

## DOCTOR LO FABER of God Street Wine

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*Email to request a private SoundCloud link to the new album.*



### **Doctor Lo // *Claiborne Avenue***

Doctor Lo Faber’s music exudes the warmth, grit, and enchantment of New Orleans — a city he’s called home for the past decade. A listen to “Claiborne Avenue,” the title track off his new album, reveals a number of specific NOLA settings: there’s the obvious, the street for which the song is named, as well as the iconic Magazine Street. There’s also a hat tip of sorts to The Neville Brothers, with a reference to the “Pocky Way beat;” and it name-checks Louis Armstrong, Mr. Bienville (Jean-Baptiste Le Moyne de Bienville, the “Father of New Orleans”), and Mr. Claude Tremé (for whom the Tremé neighborhood of NOLA is named).

If it sounds a bit like a history lesson in song, well, it is. And this historical focus is fitting, given that Dr. Faber (or Doctor Lo, as he’s known in the music world) has his Ph. D. in American History, is a former history professor, and published a book about New Orleans in 2013 entitled [Building the Land of Dreams](#). “Some of the songs are united by being my experience of living here in New Orleans for about nine years now,” Lo explains. And while he notes that his music “is not New Orleans-y,” one can’t help but almost instantly feel transported to the Crescent City while listening to it.

Seemingly a product of the pandemic — said track speaks of the “tourists [who] left without a trace” — *Claiborne Avenue* (the song and the album) is both observational and introspective at once. It sees Doctor Lo reflecting on the past through a nostalgic lens with a hint of regret (“I broke the rules and I paid the cost / You know nothing comes

free”), and the refrain “Who knows what you might catch in the air” takes on more meanings the longer you listen.

Doctor Lo doesn’t limit his reflections to NOLA, however. He laments the state of our country in the beautiful, string-laden “Kenosha Baby,” singing “This is America where shit is insane / Where some eyes see murder and think ‘how can I gain’.” The stories of people and places are all set to an Americana-tinged instrumental backdrop, with plenty of acoustic guitar, mandolin, slide, and some awesome B3, Rhodes, and piano. It’s a delightful package that reveals more nuances and a richer, more detailed sense of setting with each listen.

Faber has a rich musical history; prior to adding the “Doctor” title to his moniker, he founded legendary jam band God Street Wine in 1988. GSW landed a record deal with Geffen in 1994, and later with Mercury (the latter which he describes as a “really wonderful sort of success-validating experience”). During that time they toured nearly constantly, pausing only to record. Ultimately, GSW hit a wall of burnout and played their farewell show in December 1999.

Faber went on to form the Lo Faber Band, and compose and record the double-CD concept rock operas *Henry's House* and *Friday Night Freakshow* in 2001 and 2003 respectively. Meanwhile, the age of social media led to GSW fans congregating in a Facebook group that successfully brought the band back for a series of annual reunion shows beginning in 2010.

When the pandemic hit the US in full force back in March 2020, Doctor Lo took to his [YouTube channel](#) to connect. “I’m gonna find another way to connect with people during this time,” he recalls, “I’m gonna make really strange videos with multiple versions of myself in front of a green screen.” While at first he was hesitant to embrace live streaming, by June 2020 he was all in and now continues to broadcast twice a week to his social media pages. “I’ve really enjoyed adapting to this reality,” he says.

Faber played most of the instruments himself for the initial recordings of *Claiborne Avenue*, and afterwards had some other musicians replace the parts he played “but better,” he humbly notes. The album features a long list of standout players with impressive pedigrees, such as Dave Eggar (The Who, Coldplay, Beyonce) on cello and string arrangements; Jason Crosby (Phil Lesh, Jackson Browne, Tedeschi & Trucks) on piano and fiddle; God Street Wine’s Jon Bevo and Aaron Lieberman on keys and lead guitar; well-traveled New Orleans musician/DJ Marc Stone on slide guitar; Bristol, TN virtuoso Blake Collins on mandolin; and Ted Marotta and Tom Pirozzi, who served as the rhythm section for Ominous Seapods in the 90s, holding down the grooves on drums and bass.

All together, the final product is just what Doctor Lo hoped it would be, something that reflects the “lived experience” of New Orleans from the perspective of a songwriter who still considers himself very much an outsider in the city’s vibrant yet notoriously insular music scene. There may be no tourists on Claiborne Avenue, but there’s a heck of a lot of heart and soul.