



[April 10, 2023](#) [Indie Music](#)

Scott DL's Enlightenment Saloon – Q&A



It's not often that you find an album these days that is so melodically pleasing that listening to the entire thing front to back is a seamless, almost timeless experience. Welcome, my friends, to the Enlightenment Saloon. More specifically, **Scott DL's Enlightenment Saloon** and his 11-track full-length album by the same name. That's right partners, step right up to the bar and have yourself a tall glass of "jangly," ultra-melodic alternative rock chased with a shot of top-shelf contemporary ear candy. Okay, okay, I'll take a step back for now from the figurative. In its entirety, the album's sound encompasses a wonderful tip of the hat to the vibes of 1990's alternative bands that were heavily influenced by 1960's melodics. Bands like The Beatles (and Oasis by proxy on some tracks), The Rembrandts, Deep Blue Something, and Gin Blossoms are a few that came to mind when listening. Scott DL is an accomplished and experienced artist, who arranged for a collective of other talented artists to be involved and perform on the new album.



Scott DL has been performing around the U.S., releasing CDs, and collaborating with a litany of industry professionals such as Bruce Swedien, Paul Arthurs, Peter Nemesvari, and many more since 1997. Subsequent to a stint in Cheltenham, UK, Scott moved back to the U.S. sometime in 2021 and began work with producer Gerard Estella in Cedar Rapids, IA at the Brucemore Mansion's Artisan Studio on what was to eventually be this recently released album (officially released March 2023).

In momentarily full-circle fashion, Scott DL and the band then performed live at the 26-acre estate at Brucemore, and there's a great

clip on their YouTube channel of them performing the opening hit song off the record, “**New Normal**” here:

[Scott DL’s Enlightenment Saloon – New Normal \(Live\) – YouTube](#)



The band also has had notable performances at the Opus Concert Café in Cedar Rapids, and several more lined up this year, so keep up with their socials to find out where!



Scott DL’s Enlightenment Saloon, live at Opus Concert Café, Cedar Rapids, IA, January 18, 2023

Scott DL's Enlightenment Saloon is now streaming everywhere!

Check this album out on your preferred streaming service here:

Scott DL's Enlightenment Saloon

Track Listing:

1. "New Normal" – this Beatles-like, super melodic hit song from the album has been written about in many reviews and is a great introductory track for the band.
2. "Margo Bought a Bridge" – this song reminds me of a "sitting-at-the-piano" McCartney era tune. Scott DL pens a lot of visually stimulating lyrics in this piece.
3. "Industry of Leisure" – The lyrics "my industry of leisure (is) all your guilty pleasures" are possibly my favorite lyrics on the album. Clever quips in this one.
4. "Across the Sea" – Begins with a folksy fingerpicking minor progression in the opening verse. This is what I'd call "the ballad" of the album. Sings to your heart like a Jim Croce song.
5. "Ashes of a Life" – Starker in nature, this song prefaces lyrically: "Gray is the color matching my mood tonight." A very melodic tune with deep lyrics. It has a neat little "Misirlou" style guitar tone for leads.
6. "Heat Island" – By the time you get to this song on the album, you don't see the curve ball coming that is Aurélie Berta singing lead vocals. She does an amazing job, shifting gears on the album into a more Norah Jones vibe.
7. "Another Roller Coaster" – Features a cool electric organ and a super catchy walking bassline catching the root notes at perfect spots. A Beatles vibe returns to the album, particularly in how this metaphorical line is performed: "Hold on tight cause we're just about to ride another roller coaster, left or right, does it really matter, as long as it will bring us closer."
8. "Forbidden Fruit" – A straight forward, feel good rock and roll song. I

hear more of a Stones and Kinks vibe on this track. My favorite part of the song happens at the bridge, where the song breaks down into a buildup: “Everything was copacetic, with my new aesthetic, but they’ve thrown up a dragnet, now I’m running down the gauntlet” before reprising to the upbeat chorus resolving with “Give me liberty or make a martyr of me.” I might go out on a limb here and say this perhaps is my favorite track on the album.

9. “Mormon Cowboy” – This song gives me Tom Petty vibes but has all the storytelling aesthetic of a Dylan song. The story of how “Abraham met Sarah” is a stripped-down acoustic song, with folk sensibilities. In line with many clever lyrics on the record, “He was a peace-loving man, in all the wrong ways” is one that stuck out to me on this track.

10. “Universal Travelers” – A “dreamy” song of sorts. Delivered in a somber, spacey, and very melodic way. The influences conveyed remind me in a way of another independent artist I really like right now, Bottlecap Mountain.

11. “Take Me to Hong Kong” – This song reminds me the most of that 90s era alternative rock I mentioned earlier. The lyric “Home of Mr. Wright and Suzie Wong” makes me chuckle, as I remember once upon a time commuting daily past a potato factory, named “Wong Potatoes,” and I’d refer to it as the “Wong side of the road.” It gets boring on long commutes in rural Oregon. Don’t judge.

Scott DL was accompanied in the studio by Gerard Estella (keyboards, guitar), Jim Coates (guitar, mandolin), Lincoln Ginsberg (bass, cuatro), Dave Nanke (drums, percussion), and Aurélie Berta (vocals).

[Purchase the album on CD](#)

[Lyrics and credits](#)



I had the awesome opportunity to chat with Scott about the project for a brief Q&A!

