with directing. In 1916 she began her

second marriage, to Charles Eyton, described in most biographies as a Paramount executive, but likely general manager of the Oliver Morosco Photoplay Company, which released through distributor Paramount at the time. Williams appeared in a series of Morosco pictures. In 1917, Julia Crawford Ivers produced her scenario for *Lost in Transit* at Pallas Pictures, also releasing through Paramount and, like Morosco, soon to be absorbed in Famous Players-Lasky-Paramount. *Lost in Transit* is Williams's last known screenwriting credit. In 1919, *Moving Picture World* reported that she would organize her own company, but probably the company never materialized. Williams worked steadily as a performer through 1935, when she retired from the screen with well over one hundred titles to her name. Although several titles in which Williams acted survive, there are no known prints of the titles she either wrote or directed.

The relationship between Williams's star persona and her roles as screenwriter and director poses an interesting, and not atypical, problem. As with many other early women filmmakers, her success in front of the camera created opportunities behind it, but her reputation as a performer may well have limited those opportunities as well. Known especially for her work with the big cats in Selig's Zoo, Williams exemplifies the “nervy movie lady” described by Jennifer Bean. Unlike her action-hero counterparts, Bean argues, this figure was represented as “nonknowledgeable and unknowable.” Her hallmark was the ability to confront extreme bodily dangers with a childlike lack of concern—not, one would think, a quality prized in a director. A 1915 item in Selig's in-house paper, *The Paste-*

Pot and Shears, suggests the blithe unconcern Bean finds typical: asked to account for her success in working with wild animals, “‘I just act with them’ was the answer of the blonde and enticing Kathlyn.” Three titles Selig credited her with writing and (in the one case) directing in 1914 and 1915 each drew on this devil-may-care persona: *The Leopard’s Foundling* (1914), *The Strange Case of Talmal Lind* (1915), and *A Sultana of the Desert* (1915).



According to Harold McGrath’s illustrated novelization, *The Adventures of Kathlyn* is set in the mythical Indian kingdom of Allaha. The serial’s thirteen episodes chronicle Kathlyn’s perilous encounters with wild beasts and agents of the insidious Council of Three as she strives to rescue her explorer father and free the enslaved population. She finds help from a white hunter and native servants she befriends. *The Leopard’s Foundling* (1914), the first of three films, and the one written and directed by Williams, moves its action to Africa and makes its heroine a wild child lost to her human parents, raised by leopards, and redeemed to civilization by an American hunter. *Moving Picture World* in November 1913 described the then-unreleased film as “a new note in dramatic daring in dealing with

the oarnivora [sic] as though the treacherous big cats were the most tractable and gentle of animals”. *The Strange Case of Talmal Lind* (1915) returns to a mythical beast-filled India to tell the tale of Talmal, who dies tragically saving the white man she loves, and the final film, *A Sultana of the Desert* (1915), features Williams as Jean, the daughter of a French exporter who objects to her romance with Christoph and banishes her to the convent. Christoph chases her across the desert, and in the complications that follow Jean befriends a lion subsequently killed by her father. Although detailed analysis is impossible in the absence of surviving prints, it seems clear enough that, as in *Adventures of Kathlyn*, these films feature stereotypically exotic settings, adventure plots, big cats, great white hunter figures, native friends, and absent, wicked, or otherwise inadequate fathers.

As with Cleo Madison and Grace Cunard, two other serial queens who also wrote and directed the films in which they appeared, press coverage of Williams emphasized her femininity along with her daring. For instance, in 1914 the *Los Angeles Times* reported that for *The Lady or the Tigers*, “Miss Williams was required to enter the cage of three tigers lately brought from the jungle, which were untamed and didn’t know a moving-picture genius from a meat-pie,” and in the next breath that “Miss Williams has five new Paris gowns for use in *The Rosary* and *The Ne’er Do-Well* (4). In addition to uniting the daredevil and the fashionable lady in a single body, this story also implicitly parses those roles into two different genres.

In fact, Williams’s first credited screenplays were modern dramas with fairly conventional romance plots. *The Last Dance* (1912) relates the tragic story of a nightclub dancer who retreats to the country to recuperate from heart trouble. She falls in love with the local minister, who nurses her back to health but ultimately spurns her because of what he regards as her disreputable past. To prove the virtue of her dancing, she performs for him and wins him over, but her heart condition finally kills her. Williams did not appear in *The Last Dance*, but she plays the lead in *The Young Mrs. Eames* (1913). Here, a young widow rejects an ardent younger suitor after she overhears him declaring his love for her daughter. She marries a man closer to her age. After leaving Selig to work at Paramount under the direction of William Desmond Taylor, Cecil B. DeMille, and others, Williams’s films continued more in this dramatic vein. Her screenplay for *Lost in Transit* (1917) follows an infant boy kidnapped first from his wealthy father and then from an Italian junk man who cares for him.



In April 1917, a story in the *Los Angeles Times* reported that Williams “has had more than a dozen of her photoplays produced and two of them she directed herself.” It added, “Deep in her heart Miss Williams has always felt a great desire to devote all of her attention to directing, but she is too popular as an actress with the managers and the public to permit her to indulge her ambition”. The story leaves us with two puzzles. First, there is a discrepancy between the number of titles it attributes to Williams and known credits. Second, one might well wonder how studio producers understood her popularity and how that understanding did and did not translate into opportunities to write and direct.

Cooper, Mark Garrett. “Kathlyn Williams.” In Jane Gaines, Radha Vatsal, and Monica Dall’Asta, eds. *Women Film Pioneers Project*. New York, NY: Columbia University Libraries, 2013. <https://wfpp.columbia.edu/pioneer/ccp-kathlyn-williams/>

Short Bio: Kathlyn Williams was born in Butte, Montana, on May 31, 1879, to Joseph E. and Mary C. Williams. She attended the Sargent School of Acting before going on to Wesleyan University in 1899. She gained acting experience in local stock and touring companies and gradually gained respect in such plays as *When We Were Twenty-One*. She performed for the Belasco Stock Company and started in film in 1908 with D.W. Griffith at the Biograph Studio. After her days in serials which Mark Garret Cooper has documented extremely well in the piece above, Williams appeared as the star for both Cecil B. DeMille and his brother William C. de Mille in *The Whispering Chorus* (1918), *We Can’t Have Everything* (1918), *The Tree of Knowledge* (1920) and *Conrad in Quest of His Youth* (1920). The rest of the decade so her play important supporting roles in *The Spanish Dancer* (1923), *Our Dancing Daughters* (1928), and many others. She acted in a few talkies in the 1930s, most notably in the 1931 version of *Daddy Long Legs*, before her last final appearance in 1935’s *Rendezvous at Midnight* with Ralph Bellamy and Valerie Hobson. Although there were attempts at comebacks, a tragic car accident in 1949 resulted in the loss of a leg, ending any chances whatsoever of revitalizing her career. She was confined to a wheelchair for the remainder of her life. She died on September 23, 1960.

