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CD Review: Raydience

Ray Padilla.

The Good: San Francisco-based Padilla's debut recording, under the moniker Raydience, is a mix of world jazz, R&B, African rhythms and new wave instrumentals. The instrumentation and vocals are fairly top notch, where Padilla, a multi-instrumentalist, composer and vocalist, gathers current and former members of Tower of Power and Garaj Mahal, along with a slew of seasoned jazz session musicians. The varied tracks include "Zambula" (a tropical jazz dance track), "Arcenio's Garden" (a mellow acoustic mood setter), and "Setting Birds

The Deal: A world jazz debut from longtime musician/vocalist Ronnie

Free" (R&B vocals, jazzy, gospel-like), along with "My Brother My Brother," "Angelica," "You Are My Rainbow," "Tara Nova," "Bahian Smiles," "Dancing In The Rain" and the strongest track "Shakti Ma." The spirituality and earthiness of Padilla's Native American roots permeate most compositions.

The Bad: There are many sinewy, moody touches, but some of the tunes get dull after a couple listens.

The Verdict: A recording exploring Native American spirituality, jazz and world rhythms that works well most of the time.

Tags: Raydience, CD Review

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