



## Madagascar's Razia Said Issues a Soulful and Poignant Musical Call for an End to Environmental and Cultural Destruction in her Native Land

Cumbancha Discovery to release the magnificent album *Zebu Nation* in early 2010

**US/Canada Release Date: February 23, 2010**

**Europe and ROW Release Date: February 22, 2010**

**For more information, review copies, song lyrics & descriptions, interviews, photographs, tour dates and other support materials, etc. please contact:**

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Press Kit: <http://www.cumbancha.com/razia/press>

**December 9, 2009** – Seeking to raise awareness of the critical impact of slash and burn agriculture and climate change in her native **Madagascar**, singer **Razia Said** has created a stunning and moving album of original songs entitled *Zebu Nation*. The album celebrates the wealth of Malagasy musical culture and will be released in the US & Canada by **Cumbancha Discovery** on **February 23, 2010**.

*Zebu Nation* is the outcome of a personal journey that began in February 2007 when Razia returned to Madagascar to reconnect with the land she left as an eleven year-old child. For six weeks she traveled around the country in a van with a group of musicians and a film and audio recording crew. Along the way, she visited inspiring local musicians and saw firsthand the damage done to her homeland's forests and landscapes. The results of her journey are reflected in the stunning collection of songs featured on *Zebu Nation*, and in an interactive multimedia website ([www.raziasaid.com](http://www.raziasaid.com)) that includes songs, pictures and videos from her travels.

Featuring Razia's smooth and soulful voice, *Zebu Nation* weaves Malagasy music styles such as *tsapiky* and *salegy* with contemporary arrangements to create an uplifting and accessible sound rooted in the Indian Ocean island's strong musical traditions. *Zebu Nation* features some of Madagascar's most celebrated instrumentalists including the guitar and *marovany* (a box lyre) player **Dozy Njava** and the world-renowned accordionist **Regis Gizavo**. "Their presence in these songs really gives this album that special Malagasy feel," notes Razia.

Razia began singing for her family in Madagascar at the age of three. At age eleven, Razia went to live with her mother in Gabon, West Africa, where she joined the local church choir. As a teenager, she was sent to boarding school in France, where she played guitar and began writing songs. Seeking stability, Razia obtained her doctorate in pharmacy in France, and has lived in Italy, Bali and Ibiza. She now lives in Harlem, New York where she performs regularly at several of the city's well-known venues.

Madagascar is home to thousands of plants and fauna unique to the island, which is the world's fourth largest and situated in the Indian Ocean off the southeastern coast of Africa. One third of its native forests and vegetation have disappeared in the last thirty years, and scientists predict that several species of amphibians and reptiles found in Madagascar's mountainous north could become extinct in the next 50-100 years because of global warming.

The loss of forests in Madagascar is what galls Razia the most. "To see my country stripped like this is heartbreaking." Her song "Slash and Burn," is an outcry against the rampant practice of clearing brush which devastates Madagascar's fragile soil. "What I saw shocked and appalled me," Razia says. "I found the decimation of what once made Madagascar unique in the world: its intense, vivid flora and fauna, its forests, its very essence. I saw an entire country being destroyed."

In addition to delivering an urgent message, *Zebu Nation* creates a personal, soulful portrait of Madagascar. Razia says, "The songs of *Zebu Nation* let listeners journey to the magical place I have always known and loved." Songs such as "Yo Yo Yo" and "Mifohaza" speak to the richness of Malagasy sounds and rhythms, while "Omama" sends a message of love and thanks to Razia's grandmother, who still lives on the island.

"As the strife and political chaos of the country are growing daily," says Razia, "some of the Malagasy people are turning to art to inspire unity. We want to share in that movement and tie in with communities and organizations that are working on projects for change in Madagascar."