“James Wong Howe: Painting With Light”
by Robert Byrne

This article was published in conjunction with the screening of The Spanish Dancer at San Francisco Silent Film Festival in 2012



What do *Mantrap* (1926) and *The Spanish Dancer* (1923) have in common with *The Thin Man* (1934), *Yankee Doodle Dandy* (1942), *Sweet Smell of Success* (1957), *Hud* (1963), and *Funny Lady* (1975)? All these films and more than 140 others owe their visual expression to cinematographer James Wong Howe, a transformative figure in the history of motion picture photography.

A typical impression of a cameraperson, particularly during the silent era, is that of a camera operator standing behind a tripod, cranking furiously when the director shouts “Action!” In reality, the cameraman (or cinematographer or director of photography, all titles for the same position) is an essential member of a film’s creative team. Using light and lens as palette and brush, the cinematographer directs a team of operators and assistants, electricians, gaffers, riggers, and special-effects technicians to achieve a film’s look. Many of the most successful silent-era stars and directors worked in close collaboration with one particular cinematographer on their films: Billy Bitzer with D.W. Griffith, Charles Rosher with Mary Pickford, and Roland Totheroh with Charles Chaplin.

James Wong Howe began his career in the motion picture industry as James Howe at Famous Players-Lasky (later, Paramount) in 1917. Working for ten dollars a week in the camera department, he swept floors, cleaned and carried equipment, and loaded cameras. His first assignment operating a camera came during Cecil B. DeMille’s *Male and*

Female (1919) for a scene featuring Gloria Swanson in a lion's den, which had to be captured in a single take requiring an unusual five-camera setup. DeMille took notice of the slate-holding Howe and promoted him to a needed "fourth assistant cameraman."

Thereafter, Howe apprenticed as an assistant camera operator and along the way learned the intricacies of lighting, lenses, film stock, and cameras. His big career break came in 1923 with the appropriately titled *Drums of Fate*. To supplement his modest studio income Howe had acquired a still camera that he used after-hours to shoot publicity portraits for the actors. Following a session with Mary Miles Minter, the actress was astonished to that see her eyes appeared dark in the prints that Howe delivered. The orthographic film stock in use at the time did not register blue and the pupils of blue-eyed actors such as Minter typically washed out when photographed. Purely by accident, Howe photographed the actress near a black curtain that reflected in her eyes. When Howe said he could reproduce the effect with motion pictures, Minter insisted on having him on her upcoming feature, *Drums of Fate*. Howe delivered on his promise by rigging a black velvet frame for his camera, leading Hollywood gossips to whisper that "Minter had imported a Chinese cameraman who worked mysteriously behind black velvet."

During the mid-1920s, Howe worked primarily with directors Herbert Brenon and Victor Fleming and his technique steadily advanced. Hollywood cinematography of time typically consisted of bathing sets and actors alike with bright, even illumination without regard for mood or emotional effect. Because each shot was lit individually, akin



to still portraits or tableaux, the images lacked visual cohesion when edited together in a sequence. *The Spanish Dancer*, Howe's fifth film as cinematographer, sometimes suffers from this inconsistency. However, even at this early stage in his career, Howe had begun using light to evoke mood, as in the long shadows of the film's dungeon scenes.

Mantrap, shot three years after *The Spanish Dancer*, demonstrates a marked evolution in Howe's style. In 1925, he began experimenting with camera movement and, in the film's opening scene, he opens with an innovative dolly shot.

After tracking in on divorcee Mrs. Barker (Patty du Pont), he slowly moves up her legs, settling on her face as she preens in her hand mirror. She then lowers the mirror to reveal the face of her lawyer (Percy Marmont), which replaces hers in the frame. Howe also used pan shots to advance the story rather than simply to explore the landscape. Howe explained in a 1945 article: "I believe in a minimum of camera movement and angles that do not violate sense but contribute intrinsically to the dramatic effect desired." His approach is fully evident in *Mantrap*, when he follows Clara Bow's legs as she trudges through the forest and in his slow, lumbering pan around the party scene in the cabin interior, conveying the boredom of the trapped participants.

Howe demonstrated remarkable versatility over the years and in the decades following the silent era. His philosophy remained that the best camerawork never called attention to itself but rather used lighting, framing, and movement to support and express the mood and emotion of a sequence. In a 1960 letter, he explained, "I still believe that the story is the vital nucleus, and that all else must aim and work toward expressing and interpreting the story ... motion picture photography should never be a polished lens through which one views the action; it should contribute to the emotional values of that action in its own way." Howe's filmography provides ample evidence of his method in action. In the modeled profiles of Nick and Nora in *The Thin Man*, the deep-focus shadows of Fritz Lang's *Hangmen Also Die* (1943), the hand-held battle sequences of Raoul Walsh's *Objective, Burma!* (1945), the

Technicolor saga *Old Man and the Sea* (1958), and the stark vastness of the Texas panhandle in *Hud*, storytelling always came first for James Wong Howe.

Howe retired in 1975 with an unprecedented 16 Academy Award nominations, two Oscar statuettes, and recognition by his peers as one of the industry's great cinematographers. His final production was *Funny Lady*. Recognizing his virtuosity, Barbara Streisand insisted on having him as her cinematographer, just as Mary Miles Minter had done a half-century earlier.



To listen to George Pratt's 1958 interview with James Wong Howe:

<https://soundcloud.com/george-eastman-museum/sets/silver-voices-james-wong-howe>

He says about *The Spanish Dancer* in this interview: "We had big scenes out on the Lasky Ranch as we called it. We'd work long hours. I remember one scene particularly — we worked all night... It was the first one I worked with Pola Negri. She understood [English] quite well. She really wasn't temperamental, but I think because she was a star and we had Gloria Swanson there they would vie with each other. I think it was more what they do in the profession, they were acting. But she was a nice person... and a wonderful actress."

For more interviews:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZVCRpiOQTCQ>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e4RL0UyaxPM>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tw5EvJ_629o

<https://vimeo.com/15815385>

James Wong Howe and Sanora Babb



Although James Wong Howe had a long and successful film career, he did not garner industry-wide acclaim, including ten Oscar nominations and two awards, without facing a good deal of prejudice. The prime example was his relationship with Sanora Babb who he met in the mid-1930s. Babb had an incredible life, born in 1907 in the Otoe territory of Oklahoma, her father a professional gambler. She grew up (with her parents and a sister) in a one-room dugout in Lamar, Colorado. Although she didn't attend school until she was 11, she became her high school valedictorian and attended the University of Kansas until she ran out of money and started working as a journalist. She moved to Los Angeles in 1929 to work for the *Times* but after losing her job because of the Depression, she found herself homeless at times. In 1932, Babb started a long friendship with the author William Saroyan that grew into an unrequited love affair on Saroyan's part. (She also had an affair with Ralph Ellison.)

In 1938, while working for California's Farm Security Administration, her detailed notes on the tent camps of migrant workers in California were given without her knowledge to John Steinbeck. Her novel, *Whose Names were Unknown* was cancelled by her publisher Bennett Cerf when *The Grapes of Wrath* was released. It did not see print until 2004.