AMS Radio: Scott, THANK YOU for being so gracious enough to chat with me about **Scott DL's Enlightenment Saloon** today. I typically kick these Q&A's off with my "big 3" questions that I ask everybody, because I find them to be questions everyone should/would want to know about every artist. That being the case, first question: What inspires you to create music? Who would you say are your biggest influences?

Scott DL: First of all, thank you, Ben, for taking an interest in my music. I really appreciate the fact that in a time when music is often free, you bought the album. It's an honor whenever someone says they like my music enough to purchase it.

My older cousin Eric, who was my first musical hero, turned me onto the Beatles when I was six years old! We spent time "playing" tennis rackets to Beatles albums growing up. I was John and he was Paul, with our sisters as the audience. We went on to become professional musicians.

As a result of listening to the Beatles, I've always gravitated toward close two-part vocal harmonies and ear-catching melodic landscapes. Many bands both here and in the U.K. have served as inspiration along the way.

My favorite part about being a musician is writing new material. Nothing puts a spring in your step like having a new song to share with the world! I enjoy taking personal thoughts and experiences and finding ways to make them universal.

AMS Radio: Tell me a little bit about your creative/writing process. How does the music make it from concept to final product?

Scott DL: The process varies from song to song, but I often get ideas from chord changes that

suggest melodies and lyrics to reinforce the mood the chords create. When I write with Eric Pals, he usually hands me a completed lyric and I find ways to bring it to life as a song. I sing melodies and then find chords to go with them. I don't know what kind of song will result from it, but it suggests avenues to explore. Once I have a skeleton of an idea, I present it to Eric and we see if we agree on the direction. We've written together for years so it's a non-judgmental partnership. When I write on my own, songs can happen quickly or get refined over a period of time.

AMS Radio: Tell me about the music scene where you are from. What's popular, what do you like or dislike about it, and what interesting things are happening?

Scott DL: Having recently returned to the place I grew up, I'm still finding my way around the music scene. Most of the local clubs like familiar music, but there are original venues in the area and some festivals as well. I'm surprised at the number of original bands in all genres of music in the Midwest, but especially in regards to Iowa.

AMS Radio: Tell me a little about your experience working with Bruce Swedien. That's a pretty incredible experience I would imagine. He has been involved with many major projects in the past from what I understand, and I believe he was the engineer on Michael Jackson's *Thriller*, wasn't he?

Scott DL: Before I moved to Ocala, Florida, where

I lived for 10 years, I knew Bruce lived in the city as well. I remember thinking it would be great to meet him. Then I was talking to a dentist/musician friend of mine, and we were discussing people we had met and he said "Bruce is a patient of mine!" So a meeting was arranged at Bruce's studio and I played him some songs I had written. I had a great time spending a few hours with him.

Bruce called a couple days later and asked if I could write a song about Michael Jackson for him! I said yes (of course) and took a couple of weeks to come up with something. I wrote it from Bruce's perspective as he has spent 25 years working with Michael before he passed. I took it back to Bruce and it brought tears to his eyes. He said "Get my wife, I want her to hear it." I played it for Bea and she cried, too. Bruce said "I'm not sure what to do with this, but we must record it." He ended up recording and mixing three of my songs for a CD project. Bruce became a dear friend and I would spend hours at his studio listening to tracks he had recorded, hearing wonderful stories of his time in music. Time stopped when I was with him. I loved it. Both he and Bea were very kind to me. Unfortunately, Bruce passed away a couple years ago, but he left an incredible musical legacy.

AMS Radio: Tell me a little bit about the recording experience at Bruce more. That's quite an impressive mansion with a lot of history that I read about. To play there after cutting an album must have been an exciting and interesting experience, wasn't it?

Scott DL: I have known the producer, Gerard Estella, since 1993, and we have done some work together in the past. It was fun to reconnect and make new music. Gerard runs The Artisan Studio at Bruce more and knows all the best players. Thankfully, he introduced me to the fabulous players on this record. As an outreach to promote the arts within the community, Bruce more provided the means for me to record an 11-song album at The Artisan Studio. We recorded the new album "old school" with everyone in the same room playing together. It brought a freshness to the process that is missing when you track one instrument at a time. We went for "performances" so we would record two or three takes, pick the best one as the bed track, and build from there. Eighty percent of the song would be done within an hour or two. The sessions were low stress and great fun. It certainly helps to work with sympathetic, talented musicians who play for the song rather than for their own glory. It took about eight months from start to finish.

AMS Radio: The artists that you acquired for this latest album, is that also the same lineup in the currently ongoing live act? Would you say this is the permanent lineup for Scott DL's Enlightenment Saloon as a band, or does every release tend to be a new cast of collaborators?

Scott DL: The lineup is myself (guitar and vocals), Jim Coates (guitar), Dave Nanke (drums) Lincoln Ginsberg (bass), Gerard Estella (keys and guitars), and Aurélie Berta (lead vocals on *Heat Island*). Gerard produced, arranged, and engineered the entire record.

We have played a few shows at Brucemore and one at Opus Concert Café in Cedar Rapids, Iowa so far. All of the musicians are in high demand in their own right, but I'm hoping our schedules can align so we can continue to present the album live in various venues. The response so far has been incredible.

AMS Radio: Scott, thank you again for taking the time to chat today with me about the new album, and congrats!

Scott DL: Ben, thanks for being so supportive of my music and I appreciate your taking the time to review the album.

Follow Scott DL's Enlightenment Saloon Online:

[Website](#) // [Facebook](#) // [YouTube](#)