

33B

Recorded by Paul Bowles

At Marrakech, Morocco.

November 1, 1959.

Embarek ben Mohammed, self-accompanied on guinbri

Qsida el Kholouk

Qsida dial Qadi

This was another singer I found in the Djemaa el Fna one day, lost subsequently, and discovered again only after several days of searching there at different hours. He explained that he performed only early in the afternoon, because the arrival of the larger groups and the subsequent crowds that collected made it impossible for him to be heard. He was a vocalist par excellence, trained in the classical qsida, of which these two are examples. It is not a popular genre these days, which doubtless also explains his inability to vie with the other performers in the square. The first qsida describes the birth of the Prophet Mohammed, how he refused to drink his mother's milk and was taken in by Halima and brought up by her.

39B

Recorded by Paul Bowles

At Marrakech, Morocco.

October 28, 1959.

Music of the Haouz

Maalem Taieb ben Mbarek and Ensemble

Sebar Aqliq

The Haouz is the great plain that surrounds the city of Marrakech; anything connected with the region is called haouziya. This group comprised two kamenjas, two tarijas, one mqahs (a pair of leather-worker's shears with the points truncated) and one solo voice, which in this case was the Maalem's.

40A

Recorded by Paul Bowles

At Marrakech, Morocco.

October 27, 1959.

Vocal Music of the Guennaoua

Si Mohammed bel Hassan Soudani

1 Zidou Mell

2 Jabouna men es Soudan

3 ~~Lalla Moulana~~ Allah Coun Entina

It would take a long time to get recordings of all the distinct kinds of music that are heard daily in the Djemaa el Fna of Marrakech. Any afternoon of good weather, an hour or so before sunset, ten or fifteen thousand people gather in the huge ^{open space} ~~square~~ and form circles around the various entertainers who come regularly there to earn their living. Mediocre musicians and dancers attract nobody; technicianship is of high quality. It is true, however, that the larger troupes draw the biggest crowds, and occasionally an excellent solo performer will be found sitting all alone on the ground singing and playing, with absolutely no one paying any attention. Such was the case with the Guennaoui who made this tape.

Si Mohammed bel Hassan Soudani was born in the Sudan, and it is extremely unlikely that he ever came in contact with the institution of slavery in any manner; nevertheless, his second song, Jabouna men es Soudan, is a slave's lament, a song of the Negroes of Morocco, who until recently were for the most part slaves. A literal transcription of certain lines: "Oh, Father, they rounded us up and brought us from the Sudan. They separated us from our parents suddenly and brought us from the Sudan. They brought us from the Sudan and sold us. The Chorfa bought us. They herded us together (like animals) and brought us from the Sudan."

The first song is a patriotic-religious piece asking Allah to help the Sudan to become prosperous. The third is a song in praise of Allah. Sudanese words and phrases are mixed freely with those in Moghrebi.

The singer unfortunately has adopted the Moroccan custom of very high voice placement; his natural register (his speaking voice was that of a low baritone) is audible only in the first line of the last song. The high pitch in itself is not objectionable, but it reduces volume to a minimum, and the accompaniment, which he provided himself on a Sudanese instrument called a gogo, tended to obscure the sound of the voice.

40A, continued

Microphone adjustments were of no avail; the voice itself could not be got near enough to the mike to compensate for the loudness of the gogo, (which in itself is like a little orchestra, since it provides the sounds of a plectrum instrument, a drum and a cymbal.) In this respect at least, Si Mohmammed bel Hassan Soudani had become Moroccanized.

The gogo's body was approximately the size and shape of a shoe-box; it had a long neck to the end of which was attached a feather-shaped piece of steel with incised decorations. Tiny rings of metal had been loosely attached all along the edges of this steel feather, so that with every impulse they reverberated. The feather is called a soursal; after the first piece I asked him to remove it, so that the last two songs are played without soursal. The technique of the gogo involves not only the plucking of the guts but the striking of the membrane over which they are strung. (The entire top of the instrument is covered with skin.) (Spanish folk-guitarists often use the same device, in a simpler manner, to accentuate the rhythm.)

40B

Recorded by Paul Bowles

At Marrakech, Morocco.

October 28, 1929.

Music of the Haouz

Maalem Taieb ben Mbarek and Ensemble.