In 1937, she and Howe decided to get married, but they had to travel to Paris due to California's anti-miscegenation law. As the story goes, they maintained separate apartments due to his traditional views, but it could also have been Howe's studio contract that contained a moral clause that would have prohibited him from publicly acknowledging

their marriage. It was not until 1948, after the State Supreme court overturned the law (*Perez v. Sharp*) that they could get married officially. It still took Howe and Babb another three days to find a judge who agreed to marry them. Even then, the judge reportedly remarked “She looks old enough. If she wants to marry a chink, that’s her business.”

Howard Greer, Costumes



Howard Greer fell into his career by accident. Wanting to become an author but with a talent for drawing, he grew up in Lincoln, Nebraska. He began his fashion career at Lucille for the fabulous Lady Duff Gordon in 1916, working in both her Chicago and New York branches. She was Canadian by birth, and like her sister Elinor Glynn, influenced the world’s view of how a woman should “be,” in this case, what a proper woman should wear. Greer served in France in World War and at its end, he remained in Europe to see the world. He exhausted his funds and finding only casual work as an author (writing monthly news about fashion for *Theatre Magazine* mostly), he returned to working for Lucille as a personal assistant. After a falling out with Lady Duff Gordon (he preferred to save his own life rather than her dogs’), he returned to New York in 1921. He started working designing clothes for the theatre (including *Greenwich Village Follies*) where he gained the attention of the Famous Players-Lasky studios. Greer moved out to Los Angeles in January 1923, to work with their head designer Claire West. When she left shortly after, he became their chief designer as the company emerged from several reorganizations and mergers as Paramount Pictures. Greer gained high praise for his stylish costumes in *The Spanish Dancer*, especially a reportedly \$25,000

wedding ensemble. *Camera* magazine reviewed his costumes as “nothing short of exquisite, daring, unconventional, and of the most superb details.” He wrote about his experience with Negri:

“When I first came to Hollywood, I was frightened to death of Pola Negri. There was a lot of publicity about what she did to people she didn’t like. Pola frightens more people than any other woman on the screen, yet to me, now, she is the least terrifying. You simply have to understand her. Pola is really happy only when she is wearing rags, and she is more particular about her rags than the elaborate gowns. But if Pola’s raiment is to be gorgeous, it just be super-so.”

Negri so loved and admired his work on the film that she demanded he design all her productions. The story goes that Negri was upset that she had to share the same designer at Paramount as her “rival,” Gloria Swanson, so she switched to Greer. He had a confident flamboyance in his designs. He told a reporter around that time, “The clothes we design up here are one year ahead of Paris and two years ahead of the manufacturers.”



Paramount hired a second great designer in Travis Banton the next year. The summer before, Greer hired a young, bespectacled college graduate to help him as a sketch artist. "I studied everything Howard Greer and Travis Banton did," Edith Head wrote. "They taught me constantly. I couldn't have stayed on a week without them."

Greer left Paramount and opened his own couture shop, Greer Inc. right off of Sunset Boulevard in Hollywood in December 1927. He claimed he was tired of having to think in terms of Black and White. At Greer Inc., he designed personal clothing for the stars and the wealthier public. Mr. Greer designed clothes for Greta Garbo, Irene Dunne, Ingrid Bergman, Ginger Rogers, Katherine Hepburn and the wedding dresses for Shirley Temple and Gloria Vanderbilt. He continued to create costumes for films into the 1950s and was one of the first famous couturiers to design mass-market clothing until his retirement in 1962. His best-known film work includes the Katharine Hepburn films *Christopher Strong* (1933) and *Bringing Up Baby* (1938), and the gowns for 1940's *My Favorite Wife*. He also designed clothes for DeMille's *The Ten Commandments* and Alfred Hitchcock's *Spellbound*.

Greer published his amusing, if somewhat personally unrevealing autobiography, *Designing Male*, in 1951.

New York Times, July 3, 1956
"Howard Greer Looks Back to Earlier Days for Styles"
By Nan Robertson

At the age of 59, Hollywood designer Howard Greer has succumbed to a severe case of nostalgia.

This is something new for Mr. Greer, who has dressed almost every movie star since the heyday of Pola Negri and hasn't looked back once.

Mr. Greer's forte has long been curvaceous clothes with revealing, low cut bodices. But recently he hove into New York with a different kind of collection, obviously influenced by the gentler, more ladylike silhouette of the World War I era.

He is not the first designer to do so. The trend started last fall in New York custom salons and was given tremendous impetus by Cecil Beaton's ravishing costumes for "My Fair Lady." Mr. Greer is alone, however, in having worked under Lady Duff Gordon, the fabulous "Lucille" who ruled the dressmaking world from 1912-1919.

Nobody ever made a statelier tea-gown than Lucile. Her draping and blending of soft colors turned competitors pale with envy. She had salons in London, Paris, New York and Chicago; according to Mr. Greer, "probably not more than 3,000 women in the United States had the money or the temerity to cross her threshold."

Mr. Greer didn't cross her ladyship's threshold — he crashed it. In 1916 he was a 19-year-old student at the University of Nebraska with no money but plenty of nerve. He decided he wanted to design under Lady Duff Gordon.

He bombarded Lucille with letters until, finally, the exasperated dressmaker sent him a telegram consenting to interview him in Chicago. Back shot his answer: "Death alone will keep me from you." He went, she saw, he conquered. Much to Lucile's bewilderment, he was in.

"Frankly, I had a lousy time at her ladyship's," said this frank and breezy designer. "She was a tyrant. But I learned my first lessons about design there."



After a year with Lucile, Mr. Greer went overseas with the army. His path wound in slow stages from Paris to New York to Hollywood, where he has worked since 1923.

Hollywood designs tend to be sexier and more flamboyant than fashions elsewhere in this country, which is why Mr. Greer's latest collection is such a surprise. He thinks the World War I influence is catching on everywhere.

"The cumbersome Lucile hobble is gone," he said, "but the delicate draping, the rich brocades and the flattery of her Empire-like bodices are evident in today's design."

Mr. Greer's Lucile-influenced fashions will be available at Jay Thorpe and Bergdorf Goodman toward the end of this month.

New York Times, April 21, 1974
"Howard Greer, Designer, Dies; Couturier for Hollywood Stars"

LOS ANGELES, April 20 (UPI)—Howard Greer, a leading fashion designer from the days of movie costuming in the nineteen-twenties to mass merchandising in the sixties, died Wednesday in a Culver City Hospital. He was 78 years old.

Mr. Greer, one of the most famous Hollywood designers, who retired in 1962, had often displayed his latest styles at fashion shows here. As a designer, he made famous the frankly "sexy" dress.

His career took him from a Nebraska farm to a start as a sketcher for Madame Lucile, the reigning queen of fashion in America before World War I. He also sketched for Lady Lucy Duff Gordon, the post Victorian British style expert.

He served in the Army in France in World War. I and stayed on in Paris to work with couturiers Paul Poiret and Molyneux. Returning to America, he became a full-time costume designer with Famous Players-Lasky in 1923.

