

RADIANT RIFF RAFF

In between the breakout 2012 album *Look Out Mama* and an upcoming release, the New Orleans-based **Hurray for the Riff Raff** took a nice, long pit stop in covers country. *My Dearest Darkest Neighbor* (2013), a beautiful and mellow collection, hosts songs by a motley crew of musicians: Lead Belly, Joni Mitchell, Billie Holiday and George Harrison to name a few.

"These are songs I've gathered over the years. I've taken them with me wherever I go," lead singer Alynda Lee Segarra tells EW via email, between West Coast tour stops in Oakland and Santa Monica. "For a musician who lives most of her life on the road, the songs you know and love are one of your only consistencies. They carry a feeling of home."

Nestled within the covers are two Segarra originals born out of other songs. "Angel Ballad" was inspired by the Gillian Welch tune "Ruination Day, Part 2," both melancholy acoustic studies that rumble on like approaching thunder. "Cuckoo" is based on a traditional folk song. "They're my addition to a long history of folk songs being created out of other folk songs," Segarra says.

Riff Raff's smoky, swampy-sweet brand of Americana is a standout in the perpetual folk circuit that runs through Eugene; Segarra has a haunting voice you won't soon forget, swaying nicely with banjo and guitar (and jumping with the fiddle).

After catching some Riff Raff shows in New York City, ATQ Records — label to Alabama Shakes and Gogol Bordello — came knocking. With that backing, the band recorded a sophomore album in Nashville where they collaborated with Andrija Tokic (the sound guy behind the hit Alabama Shakes debut, *Boys & Girls*). Segarra says the record — due out in February — will have more string sections than *Look Out Mama*, but songwriting is still her darling. "I'm hoping this one shows the work I've been doing as a songwriter," she says.

Hurray for the Riff Raff plays with Spirit Family Reunion and The Deslondes 9:30 pm Saturday, Oct. 12, at Sam Bond's; \$6. — Alex Notman



PHOTO BY SARAH DANZINGER

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