Led by the smash hit of Fox's Sunny Side Up, starring Janet Gaynor, original musicals fared well in the early sound era. Such originals as Marianne tended to be more cinematic than the stage adaptations, although routine could also be the order of the day in such uninspired pieces as Honey and Tanned Legs. The most distinctive entries came near the end of the era: Fox's Just Imagine, a science-fiction musical comedy set in the future of 1930, and MGM's Madam Satan, a combination sex farce, operetta, and disaster epic directed by Cecil B. DeMille.

Capellani made four films for Cosmopolitan, including The Young Diana (1922), with Hearst's mistress Marion Davies. His last years in America were difficult, and Capellani was no doubt thinking of going back to France, making frequent travels back to his home country. His health was also an important factor; he was suffering from diabetes, then incurable. The intense activity of the past years was taking its toll. Capellani left the United States for France in 1922.
Albert Capellani
Christine Leteux

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In the early days of cinema, a forgotten master played a major part in the development of feature film and literary adaptation. In France, Albert Capellani directed for Pathé the first versions of Les Misérables (1912) and Germinal (1913), which were greeted as masterpieces worldwide. Capellani moved to the United States in 1915, where he directed some of the greatest stars of the screen, including Clara Kimball Young, Alla Nazimova, and Marion Davies. He even created his own production company in Fort Lee, New Jersey, then the hub of the film industry. Considered one of the greatest filmmakers of the age, Capellani sank into oblivion after his premature death in 1931. Yet cinema made a giant leap forward thanks to the extraordinary visual sense of this artist, who considered filmmaking on a par with drama, literature, and music. In 2010, the Bologna Film Festival organized a retrospective that restored him to the place he deserves in film history. His amazing career is recounted for the first time after in-depth research in archives. This is the first-ever detailed biography of this pioneer, affectionately nicknamed “Cap” by the Americans. This book follows the adventures of a filmmaker who, together with many fellow French directors, technicians, and cameramen, brought to the American film industry the “French touch.”

Becoming a Star
Mariusz Kotowski

in Pola Negri: Hollywood's First Femme Fatale

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Chapter 12 talks mainly about the scandals surrounding the people who populate Negri's private and professional life, primarily Marion Davies and Mabel Normand. The chapter also offers an insight into Negri's personality. Although her continuing success in movies such as East of Suez, The Charmer, Flower of the Night, and A Woman of the World would have allowed her to become complacent or self-absorbed, Negri is anything but. She takes care of her mother overseas, donates to several charities, and always has favorable and well-thought-out opinions on
her acting partners. The reader finds that Negri is an exceptionally well-rounded woman, unspoiled by her fame.