He was the first big-name designer to start a custom salon in Hollywood in 1927. He was also one of the first West Coast designers to establish his own wholesale business.

Mr. Greer designed wedding gowns for Shirley Temple and Gloria Vanderbilt and apparel, worn on and off the screen for Mary Pickford, Irene Dunne, Joan Crawford, Ginger Rogers, Gloria Swanson, Rita Hayworth, Katherine Hepburn, Theda Bara and Pola Negri, among others. In his autobiography "Designing Male," published in 1951 he wrote, "Madame may be a dreamboat to her friends, but she can be a fishwife to her dressmaker."

Many of the headaches he endured, he said, were tolerable only because his work enabled him to be in the presence of such celebrities as Isadora Duncan, Queen Marie of Rumania and Greta Garbo.

Ernest Belcher, Choreographer

Ernest Belcher was born in London, England, in 1882, the son of a butcher. Unlike most dancers who entered the field at an early age, Ernest's youth was spent helping in the shop, singing at church, and joining the Boy Scouts. In high school, he took up painting and architecture and as he put it, became "enthralled with the beauty of the music...About this time there was a sudden realization that this expression of myself in gesture and movement was to be the great dominating force in my life." He was sixteen years old.

It seemed an unpromising decision. He started at an age much older than most dancers. Dance in London was hardly a center of the ballet world — it was years before Enrico Cecchetti started a school (1914) and another decade after that before England saw the rise of a national dance tradition with Alicia Markova and Frederick Ashton. While apprenticing as an architect, he began taking lessons with Ethel Payne, a member of the four-person Go-Bang-Girls. At that time in 1898, the British music hall was the place to see dance and the Alhambra and Empire were the most famous. For the next two years, Belcher studied both architecture and dance before he made the decision to study with Francesca Zanfretta who had gained a reputation for teaching many of the best young dancers. It was a time of taking a number of odd jobs to pay for rent and dance lessons. Later in life, he said that he started gaining fame in 1902, but that was not the case. It should be noted here that like many people who came to Hollywood to reinvent themselves, that Belcher's stories about his early days had some grains of truth and perhaps some fabrications. It was dance historian Naima Prevots (*Dancing in the Sun: Hollywood Choreographers 1915-1937*, UMI Research Press, 1987) whose comprehensive research into Belcher's life with the assistance of his daughter Marge Champion that his authentic story was revealed.



It was in fact some years later in 1909 that he finally appeared at the Alhambra. Though those years must have been difficult, Belcher studied ballet and a large variety of folk, Spanish, Indian, Asian and many other forms of dance that helped him in his later career. In 1911 through the next year, he worked for Selsoir Motion Picture Company of London, performing dances for the screen. For the next four years, Belcher teamed with several female partners onstage to perform at the British dance halls with such pieces as "The Apache Dance," "The Tango Waltz," "The Yankee Tangle" (supposedly based on New York's famed Bowery), and operatic dances. In 1914, Belcher and Gertrude Atherton were partners signed to a two-year contract at the Oxford Theatre. But six months later, growing tired of the act, Belcher left for a tour of America with a dance troupe called the Golden Dancers.

Settling down in New York City that September, Belcher's career took a very similar turn at the very same restaurant as another immigrant who came to the city the year before, Rodolfo Alfonso Raffaello Pierre Filibert di Valentina d'Antonguolla Guglielmi — who also later found fortune in Hollywood as Rudolph Valentino. According to the August 1928 issue of *Dance Magazine*, "It was his pleasant duty to dance with ladies unescorted or with non-dancing partners" at Louis Bustanoby's Cafe des Beaux Arts. Located on West 40th Street, it was one of the great "lobster palaces" of turn-of-the-century New York. By 1911, Bustanoby created something new, a "Ladies Bar" that catered to women — a man could only be there if attended by a woman. It was advertised for respectable women, and it was *very* unusual at the time for a place to accommodate women so they could drink alcohol and socialize. At other bars, a woman was considered disreputable if they were there. And at the Café, though the women were respectable, Bustanoby is credited with inventing the "gigolo," the attractive young busboy who was paid to dance with the ladies. Two of those busboys (though perhaps not at the same time) were Valentino and Belcher. For this "disreputable" job, Belcher took on the name "Eddie York," a name he would playfully use once again years later when he found himself cooking for fun at the Beverly Wilshire Hotel's coffee shop. It was at the Café one night,

when short an entertainer, Belcher performed a dance for the audience. Becoming quickly popular as “the dancing busboy,” Belcher achieved sufficient recognition that President and Mrs. Woodrow Wilson asked him to dance at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel. Soon he was engaged as a dancer on the famed Keith-Orpheum circuit.

But by 1915, Belcher later said, he was diagnosed with tuberculosis and given one year to live. By September, he had moved to Los Angeles for his health. According to his daughter, Belcher rented an apartment and from his window, connected a platform to a tree where he slept every night and cured himself.

So, in May 1916 at the age of 33 and perhaps seeing his life as a dancer over, Belcher created the Celeste School of Dance with five students. Perhaps it had been inspired by the Denishawn school which was founded in Los Angeles school the previous year by the famed Ruth St. Denis and Ted Shawn. It was incredibly fortuitous for both schools as the rise of Hollywood provided much work choreographing for the movies while a flood of young aspiring actors and actresses moved West seeking work in film. These schools soon provided several dancers with jobs in the movies.

Belcher’s career as a film dance director took off in 1918 when he staged dances for D.W. Griffiths’ *Broken Blossoms*. He also worked for directors Cecil B. de Mille, Mack Sennett, and Thomas H. Ince. He coached many film performers in movement and dance including Mary Pickford, Pola Negri, Ramon Navarro, Nanette Fabray and Shirley Temple.



Belcher’s career, an esteemed one for his work in Hollywood, was further distinguished by the students he inspired including his daughter Marge — whose marriage to Gower Champion created one of the best dance/choreographer teams in film and theater — and the incredible Gwen Verdon (who created her own legend with partner, and later husband, Bob Fosse). At one point, in Belcher’s class, the two of them were joined by Cyd Charisse. Adding to the family fame, Belcher’s stepdaughter was the famed actress, Lina Basquette. Other students included Fred Astaire, Maria Tallchief and Shirley Temple (to prepare for her 1939 film, *The Little Princess*). Ernest Belcher’s famed school became the Westmor Dance Studio which still exists today on South Western Avenue in Los Angeles.

Margie Champion remembered dancing for her father in this [interview](#):

The first time I really remember performing was in a ballet of my father's at the Hollywood Bowl. He put on ballets at the Hollywood Bowl almost every year, and this was in the early '30s. And I did just a slight little solo called the Spirit of the Night. And I think it was in the next year that Gwen Verdon and her mother were in my father's ballet, which was called Carnival in Venice. And she was seven. So, she always tells this story which I think is hilarious. It was kind of a comedia del arte thing, and she had, she was this little clown-like character, and she had a little poodle on a leash. And her mother, of course, was also a clown-like character, and they moved around throughout the ballet. Well, at the rehearsal -- it's very hot at, or it was then, at the Hollywood Bowl during the afternoons, and the dog got deathly ill. It threw up and did all this stuff. So, my father said we had to get the dog out of there, and she remembers my father's chief assistant coming and stripping her down to her leotard and suddenly pasting these pompoms all over her leotard and putting the little collar on her. So, she made her debut at the Hollywood Bowl as a poodle. the Hollywood Bowl as a poodle.

