

# Intersecting Sounds

Up next at ROTA Gallery, a result of collaboration between friends and the happenstance of geography.

By Seth Thomas



Dann Lawrence (courtesy of the artist).

When you walk into the ROTA Gallery on Margaret Street, you're met with a community art scene. It's an inviting space where hardwood floors and white walls are lit from the sunlight pouring in through large windows. Currently, there's video game art on display. Paintings of Mario and Luigi hang above a clay sculpture of a Piranha Plant. This space also serves as one of ROTA's two music venues. The other is downstairs, in the basement where the ceilings are low, the walls are musty, and the floors are concrete. A mural hangs to the side, depicting multi-colored psychedelic animals. When Music Coordinator Catie Wurster was asked during an interview with the *Lake Champlain Weekly* how she determines whether a band plays upstairs or downstairs, she smiled. "It depends how loud it is," she said.

The gallery grew out of house shows and the local basement scene. Because there wasn't an official space for these gatherings, the cops would get involved and end the parties. ROTA grew from the need to create a designated space for art and music and for an alternative scene in Plattsburgh. "We're younger," Wurster emphasized. "We like music that's socially

relevant. That's terrifying to some folks. So, cool, give us a basement to do that in, so we don't bother you anywhere else."

Since its formation in 2011, ROTA has grown into much more than that. The gallery now hosts poetry nights, a writers group, a literary journal that publishes work submitted by members of the community at large, and a space to create art. As a concert venue, ROTA has drawn in punk acts, blues singers, folk singer-songwriters, hip-hop artists, and other musicians from across the United States and countries ranging from Canada to Germany.

Much of ROTA's appeal is found in the way it marries local music with these outside touring groups. "A lot of people involved in ROTA travel and play music themselves," local musician Matthew Hall explained. "So part of it is traveling, playing shows, and spreading the word about it. We go somewhere and play a show. We let them know we can do a trade."

The gallery's next musical performance, coming up on Tuesday, June 17th, is a perfect example of how it all comes

CONTINUED ON PAGE 20

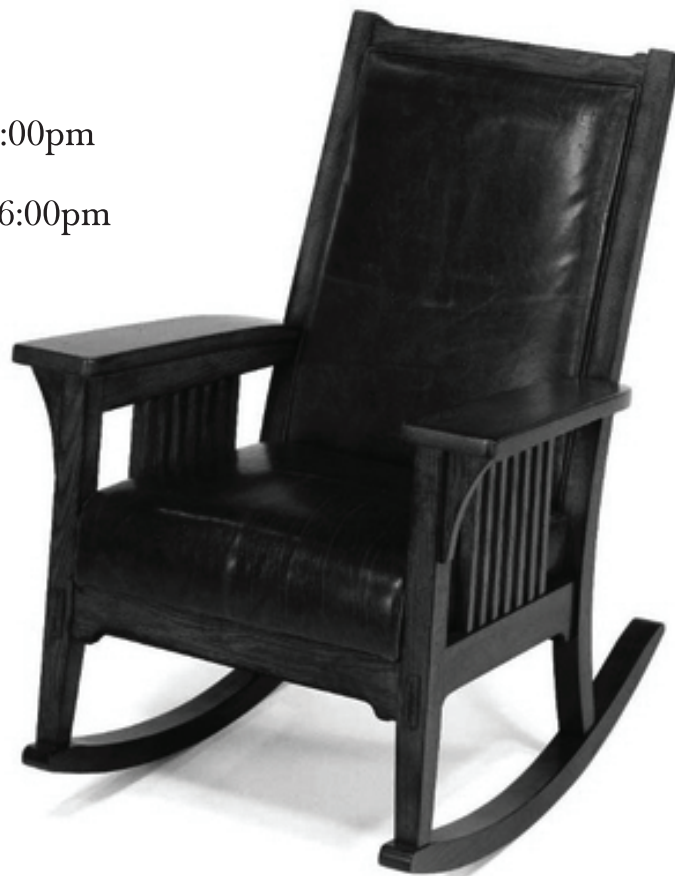
**W** WENDELL'S  
FURNITURE

**20% OFF**  
**STORE WIDE\***

## Hours

Mon - Sat  
9:30am - 9:00pm

Sun  
11:00am - 6:00pm



60 Smithfield Boulevard  
Champlain Centre Mall  
Plattsburgh, NY

(518) 310-1430

**WendellsFurniture.com**

\*Disclaimer: Must present coupon. Can not combine with other offers.