1 Hattan Ana Manarfou (Aaita Mrrakchiya)

2 Amrani

Now and then, when it was possible, I consulted with the leader of a group and got him to reseat his musicians or change the microphone's position relative to them, so that the sonority might more nearly approximate the sound desired by him in his music. At the outset of this session I had not realized ~~that~~ the haouziya was primarily a percussive genre, and kept making attempts to get more voice. But each time the voices sang louder, the percussion increased its volume as well, so that the possibility for the balance I thought I wanted was automatically precluded. When the Maalem tried the headphones and listened to his men, he looked both personally satisfied and at the same time mystified by my objections to the sound. "It's good this way," he said. "It's always this way."

"But you can't hear their voices," I objected.

"You can hear them enough," he answered. "You can hear everything just enough."

I desisted until the last number, when I got everybody out into the patio and gave specific instructions to the drummers not to do more than tap their tarijas. They looked doubtful, but did as I asked, and the result (41A) I still prefer to the other three pieces which were recorded as the Maalem desired them.

In Amrani, the second selection on this tape, the Maalem decided to take up a kamenja, and it is his playing (as a solo instrument) which is heard here, the other kamenja remaining silent.

41A

Recorded by Paul Bowles

At Marrakech, Morocco.

October 28, 1959.

Music of the Haouz

Maalem Taieb ben Mbarek and Ensemble

Dada Hbibti

In this piece the Maalem abandoned his kamenja and went back to his exhortatory singing and hand-clapping. The mqahs player, who had been clapping his hands instead of playing his shears, returned also to his original occupation.

The Moroccans are very fond of befuddlement music. They will sometimes describe it as "music that makes you play games inside your head." A glass of hot mint tea and a few pipes of kif along with this music (the kif facilitates concentration on the music's patterns) can provide complete pleasure for the space of an hour or so for a Marrakchi.

This is an example, (a bit happier than the reverse example of Khenifra, where country music is being changed to fit the exigencies of the city) of a city adopting the music of the rustics of the surrounding region in order to attract them there. The Djemâa el Fna is frequented as much by peasants as by the urban Marrakech population, and Haouziya music, on the other hand, is as much appreciated by the city-dwellers as it is by the country-people from whom it came.

When I moved the group out into the patio at the beginning of this piece, several of them asked me if I would like them to play the music of the women. I said I would. The style of the piece is in imitation of the sound made by a group of women of Marrakech singing the same kind of music. The point of the parody, however, does not lie in ridicule, but in the desire to prove that they can do it better than the women. (The Maalem retains his own star personality by urging them on in his natural voice.) After the performance one of the musicians asked me: "Were we good women?"

41B

Recorded by Paul Bowles

At Marrakech, Morocco.

October 28, 1959.

Begging Music of the Djemâa el Fna.

In the past there were many more of this kind of performer in the Djemâa el Fna than there are today. The misshapen and incomplete have largely disappeared from the square, and the beggars are fewer. Occasionally one finds a man such as the one playing the aouada here, who does not actually beg with his voice, but pronounces the words of the formula, as it were, on his instrument. In this way he is able to think of himself as a musician rather than as a beggar, although no one ever stops to listen to his repetitive little plaint. He had only one arm; the other had been removed at the shoulder.

42A

Recorded by Paul Bowles

At Marrakech, Morocco.

October 31, 1959.

Vocal Music of the Guennaoua

Si Mohammed bel Hassan Soudani

- 1 Fulani Iresa
- 2 Mamadou Soudani
- 3 Bokamli Ana (gogo solo)
- 4 Yobati Moulay Idriss
- 5 Chabacro
- 6 Zongara Zongara
- 7 Toura Aamala

Having listened closely to the three selections I had got from this singer; I decided to find him again and have him give me some more of his repertory. This second session was well worth-while, since I managed to seat him so as to get more voice. At least, that was the case until I inadvertently complimented him on his gogo technique. This was a bad idea, since he considered himself an instrumentalist and not a singer anyway. As soon as I had passed this bit of ill-considered praise, he began to withhold the volume of his voice so that his accompaniment would be more audible. During playbacks he proudly drew my attention to passages where under a vocal line which was too weak in volume the deftness of his finger-work could be heard.

The most completely Sudanese piece in the group (Chabacro) is also the most pleasing to me personally, because of the free treatment of the vocal line.

42B

Recorded by Paul Bowles

At Marrakech, Morocco.

November 1, 1959.

Embarek ben Mohammed, self-accompanied on guinbri.