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Restoring *The Spanish Dancer* (1923)

ROB BYRNE

POLA TAKES THE STAGE

Pola Negri was already an international star when she arrived in Hollywood in 1922. The Polish actress boasted a brilliant résumé, having starred in five features by German director Ernst Lubitsch, most notably the sensational *Madame DuBarry* (1919), released in 1920 in the United States as *Passion*. Regardless, her first American productions, *Bella Donna* (1923) and *The Cheat* (1923), both directed by George Fitzmaurice, met with only lukewarm success, sending Famous-Players in search of a stronger vehicle for its exotic actress. The studio settled on an adaptation of *Don César de Bazan*, a novel by Adolphe Philippe Dennery and Philippe François Pinel, which had been originally purchased as a vehicle for Rudolph Valentino. However, the Sheik's legal dispute with the studio precluded his participation in the project, leaving the studio with the property on their hands. Writers Beulah Marie Dix and

June Mathis reworked the story, transforming the gypsy dancer Maritana into the central focus, and cast Negri in the role. The star hoped for a reunion with the recently imported Ernst Lubitsch, with whom she had so successfully conquered Europe, but the studio had already loaned the director to Mary Pickford for *Rosita* (1923), a film based on the very same novel. Famous-Players instead assigned Herbert Brenon to direct Negri in their version, titled *The Spanish Dancer*.

The photoplay for *The Spanish Dancer* features Pola Negri as Maritana, a gypsy dancer in love with Don César de Bazan, a penniless nobleman played by Antonio Moreno. Intrigue in the Spanish court arises when the king (Wallace Beery) must decide whether to sign a treaty with France. His wife, Queen Isabel (Kathlyn Williams), advocates in favor but is opposed by courtier Don Salluste (Adolphe Menjou), who conspires to sow discord between the royal couple. Don César is arrested in violation of the king's edict against dueling and is sentenced to the firing squad. Maritana pleads with the queen to spare Don César, but the king has designs on the "gypsy wench" and delays the pardon. The plot reaches its climax when the king dupes Maritana into a rendezvous at his hunting lodge, while Don César escapes and attempts Maritana's rescue and the queen arrives to confront her husband with his infidelity.

Principal photography for *The Spanish Dancer* began June 4, 1923, and concluded two months later, on August 2. According to Glendon Allvine, 75,000 feet of film were exposed, which Hector Turnbull edited into a nine-reel release length of 8,434 feet.¹ The film premiered in New York on October 7, only one month after Mary Pickford's *Rosita*. *Photoplay* proclaimed Negri's performance "magnificent," observing that "after being wasted in 'Bella Donna' and 'The Cheat,' Pola Negri comes back to her own in this picture."² Comparing her performance to Mary Pickford's *Rosita*, the *Tribune* characterized Negri's performance as "more colorful, more vigorous, more dazzling, and [a] gaudier one," while the *San Antonio Express* described the production as "not only spectacular, but is dramatic in its small moments," adding that "Negri comes back and is again the Negri that so electrified the world in 'Passion.'"³ Taking



a more reserved stance, *Film Daily* described *The Spanish Dancer* as a “nicely staged story” but added that the “picture runs too long.”⁴

A FUNNY THING HAPPENED ON THE WAY TO THE ARCHIVE

Ninety years later, attitudes toward *The Spanish Dancer* could be described as indifferent at best. Most who have seen a print describe it as an illogical and overly wrought costume drama. Only two 35mm prints of *The Spanish Dancer* are known to exist, both of which are fragmentary and incomplete foreign-translation prints, and what can usually be found of the American version are copies of the 1930s Kodascope Library 16mm abridgement.⁵ Edited for brevity, the artlessly reduced Kodascope version omits key plot elements, including the treaty

dispute that sets the narrative in motion. In the United States, three companies currently offer low-budget DVD copies based on 16mm copies, all of which are dismally incomplete and none of which run longer than an hour. It is little wonder that modern-day evaluations of the film range from “this version doesn’t make a lot of sense” to “I’ve screened the Kodascope edit . . . and found it to be an awful film . . . just a chore to sit through.”⁶

REHABILITATING THE SPANISH DANCER

Despite *The Spanish Dancer*’s less than stellar reputation, research carried out at EYE Film Institute Netherlands by silent film collection specialist Elif Rongen-Kaynakçi revealed the potential for reconstituting and restoring the film.

Coming attraction advertising slide for *The Spanish Dancer*. Author’s collection.

After an exhaustive search, Rongen-Kaynakçi identified three additional film sources containing material not present in the EYE's own 35mm translated Dutch copy, and in autumn 2010, EYE Film Institute Netherlands announced plans for their restoration. The project would restore *The Spanish Dancer* using the archive's own incomplete 35mm print as a starting point and would incorporate elements from a 35mm Russian-language print, a 16mm Kodascope abridgement, and an incomplete 16mm print with French titles. Once the materials were assembled in Amsterdam, I teamed with EYE film restorer Annike Kross to complete the restoration, my own participation enabled by way of a fellowship from the Haghefilm Foundation.

Of all the challenges presented by the project, reconstructing *The Spanish Dancer*'s original editing sequence proved to be the most daunting. All four film sources were significantly compromised both in terms of completeness and image quality. The two 35mm prints had multiple reels missing, and all four sources had been reedited, abridged, condensed, or otherwise dismembered. Variations between the prints included missing shots; missing titles; shortened, relocated, and rearranged sequences; eliminated or deemphasized characters; excised subplots; missing narrative motivations; and continuity mismatches too numerous to count. One of the prints, a 16mm Kodascope, had been released as an abridgement, and the two 35mm prints had also obviously been intentionally reduced. Recalling *Film Daily's* comment that the film "runs too long," it is possible that distributors or exhibitors felt the need to abbreviate what they perceived to be an excessive running time.

We were exceptionally fortunate to have access to Paramount's original continuity script of *The Spanish Dancer*, courtesy of the Margaret Herrick Library of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, to serve as our guide. The script proved to be an invaluable Rosetta stone, settling every question regarding the form and content of the original American release. In addition to detailed descriptions of each shot and the complete text for every title, the script also indicated transitions (fade in, fade out, etc.) and provided a roll-by-roll key to the color tinting scheme. We were initially concerned that the script might not exactly



Frames from 35mm Dutch print of *The Spanish Dancer*. Courtesy EYE Film Institute Netherlands.

reflect the final released version of the film, but without exception, we were able to reconcile shots and titles in the script with what we found in the film sources. Our confidence in the script's veracity was further confirmed by the titles in our English-language print, which exactly matched the script, and by our only tinted print, which matched the documented color scheme shot for shot. The script also proved an invaluable guide when it came to re-creating English-language titles for which there was no surviving film material.

