



Need Your Light, the fourth full-length from Brooklyn's **Ra Ra Riot**, is the sound of a band being reinvigorated by its own existence. Correspondingly, the album sees the band - **Wes Miles** (vocals), **Mathieu Santos** (bass), **Milo Bonacci** (guitar), **Rebecca Zeller** (violin), and **Kenny Bernard** (drums) - getting back to their house party roots without abandoning the more heady soundscapes they explored with 2013's *Beta Love*. The result is an album that's celebratory without being solipsistic and that sees the group collectively mining its prior experiences in order to craft something that looks toward the future with an optimistic gaze.

Ra Ra Riot had planned for a longer break after *Beta Love*. However, after a few months, they couldn't help themselves from working on new music. "The inspiration came very quickly," Miles says, explaining that he decided to fly out to Los Angeles to work with previous producer **Dennis Herring (Modest Mouse, Elvis Costello)** in order to start fleshing out ideas. Shortly afterward, the group went on a writing trip to Milwaukee, then found themselves crafting *Need Your Light* with a host of previous collaborators, including **Ryan Hadlock** in Seattle (who produced 2008's *The Rhumb Line*) and **Andrew Maury** in Brooklyn (a longtime friend, collaborator and live sound engineer who also co-produced 2010's *The Orchard*).

Also in the mix - as he has been since the band's inception - is **Vampire Weekend's Rostam**. He has a long history of working with Ra Ra Riot (including the **Discovery** project with Miles), yet this marks the first time he's actually taken on the role of producer for the band. Discussing the process behind "Water" and the title track, Rostam states:

"Between 2005-2009, Wes and I wrote an album together in snatched moments in our lives... That record (the Discovery LP) seemed to benefit from us having the freedom to pick it up and put it down. In January of this year, Wes came to stay with me, and we set out to write songs again. We didn't know where it would take us. There was something I'd heard in Wes' singing in the earliest days of seeing Ra Ra Riot live that I felt had never quite been captured on record. There was our shared love of U2's Achtung Baby, something that having listened to the music we've recorded in our lives thus far you might not know about. And also this obsession with writing songs that tell stories. So we spent five days writing just two songs - 'Water' and 'I Need Your Light' - and I think we found that same freedom in making these songs that we had found years ago making the Discovery record, not knowing where it would take us."

Ra Ra Riot's desire to get back in touch with its roots was also encouraged by the decision to do a short tour of warehouses and basements late last year before reentering the studio to remind them of why they began Ra Ra Riot in the first place. "Because we started as a house party band, we never wanted to lose sight of having fun and engaging with the audience through visceral live shows," Santos says. With *Need Your Light*, Ra Ra Riot are incorporating their past into the future.

Whether Miles is singing about something fantastic or mundane, there's an enduring energy to the songs on this album which illustrate that in many ways Ra Ra Riot is still only getting started.