

Famous Cuban entertainers: José White



José White, born on the 17th. of January 1836, in Matanzas. was a Cuban violinist and composer. His father Don Carlos White was Spanish and his mother was Afro-Cuban.

After receiving his early musical training from his father, who was an amateur violinist, José White gave his first concert in Matanzas on 21 March 1854 when he was 18. He was accompanied by the visiting American pianist-composer Louis Moreau Gottschalk, who encouraged him to pursue further violin studies in Paris and raised money for him to travel there.

José White studied at the Paris Conservatory from 1855 to 1871 and was highly praised by Rossini. From 1877 to 1889 he was director of the Imperial Conservatory in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, where he served as court musician for the Emperor Pedro II.

Afterwards he returned to Paris to spend the rest of his days. The famous 1737 "Swansong" Stradivari was his instrument. His most famous work is La Bella Cubana, a habanera. White also wrote a violin

concerto, recorded several decades ago on the Columbia label. José White died on 15 March 1918, Paris, France.

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