1. Qsida dial Metmora
2. Qsida dial Oualidine
3. Examples of solo guinbri
4. Dance for Guinbri Solo
5. Aaita Marrakchiya
6. Mellaliya

These qsidas are based on secular subject matter; the music is less formal and hieratic than in the two recorded by Embarek ben Mohammed on Reel no. 33B. The examples of solo guinbri are quite worthless; however, I left them rather than erasing them. He was warming up for his Dance for Guinbri Solo (No. 4).

The Aaita Marrakchiya always has two separate misanes; the transition is abrupt and without warning. The careful listener to no. 6, (Mellaliya) will hear that the melody is identical to that of ~~Box el Atlas~~ ^{El Aarabiya,} (no. 1 of Reel 17B).

43A

Recorded by Paul Bowles

At Marrakech, Morocco.

November 1, 1959.

Music of the Haouz

Maalem Taieb ben Mbarek and Cheikhats

A day or so after making the first recordings of Haouziya music with the Maalem Taieb ben Mbarek, I met him in the Djemâa el Fna, and he suggested making some tapes of Haouziya music using cheikhats. (Cheikhats are professional female entertainers; their status is something akin to that of the erstwhile geishas in Japan. They sing, dance, play, converse, serve tea, and in general act the part of hostesses whose sole concern is that of entertaining the male client. Since the abolition of brothels in Morocco, their civil status has become equivocal and their prices have gone considerably higher, since now they are the only prostitutes allowed to entertain in their own establishments in the former tradition, all the rest having been forced into the streets to earn their living. The Maalem Taieb was fearful of police interference, but since I had originally had him convoked by a mokhazni sent by the Khalifa of the Pacha, he finally agreed to bring three women to the U.S.I.S. in Marrakech, where I had made his earlier recordings, without my having to go through the official formalities again. The women were immobile throughout the session, standing in a corner of the patio tapping their tarijas while they sang.) The Maalem sat at some distance playing his violin, while the man who had been described by him as having the best male voice, (because it was the voice most like a woman's) stood with the women and led them with his own high-pitched singing.

Two of the women played tarijas; one had a set of three tiny brassfinger-cymbals; the male singer played tarija; the Maalem played kamenja.

43B

Recorded by Paul Bowles

At Marrakech, Morocco.

November 1, 1959.

Music of the Haouz

Maalem Taieb ben Mohammed and Cheikhats

Ben Kabbour Aqaidi

Haouziya music is a genre which is at its most successful when the performers manage to arrive simultaneously at a state of exaltation. If this fails to happen, the music is not very moving. If it does happen, the listener as well as the musicians can be transported to a quasi-mystical state.

44A

Recorded by Paul Bowles

At Marrakech, Morocco.

November 1, 1959.

Music of the Haouz

Maalem Taieb ben Mbarek and Cheikhats

Soula al Couida

The querulous (and sometimes even despairing) sound of Haouziya music is belied by the ecstatic expressions on the faces of those singing and playing it; there is an enormous disparity between the way they sound and the way they look.

These singers were perfectly obedient about standing where I asked them to. After each piece, however, they insisted on returning to the positions they had been assigned by the Maalem, so that there was a continuous coming and going after and before each number.

Maalem Taieb ben Mbarek was the most exacting of all the musicians I had to deal with when it came to play-backs. Generally the musicians were to all appearances content to hear perhaps half of each number; Maalem Taieb insisted on hearing everything from the beginning to the end. If I skipped even the first note or drumbeat he complained. Sometimes he wanted to hear certain sections twice. Sessions with him took a good deal of time. Fortunately the U.S.I.S. in Marrakech, where they took place at night after closing hour, assigned people to stay on until whatever hour we happened to finish.

44B

Recorded by Paul Bowles

At Marrakech, Morocco.

November 1, 1959

Music of the Haouz

Maalem Taieb ben Mbarek and Cheikhats

Hadouk Khail Hadou Alamma

This piece, while resembling completely the other examples of Haouziya music, seems to me to be the most successful recording of the set, partly because of the acoustics, but principally because the performers seemed finally to reach some unnamable state which the music strives to induce in the group-psyche of those performing it.

59A

Recorded by Paul Bowles

At Marrakech, Morocco

December 18, 1959.

Music of ~~the~~ Souassa.

Rais el Hussein and his Ensemble

1. Rhna dial Tiznit

2. Aoulouz (Taroudant)

The music of the Souassa, usually, although incompletely, labelled "Chleuh" (Chleuh meaning any Berber whose language is Tachelhit) is not a tribal manifestation, but a regional one, like the music of the Djebala. The Souss (inhabitant: Soussi; plural: Souassa) is the region of southwestern Morocco which stretches roughly from the Atlantic Ocean to the upper Drâa Valley, and from the Grand Atlas to the Anti-Atlas. The larger troupes of Soussi musicians are often ambulatory, and dancers generally accompany them, assisted by the players themselves, who are adept at performing the dance steps while they *play* on guinbri or rebab.