The backbone of the reconstruction was a 1,630-meter tinted 35mm nitrate print from the EYE Film Institute Netherlands. Our shot-by-shot comparison between this Dutch-titled print and the Paramount continuity script showed that the film included 64 percent of the shots and titles (in Dutch translation) that had been in the original US release. In an even greater stroke of luck, a frame-by-frame comparison with American sources revealed that the Dutch print had been struck from the domestic American negative instead of the foreign export

negative, as we had originally assumed. Though entire reels were not missing from this print, the fourth and sixth were particularly deficient, each containing less than 20 percent of the original material. In general, the image quality of the Dutch print was excellent, even though it suffered moderate to severe nitrate deterioration in some places. Excluding titles, 628 of the 783 shots present in the Dutch print were eventually included in the reconstruction.

Our second 35mm source was an untinted black-and-white nitrate print, with Russian titles, obtained on loan from the Cinémathèque Royale de Belgique in Brussels. At 1,690 meters, the Russian print was virtually identical in length to the Dutch, but to our great fortune, in many instances, the large gaps in the Russian print were the inverse of the missing material in the Dutch print. In the Russian print, the third reel was missing, and the fifth contained fewer than 20 percent of the shots and titles indicated by the script. Like the Dutch print, the photographic quality of this print was generally good, though at times, nitrate deterioration had left its mark. More significant than the physical qualities of the material, the shots in the Russian print consisted of different takes than the corresponding shots in the Dutch print.

During the silent era, foreign export negatives were often generated either by using multiple cameras to simultaneously create a duplicate negative or by constructing a negative out of rejected alternate takes.⁷ Because the Dutch print matched American and English-language sources, it was clear that the Russian print had been struck from the export negative composed of alternate takes. Comparison between the takes in the Dutch and Russian prints also revealed, to our relief, that the export negative takes were not markedly inferior to those in the American version. As Christopher Bird has described, export negatives were often poorly edited and generally consist of inferior takes.⁸ This was not the case with our Russian-titled print. In total, the Russian print included 659 photographic image shots and 148 Russian titles. From these, 437 image shots were selected for inclusion in the reconstruction.

In addition to the 35mm sources, we had two 16mm prints, which contributed immeasurably by bridging gaps and providing material absent from the 35mm sources. The most



Frames from 35mm Russian print of *The Spanish Dancer*. Courtesy Cinémathèque Royale de Belgique.

comprehensive of the two 16mm prints was a black-and-white copy of a Kodascope Library abridgement obtained from Kevin Brownlow, which contained 57 percent of the shots and titles listed in the original script.⁹ The 16mm footage lacked the sharpness and clarity of the 35mm nitrate copies but included important sequences missing in the fourth and fifth reels of the 35mm material. The Kodascope print was also our only available source for original English titles, which, we were delighted to discover, exactly matched the Paramount continuity, confirming again that the script accurately reflected the titles used in the 1923 release. The English version also provided a stylistic reference for re-creating missing titles. Of the 659 image shots in the Kodascope print, 88 were included in the final restoration, primarily to replace scenes missing entirely from the 35mm sources. Our reconstruction also includes 183 of the 184 English-language titles, with the lone exception being the Kodascope "The End" title, which was obviously not the Paramount original.

The final piece of *The Spanish Dancer* puzzle came by way of a French-titled 16mm



Paramount lobby card for *The Spanish Dancer* depicting the knife fight in the gypsy camp. Author's collection.

fragment from the Lobster Film Collection featuring the critical knife fight in the gypsy camp that concludes the second reel.¹⁰ This pivotal scene was missing from all other print sources. Though this footage featured French titles, buried inside we discovered a single English flash title that exactly matched the style and typeface of the Kodascope material. This match with the English titles in the Kodascope print further increased our confidence that the Kodascope titles were photographically identical to the original American titles. Of the twenty-three shots present in the French fragment, seventeen were included in the final reconstruction.

PUTTING *THE SPANISH DANCER* BACK ON HER FEET

Shot by shot and scene by scene, each step in the reconstruction process brought *The Spanish Dancer* more clearly into focus. Using the

Paramount continuity script as a guide, we developed a detailed inventory of each shot and title encompassing all four sources. Our inventory indicated which shots were extant in each source as well as the quality of the material and the duration of the shot. Many critical plot elements had been available only from a single source, including the confiscation of Bazan's estate, the knife fight in the gypsy camp, the duel in the square, and Maritana's rescue of the child prince. No wonder the film had a reputation for not making sense! Inserting the missing titles provided additional revelations. Not only did the plot make sense, but the dialogue was well paced and often quite clever.

When reconstructing film sequences, the process of correlating shots in the film material with lines in the script was usually a straight-

forward process, but there were times when it was maddeningly difficult. This was most often the case in scenes consisting of frequent cuts between characters in conversation. In many cases, the scripted editing of these conversations called for five or six back-and-forth intercuts between close-ups, each separated by a dialogue title. It quickly became apparent that such sequences were prime targets for abridgement by latter-day editors who either removed individual shot–title pairs or simply excised the titles, leaving jump cuts. Fortunately, it was often the case that the same conversational sequence was abridged differently in each print, providing us with the opportunity to reestablish the original sequence by combining shots from different sources and inserting re-created dialogue titles. Our ability to re-create these sequences was further enhanced by director Herbert Brenon’s practice of having his actors speak the dialogue as written in the script. Had it not been possible for us to lip-read these close-ups, matching the cuts to their respective titles would have been impossible.

Our comprehensive and detailed shot list and inventory were critical to assembling the final edit, but just as essential was developing a rational methodology for selecting between duplicate shots in the inventory. Our selection criteria were driven by the project’s two primary objectives: to include material of the highest photographic quality and to create a restoration as close as possible to the original American release. According to our criteria, the higher photographic quality of the 35mm gave it precedence over lower-resolution 16mm versions of the same shot, and our goal of re-creating the American release favored the Dutch 35mm print (struck from the American negative) over the Russian (printed from the export negative.) Shots, then, were selected from the inventory based on the following criteria:

1. If only one version of a shot existed, that shot was selected for inclusion.
2. If only one 35mm version and one 16mm version of a shot existed, the 35mm version was used, unless it was exceptionally damaged.
3. If two 35mm shots of equal quality existed, the shot from the Dutch print was selected

because it was the one used in the original American release.

4. If two 35mm versions existed, and the Dutch version was severely damaged or deteriorated, the shot from the Russian print was selected.

Titles and intertitles were a much simpler consideration. Of the 254 titles in the Paramount script, 183 (72 percent) were present in Kevin Brownlow’s 16mm Kodascope print, which was our only English-titled source. With the exception of “The End,” all the titles from Kevin Brownlow’s print were used. The remaining sixty-nine titles for which we had no English source were re-created using a typeface similar to the extant English titles.

