

Hornarama Code: 25005

Turner, K: Casbah of Tetouan

A Tone Poem for 5 Horns

The Casbah of Tetouan was conceived during a visit to Morocco in the summer of 1988. The composer offers the following anecdote:

"As we crossed the Straits of Gibraltar and first laid eyes on the North African coast, I knew we were in store for an adventure! The city of Tetouan was our destination; we were soon standing before its main gates. As we entered the city, our senses were overrun by the many exotic new sights, complementing the wild sounds and smells of the bustling ancient city. After proceeding only a few feet past hobbled live chickens, we found ourselves immersed completely in the endless, tiny alleys of the Casbah. It was a labyrinth of tunnels and passageways, lined with vendors and shops the size of walk-in closets. Anything could be had, including copperware, sacks of spices and grains, and silk. Street butchers displayed slaughtered lambs, goats and pigs, and a snake charmer with his cobra unnerved the unwary passerby. Somewhere around the urine-treated leather goods things began to swim before my eyes. After I informed the guide that I was ill, a young boy was sent to escort me to a quiet place. The boy knew every secret passage and shortcut in the Casbah. He led me through even tinier streets and tunnels, across nomad camps, and even through a kitchen! We sailed through the back door of a mosque, and out the other side. Finally we entered a large, dark and cool house, which seemed to be some sort of palace. The boy led me to a back room and laid me down upon a bed of large pillows. I passed out. I awoke thoroughly disoriented. The first things I saw were six elaborately cloaked elderly men, wildly discussing in Arabic what could possibly be wrong with me, I heard exotic music and aromatic food assailed my senses. After closer observation I discovered I was in a fancy restaurant, being entertained by a belly dancer. Somehow my wife and brother found me and we resumed our inspection of Tetouan. I still felt lightheaded and rather doped by the "therapeutic" tea; my impressions of the city were somewhat hallucinogenic."

The Casbah of Tetouan has been recorded on CD by the American Horn Quartet