

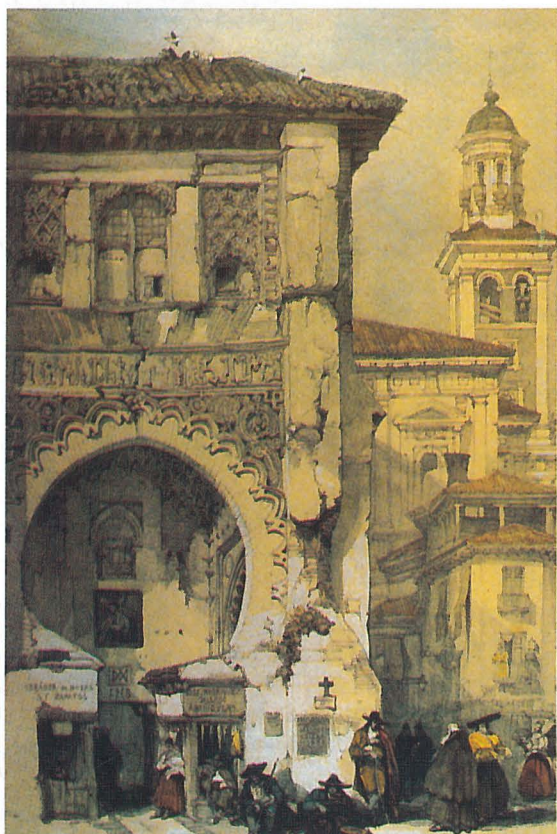
the western soundtracks do a lot for the showbiz atmosphere – even if the sunset that I drove, rather than rode, off into was somewhat watery.

**And from the O.K. Corral to the Classic Corral. . . .**

A couple of days later, the november noon-day sun was graciously warming the building crew at work on the renovations of the Corral del Carbon in Granada. Built at the beginning of the 14th century as an inn for merchant moors, and a storehouse for their merchandise, the Alhondiga Gioga was the

most important hostelry in Muslem Granada. It acquired its present name of 'Charcoal Yard' when it became the centre of the charcoal trade from 1531 (although some guide-books refer to it as a coal yard).

In the 16th century, with the restoration of



Entrance to Corral del Carbon (19th Century Engraving)



Entrance to Corral del Carbon Today



Restoration of the 14th century Corral del Carbon which was used as a 16th century Playhouse.

christianity, it was used as a playhouse before becoming domestic accommodation. The balconied courtyard is in the style of a Spanish Theatre of the classical era, the remaining example being the one in Almagro which I have been trying to route myself through for some years. Almagro is, if I correctly read the drawings and photographs, rather more rectangular than this square in Granada. However it is very easy to imagine a stage erected in the Corral del Carbon and an audience sitting in the patio and crowding its overhanging balconies.

The theatre in the Alhambra Gardens is by far the most modern building there. But despite its extreme youth (barely quarter of a century) its restraint allows it to survive juxtaposition within the surrounding mediaeval magic of Arabia. Inside the palaces, it is not difficult to imagine the balletic performances given by the ladies of the household as an entertainment and probably an audition.