

Maurice Ravel (1875 -1937)

Ravel was born in the Basque region of France and much of his work shows a Spanish influence (this, together with his interest in jazz has produced some exceptional guitar transcriptions). He was a pupil of Faure and at first fell, like many contemporary composers, under Debussy's spell. However, his ascetic and intellectual bent produced from the start a refinement of composition and orchestration, and development of melody, all his own. Later music shows a fondness for the rhythmic features of jazz, and thoughtful incorporation of the innovations of modern music – strong dissonance, atonality etc.

Piece en Forme de Habenera is from the 'Rapsodie espagnole', written for orchestra in 1907. Habenera is a Cuban dance that came to Spain in the mid-19th century and named after Havana (Habana).