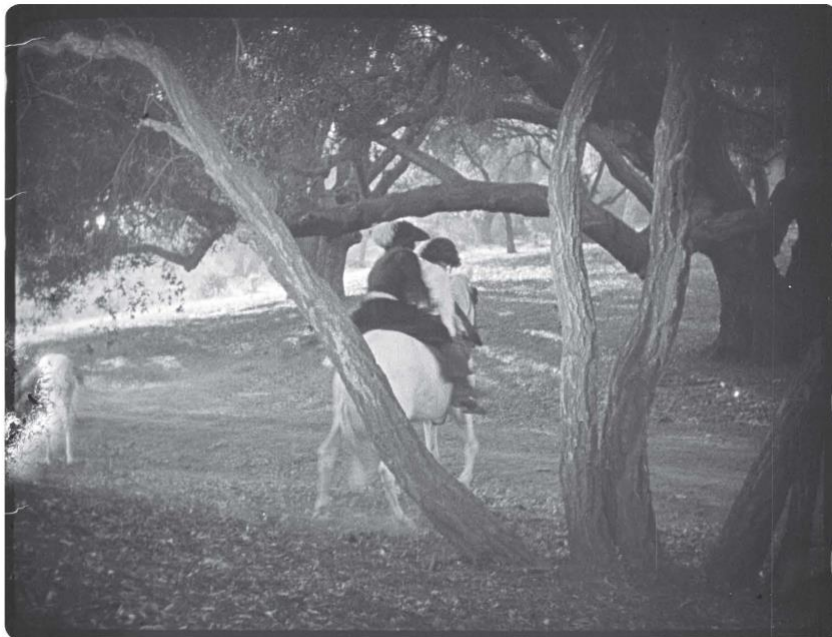
THE SPANISH DANCER GETS A FACE-LIFT

A number of factors influenced our decision to employ a digital workflow for the restoration process, specifically, the need to reconcile source material of two different gauges, physical film damage, emulsion deterioration that could only be repaired using digital tools, and the necessity to re-create missing titles. Even though the end product of the project is a restored version on film stock, working with the material as a digital intermediate allowed us to take advantage of digital tools and techniques to address problems in individual frame images to a degree beyond the capabilities of photochemical processes. Consistent with restoration ethics, we used digital technology only to correct damage to the original image and never to enhance or “improve” the frame image, nor to overcorrect other aspects inherent in motion picture film such as stability and flicker. For example, visible rips, tears, mid-shot repair splices, and cue holes were removed, and distractingly unstable shots and warped frames were corrected, but original splice lines were left untouched, and great care was taken to avoid overstabilizing or removing any inherently filmlike visual qualities.

The film source materials were scanned at 2K resolution using a wetgate-equipped Oxberry CineScan 6400, and the image restoration work was performed using the DIAMANT-Film Restoration suite. The workflow was necessarily divided into two phases, first working on



Scanned from 35mm
Dutch print of *The Spanish
Dancer* prior to restoration.
Courtesy EYE Film Institute
Netherlands.



Scanned from 35mm
Dutch print of *The Spanish
Dancer* after restoration.
Courtesy EYE Film Institute
Netherlands.

shots, followed by work on individual frames. DIAMANT-Film Restoration provides a number of tools for what the vendor calls “automatic” restoration. These tools operate on sequences of frames (shots) and can be used to address issues such as scratches, dust, flicker, warping, and instability. In general, we avoided using these automated tools to eliminate any possibility of introducing digital artifacts, a situation in which the software misidentifies something in the frame as a defect and alters the image to “correct” the problem. Instead, we relied primarily on DIAMANT-Film’s manual Dustbuster tools to restore damaged images on a frame-by-frame basis.

Our final step was to create a black-and-white negative and, from that, a color exhibition print using the Desmet process to reproduce the original Paramount tinting scheme. Luckily, the continuity script included tinting instructions, and EYE’s Dutch 35mm nitrate print was accurately colored according to the same scheme, thereby enabling us to match the original hue and saturation. Though it is possible that the original colors in the Dutch print may have faded, the colors we found in the nitrate were deep and vibrant. To make the best match possible, we color matched to the outer edges of the film, around the perforations and outside the frame, on the principle that color tint exposed to the projector lamp would be more likely to have faded than the outer edges.

The new restoration brings the film as close to complete as may ever be possible. Although the longest of the original surviving sources barely reached 60 percent of the scripted film, the new restoration brings the total to 95 percent. The restoration also includes all of the titles and 1,170 of the 1,228 scripted shots as well as restoring all the missing sequences, characters, and subplots. What remains lost are primarily individual shots unavailable in any existing print source, typically only a single shot or two at a time, and in no case are there gaps noticeable in the continuity.

MARITANA RETURNS TO THE SCREEN

On July 6, 2011, the restoration team from the EYE Film Institute Netherlands gathered in Zaal

2 at EYE’s Vondelpark pavilion for an internal screening of the newly restored feature. Approximately two dozen EYE employees enjoyed a version of *The Spanish Dancer* that has been unseen for generations. The screening was a revelation. The pacing is brisk, both stars are well suited to their roles, and the plot and dialogue are clever and well written. The reconstituted feature presents a carefree romantic drama reminiscent of *The Three Musketeers* (1921) rather than a stuffy costume drama. Pola Negri commands the screen, and Antonio Moreno’s performance seems more likely to have been inspired by Douglas Fairbanks than by the matinee idol Rudolph Valentino, for whom the material was originally written. No longer is *The Spanish Dancer* an incomprehensible “chore to sit through.” Instead, the newly reconstituted version presents two charming leading actors, an impressive supporting cast, drama, romance, swordplay, dancing, lecherous royalty, hundreds (if not thousands) of extras, and a running gag about the splendid plumage of Don César’s hat. Technically speaking, we repaired and put the shots back together, but what we truly restored is the heart and soul of *The Spanish Dancer*.

Rob Byrne is an independent film preservationist and president of the San Francisco Silent Film Festival. He holds an MA in preservation and presentation of the moving image from the University of Amsterdam and was the 2011 recipient of the Haghefilm Foundation Fellowship. Specializing in silent-era film restoration, Byrne has worked in conjunction with EYE Film Institute Netherlands and the Niles Essanay Silent Film Museum to restore *Shoes* (1916), *The Spanish Dancer* (1923), and *Twin Peaks Tunnel* (1917). Rob is author of the website “Starts Thursday! The Art and History of Motion Picture Coming Attraction Slides” (<http://www.starts-thursday.com/>) and has published articles in the *Journal of Film Preservation* and *Nisimazine* as well as program notes for the San Francisco Silent Film Festival.

NOTES

I would like to express my deepest appreciation and gratitude to EYE Film Institute Netherlands and to the Haghefilm Foundation, specifically

Giovanna Fossati, Paolo Cherchi Usai, and Peter Limburg, who made possible my participation in this wonderful project. I also recognize, thank, salute, and offer transatlantic hugs to my friends and colleagues at EYE and Haghefilm, who so freely shared their knowledge and expertise and from whom I have learned so much, particularly, Elif Rongen-Kaynakçi, Daniella Curro, and my partner in crime, Annike Kross. Finally, I would like to thank Kevin Brownlow, David Pierce, and Shari Kizirian for being there when I had questions and for helping shape this article into a form presentable for human consumption.