together. Hall played a show last summer in Northampton, Massachusetts where he was on the same bill with Dann Lawrence. Now Lawrence, along with his friend's band, Brainwave Bionics, and Hall are all gathering for one night of music at ROTA. Collectively, they represent an eclectic mix of poetry, folk, hip-hop, and indie rock. If there's one thing that bridges it all, it's a strong D.I.Y. aesthetic — a perfect fit for ROTA.

Hall will be playing under his alternate persona, Antwon Levee, alongside fellow artist Sarah Impalin. The act, which he describes as tongue-in-cheek, performs hip-hop with a comedy bend. In Antwon Levee music videos, you see he and his friends hanging around their apartment complex, rapping for laughs.

**Noise in the Attic**

The music of Dann Lawrence and Brainwave Bionics can be easily accessed on the net, either through Bandcamp or YouTube. The songs are the product of personal recordings. Rather than rent studio space, they've created their own in the attic of Dann's friend, James Coarse, leader of Brainwave Bionics, with equipment the musicians have picked up themselves and freeware like Audacity.

Lawrence's albums are brief affairs, some with a running time of less than ten minutes. There's also a wide variety of musical genres among his albums. They range from noise-rock without lyrics to lyrics set to acoustic guitar. Sometimes the lyrics aren't accompanied by music at all. "The sounds of my different records are completely informed by the situation in which they were created," he said. "I record everything myself wherever I'm living and my budget is always nonexistent."

While living in the Boston suburb of Newton, Lawrence met Coarse and the two formed a band. "We played a lot of shows, made two records, and eventually toured out to California before the project fizzled out," Lawrence said. "We were good, and it was really an exercise in learning how to put on a live show and do a group."

The two have since worked on their own projects, releasing more than a dozen albums between them.



An inside view of ROTA's upstairs music venue, with Catie Wurster (left) and Shannon Stott. (photo by Seth Thomas)

For his part, Coarse considers his newer material something of a reaction to the old band, in which he rapped over punk music. "Brainwave Bionics was grounding," he said. "I wasn't making music to get out my angst. I wanted to make music that made me feel good rather than make me feel aggressive."

It's also a more collective endeavor, stemming from his love of playing with other musicians from Newton. "I hope that comes through in the music: kids hanging out, making music that sounds good, and also having a good time," he added.

His lyrics are observational and introspective, and many of the songs on his album "Lux Life" are punctuated with in-studio banter. It's thoughtful, while still maintaining a sense of fun and community.

Tuesday's show will bring all of these singularly creative artists together under one roof. This combination of musical styles, locals, and out-of-towners is nothing new for ROTA. "Some people are into touring bands," Catie Wurster observed. "Some people are into seeing local music. This place is where we mix it."

*Seth Thomas, a journalism major at SUNY Plattsburgh, is currently participating in an internship program with Studley Printing & Publishing. The concert featuring Antwon Levee, with Sarah Impalin; Dann Lawrence; and Brainwave Bionics is on Tuesday, June 17. Doors open at 7:30 p.m.; the show starts at 8. Admission to all ROTA shows is on a sliding scale from \$3 to \$10. For more information, please visit [www.facebook.com/rotagallery](http://www.facebook.com/rotagallery).*

**Upcoming Events at the ROTA Gallery**

June 12, at 7 p.m.: A concert featuring Lauren Capito, Kaylin Rock, Alison Lutz, and Punkahontas

June 14, at 5 p.m.: Opening of art exhibit by 13-year-old artist Keagan Bond

June 17, at 7:30 p.m.: A concert with Antwon Levee, featuring Sarah Impalin; Dann Lawrence; and Brainwave Bionics