The combination of this ensemble is as follows: three guinbris, one rebab, one bendir and one naqous. The Aoulouz from Taroudant is very clearly a dance, with its series of false endings, but each piece has the same form: a vocal prelude which gives way to a dance of increasing tempo in which the instruments gradually replace the voices.

59B

Recorded by Paul Bowles

At Marrakech, Morocco.

December 18, 1959.

Music of the Souassa

Rais el Hussein and His Ensemble

1. Rhna dial Imi n'Tanout
2. Rhna Ouarzazat

The members of this ensemble are from different parts of the Souss; they met one another and formed the group in Marrakech, where they are a daily feature of the Djemâa el Fna. Of the numbers they recorded for me, only one has a title (a generic one): the Aoulouz from Taroudant on 59A; the others bear merely the names of the towns of their origin. The words are in Tachelhit, the Berber dialect of the South of Morocco, and the music is Berber music, but one whose scalar material at some point in the past has been altered, (as it has in the greater part of the music of southern Morocco,) to bring it nearer to the music of the large West African element in the population of that part of the country, rather than (as in the case of the music of the Djebala) being modified to suit the exigencies of the Arab conquerors of the north.

The best example of this music seems to me to be number 1 on this tape. The recordings were made in the patio of the Maison d'Amérique, the local USIS headquarters. There was a good deal of reverberation, and on the headphones I found the general sonority poor. The harshness of the rebab and the shrillness of the naqous are always hard to record. The first three of the five recorded pieces were done with the microphone at a distance of six feet or so from the principal performer; the fourth piece with the microphone pulled back another ten feet. The last piece, on reel 60A, I recorded from inside a room giving onto the patio. Unfortunately these changes did not *produce* the results I had expected; that is to say, they did on the headphones, but not on the playback. When I listened afterwards, I found that the same rule still held: on the headphones the last two sounded better, while on the loudspeaker the first three were preferable.

60A

Recorded by Paul Bowles

At Marrakech, Morocco.

December 18, 1959.

Music of the Souassa

Rais el Hussein and His Ensemble

Rhna dial Tamanar

The stylization of Soussi minstrels is so great that similarities between the music they make and the original matériel upon which it is allegedly based, are obscured; it has become a genre all by itself. Thus, although this tape is supposed to be a song belonging to the Haha Tribe near Tamanar, it is extremely difficult to hear any particular likeness in it to Haha music. If there is any strictly local style whose character has been retained in these large groups of wandering Souassa, it is that of the region of Tiznit. (Compare tapes numbers 8A and 8B, recorded in Tiznit.)

H6848

IIB Recorded in Marrakech, Morocco, June 1961.

The first four recordings were made one night in June 1961 on the roof of my house in the Medina of Marrakech, between 1:45 and 4:30 A.M., while the muezzins were calling. In number 1, the dominant voice is that of the muezzin in the Koutoubia Mosque. In number 2, one can also hear the muezzin of the Mouassine and the Ben Youssef Mosques. In number 3, the city's full chorus is performing. Each city has its own particular sonorities and, one might say, harmonies. The harmony may be totally unconscious, or only incidental, but it is certainly present. Recorded by Christopher Wanklyn.

IIB Recorded in Tangier, Morocco. February 23, 1961.

During the month of Ramadan it is the custom to play rhaitas at night from the tops of the minarets at the hours when the muezzins call. The musicians generally play a few phrases facing in one direction, then they turn in a ninety degree angle and continue, in such a way that they are constantly rotating. Since all eating must be done during the night hours, it is important that people who want to sleep a part of the night be awakened in time to prepare the final meal. To this end, each haouma, or quarter, employs several men who walk quickly through the alleys beating drums (tbola). Other official rousers play the nfaa, a brass horn approximately eight feet long. Few of these are now played in Tangier, although their use is still a part of the Ramadan tradition in Fez. At a certain point in the course of the number 7 sequence, the repeated blast of a nfaa can be heard faintly behind the rhaitas and drums. The last three sequences were taped from my bedroom window. The sound of frogs croaking nearby sometimes almost covers the music of the reeds.

Recorded by Paul Bowles