1. Glendon Allvine, introduction to Photoplay edition *The Spanish Dancer, Being a Translation from the Original French by Henry L. Williams of Don Caesar de Bazan*, by Victor Hugo, Pola Negri ed. (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1923), viii. See also "The Spanish Dancer," AFI Catalog of Feature Films, <http://www.afi.com/members/catalog/DetailView.aspx?s=&Movie=12321>.
2. "The Shadow Stage: A Review of New Pictures," *Photoplay*, December 1923, 72.
3. *Tribune* review quoted in "The Spanish Dancer," *The Film Daily*, October 14, 1923, 6. "Negri

Stars in First of New Paramount Pictures," *San Antonio Express*, October 28, 1923, B15.

4. "The Spanish Dancer," *The Film Daily*, October 14, 1923, 5.
5. The Kodascope Library abridgement of *The Spanish Dancer* was released in five reels at an advertised length of 4,873 feet. See *Descriptive Catalogue of Kodascope Library Motion Pictures*, 5th ed. (New York: Kodascope Libraries, 1932), 188–89.
6. Comments from the Nitratedville online forum, <http://www.nitratedville.com/viewtopic.php?t=7232#p39574>, on Bob Fells, "Restoration Project: Pola Negri in THE SPANISH DANCER (1923)," September 20, 2010.
7. Christopher Bird, "Europe Ain't Gonna See This Scene: Working with Variant Versions in Photoplay Productions' Restoration of *The Cat and the Canary*," *The Moving Image* 9, no. 2 (2009): 149–63.
8. Ibid.
9. *The Spanish Dancer*, Kodascope Library abridgment, 570 meters, 16mm, collection of Kevin Brownlow.
10. *The Spanish Dancer*, abridgment, 625 meters, 16mm, Lobster Film Collection (Serge Bromberg/Eric Lange).

Milestone Film & Video



After more than 31 years in film distribution and restoration, Milestone has built a reputation for releasing classic cinema masterpieces, groundbreaking documentaries, and American independent features. Thanks to the company's work in rediscovering and releasing important films such as Charles Burnett's *Killer of Sheep*, Kent Mackenzie's *The Exiles*, Mikhail Kalatozov's *I Am Cuba*, Marcel Ophüls' *The Sorrow and the Pity*, the Mariposa Film Group's *Word is Out* and Alfred Hitchcock's *Bon Voyage* and *Aventure Malgache*, Milestone has long occupied a position as one of the country's most influential independent distributors.

In November 2007, Milestone was awarded the Fort Lee Film Commission's first Lewis Selznick Award for contributions to film history. In January 2008, the Los Angeles Film Critics Association chose to give its first Legacy of Cinema Award "to Dennis Doros and Amy Heller of Milestone Film & Video for their tireless efforts on behalf of film restoration and preservation." And in March 2008, Milestone became an Anthology Film Archive's Film Preservation honoree.

In 1995, Milestone received the first Special Archival Award from the National Society of Film Critics for its restoration and release of *I Am Cuba*. Manohla Dargis, then at the *LA Weekly*, chose Milestone as the 1999 “Indie Distributor of the Year.” In 2004, the National Society of Film Critics again awarded Milestone with a Film Heritage award. That same year the International Film Seminars presented the company its prestigious Leo Award and the New York Film Critics Circle voted a Special Award “in honor of 15 years of restoring classic films.” In November 2007, Milestone was awarded the Fort Lee Film Commission’s first Lewis Selznick Award for contributions to film history. The company won Best Rediscovery from the Il Cinema Ritrovato DVD Awards for its release of *Winter Soldier* in 2006 and again in 2010 for *The Exiles*. In 2015, the Il Cinema Ritrovato again awarded Milestone, this time for Best Blu-ray, for their series, *Project Shirley* (Clarke).

In January 2008, the Los Angeles Film Critics Association chose to give its first Legacy of Cinema Award to Doros and Heller of Milestone Film & Video “for their tireless efforts on behalf of film restoration and preservation.” And in March 2008, Milestone became an Anthology Film Archive’s Film Preservation honoree. In 2009, Dennis Doros was elected as one of the Directors of the Board of the Association of the Moving Image Archivists and established the organization’s press office in 2010. He is currently serving his third term. In 2011, Milestone was the first distributor ever chosen for two Film Heritage Awards in the same year by the National Society of Film Critics for the release of *On the Bowery* and *Word is Out*. The American Library Association also selected *Word is Out* for its Notable Videos for Adult, the first classic film ever so chosen. In 2019

In December 2012, Milestone became the first two-time winner of the prestigious New York Film Critics’ Circle’s “Special Award” and also received another National Society of Film Critics Film Heritage Award, this time for the company’s work restoring, preserving and distributing the films of iconoclast director Shirley Clarke. Important contemporary artists who have co-presented Milestone restorations include Martin Scorsese, Francis Ford Coppola, Barbara Kopple, Woody Allen, Steven Soderbergh, Thelma Schoonmaker, Jonathan Demme, Dustin Hoffman, Charles Burnett, and Sherman Alexie.

In 2009, Dennis Doros was elected to the Board of the Association of the Moving Image Archivists (AMIA). He went on to serve three consecutive terms on the board. In 2016, he was honored with AMIA’s William O’Farrell award, in recognition for services to the field. From 2017–2021, Doros served as President of AMIA on the board of Co-ordinating Council of Audio-Visual Archives Associations. From 2018–2021, Doros was a member the National Film Preservation Board, which helps select the Library of Congress’s yearly additions to the National Film Registry. In 2019, Doros and Heller were honored by the Art House Convergence with the organization’s Spotlight Lifetime Achievement Award and the Denver Silent Film Festival’s David Shepard Career Achievement Award. In 2020, Milestone received the Ambler Cinematic Arts Award.

Heller and Doros have lecture internationally on the importance of preservation and restoration and to present films from the Milestone collection. Their goals are to educate about the importance of saving and screening films outside the mainstream and to share the pure joy of cinema.

In recent years, Milestone premiered pristine restorations of Mikhail Kalatozov’s *I Am Cuba*; Lois Weber’s *Shoes* and *The Dumb Girl of Portici*; Ross Lipman’s *Notfilm*; Kathleen Collins’s *Losing Ground*; George T. Nierenberg’s *Say Amen*, *Somebody* and *No Maps on My Taps*; the films of Rob Epstein and Jeffrey Friedman, including the Oscar®-winning *Common Threads*, and Luchino Visconti’s *Rocco and His Brothers*. Upcoming restorations include the films and videos of Ayoka Chenzira and Eleanor Antin’s *The Man without a World*. In 2021, Milestone entered into a distribution agreement with Kino Lorber, which will allow cofounders Doros and Heller more time to focus on the rediscovery and restoration of many more films that will delight viewers and challenge the cinematic canon.

“*They care and they love movies.*” — Martin Scorsese

“*Milestone Film & Video is an art-film distributor that has released some of the most distinguished new movies (along with seldom-seen vintage movie classics) of the past decade.*”

— Stephen Holden, *New York Times*