June 21: "Really, Really Free Market"/Summer Solstice celebration

**Ongoing events**

Sundays at noon: Free yoga

Sundays from 1-3 p.m.: Plattsburgh Writer's Group meets

Thursdays from 2:30-4:30 p.m.: NAMI art class

*ROTA is a substance-free, all-ages facility.*

**LCW BUSINESS & SERVICE DIRECTORY** *Your resource guide for some of the best local businesses in the North Country.*

**AMMO & GUNS**

**Old Lantern Gun Shop**  
 "Your Full Service Gun Shop"  
 35 Years of Experience & Quality Customer Service  
 3925 Route 9 • Plattsburgh, NY 12901  
**(518) 563-6039**

**AUTO SALES**

**LEROY'S Auto Sales**  
 Financing available as LOW as 4.24% for 60 months  
 144 Main Street Tupper Lake, NY  
 (518) 359-9031  
[www.leroyautosales.com](http://www.leroyautosales.com)

**AUTO SALES**

**PHIL'S**  
 Chevy AN AMERICAN REVOLUTION  
 529 Route 11 Ellenburg Depot, NY  
 Open Evenings 'til 7pm  
**(518) 594-3968**

**AUTO SALES**

**DODGE CHRYSLER**  
**S & S AUTO SALES**  
 3385 State Route 11 • Malone  
 518-483-2500  
[www.ssautochryslerdodge.com](http://www.ssautochryslerdodge.com)

**AUTO SALES**

**A & L Auto Sales**  
 Home of Buy Here, Pay Here!  
**NO CREDIT CHECKS! LOW DOWN PAYMENT! WALK IN AND DRIVE OUT!!**  
 667 Route 3 • Plattsburgh, NY  
**518-566-2000 / 726-6104**  
 Locally Owned & Operated

**CABINET MAKER**

**STEPHEN'S KITCHEN CABINET SHOP**  
 QUALITY BUILT KITCHEN CABINETS  
 30 YEARS EXPERIENCE  
 FINISH CARPENTRY INSTALLATIONS  
 CUSTOM BUILT COUNTERTOPS  
 KITCHEN CABINET DOOR REPLACEMENT  
 CALL TODAY FOR A **FREE ESTIMATE**  
 STEPHEN KACZMARCZYK  
**518-643-0290**

**CHEESE**

**McCadam Cheese**  
 New York's Finest!  
 Visit our farm and cheese store at  
 39 McCadam Lane Chateaugay, NY  
 Owned by the local dairy farm families of Agri-Mark!

**CHIMNEY SWEEP**

**Stab Hollow CHIMNEY SWEEP**  
 Complete Chimney Care since 1975  
 Cleaning • Repair • Inspection  
 Stainless Steel Lining • Video Camera  
 Brian Dwyer • Box 77 • Crown Point, NY  
**518.597.3640**  
**1.800.682.1643**  
 Member NYS & National Chimney Sweep Guilds

**CREDIT UNION**

**DFCU** Proudly Serving Clinton County New York Since 1958  
 50 State Road • Dannemora  
 344 Tom Miller Road • Plattsburgh  
 122 New York Road • Plattsburgh  
 10 Elm Street • Champlain  
**www.dfcu.net**  
**518-563-5667**

**FARM & GARDEN**

**DRAGOON'S FARM EQUIPMENT, INC.**  
 Kubota Gary Dragoon, Sales Manager  
 Cub Cadet  
 OTROY-BILT  
 White's  
 Husqvarna  
**2507 Route 11 Mooers NY 12958**  
**518-236-7110 or 236-7148**

**FUNERAL HOME**

**BROWN FUNERAL HOME, INC.**  
 Serving the families of the North Country since 1892  
 WARREN BENNETT  
 RYAN BENNETT  
 MICHAEL BENNETT  
 STEPHEN LAPOINTE  
 Plattsburgh • Cadyville • Altona  
**518-561-3980 • 1-800-848-5308**