

An Interview with John Ike Walton

MYTH Magazine met with John Ike Walton, original drummer and founding member of the pioneering (and legendary still to this day) psychedelic garage rock outfit *The 13th Floor Elevators*, along with his wife, Alice, for a cup of coffee on a recent Sunday morning at a bookstore coffee shop in Kerrville. He and Alice have been staying busy remodeling one of their rental units, and were planning on going to Luckenbach later on around lunchtime, providing the much needed rain gives out by then. John, 64 (he shares the same birthday as Jimi Hendrix), has a keen memory of his days with the Elevators, and has brushed shoulders, as well as played, with many influential rock artists of the mid- to late-60's. John left the Elevators in 1967, after two years of non-stop touring mixed with running from the law--Texas wasn't too keen on long-haired musicians back then-- and one ground-breaking album, in favor of cruising the Texas hill country roads on his motorcycle.

MYTH Magazine: John, more than 40 years have passed since the release of the Elevators' first album, *The Psychedelic Sound of the 13th Floor Elevators*, and...

John Ike Walton: Actually, let me correct you there...that was not our first recording. Our first album was the *Live* album. That stuff is the first stuff we put in the can. We went into the studio and they said, 'Okay, we're getting some levels.' Well, we played about ten or twelve songs, and they said, 'We're still getting levels.' But they weren't, they were recording everything that we were doing.

MM: Out takes? Covers?

JW: Cover stuff, everything that we did in Austin at the Jade Room, and they were putting it all in the can, and we didn't know this until the *Live* album came out.

MM: Which was after *Easter Everywhere*

JW: Yeah, after *Easter Everywhere*. And then when that came out, I said that's the first stuff we ever cut. And so, the third album is actually our first album.

MM: And they just threw canned applause in there to make it sound live?

JW: Yeah, that's right.

MM: I am sure, more than zillion interviews have been done with you and/or the other members of the Elevators since you broke up. Why, after forty years, is there still a strong interest in a band that was together for only four years and four "official" albums?

JW: Well, Charly Records over in England has been putting this stuff out for, well...here's the deal. Noble Gunther and the people that formed IA (Houston-based record label International Artists) were a couple of lawyers and they did this for a little while, and then they weren't making any money off of it, and so they stopped doing it after Bubble Puppy had (released) *Hot Smoke and Sassafras*.

MM: Bubble Puppy was a group out of Houston?

JW: Yeah, well the lead guitar player was from Corpus Christi. But at International Artists, we were their first people, and since *You're Gonna Miss Me* had a lot of air play around Texas and up to number thirty one in Billboard, to all the groups around Texas that was the only record company around and thought that was a happening thing that they should get into, you know, to get with these people (IA). Anyway, Bubble Puppy, right after they had their hit, *Hot Smokin Sassafras*, the company folded. They put our master tapes in storage for gosh, a long, long time. Lelan Rogers, Kenny Rogers' brother, bought the tapes (in 1978) and then, he also went to TNT where they had our old albums still there, and he put them together in some boxed set of all four of our albums, and since they had been out of print for a while, he was selling them for two hundred dollars a set. And you see we didn't know any of this was going on...I got wind of that after a while. And then he subleased all of our stuff to Charly Records in England, and they put it out all over Europe. Augie Meyers is a friend of mine, and he came back (from Europe) and said, 'Man, you guys are all over Europe.' He said we were in all of the record stores and we were really a big hit. And so, Charly franchised our music to other record companies all over Europe. And this went on...well, that movie High Fidelity, they franchised *You're Gonna Miss Me* to them. They franchised it to Dell Computers.....

MM: By franchising, do you mean licensing?

JW: Licensing, right. They did that to probably thirty or forty different companies in Europe. I finally received a royalty check from them just in time to pay the IRS some back taxes I owed them just recently, and so that was a good thing. I mean it wasn't as much as they actually owed us, but it really came at the right time.

MM: The scuttlebutt on the Internet is that the masters are no longer around. Is that true?

JW: Well, the masters were sold by Lelan Rogers to Charly Records for \$150,000. He sold them after he had licensed it to them for many, many, many years. And when Roky's attorneys came down on Lelan Rogers, Lelan decided to sell, outright, the masters of all of his stuff to Charly Records for \$150,000, and then he was out of the picture. Then it was all Charly Records. But before that, they (Rogers and Charly) had a partnership deal, and that went on for many years, since 1989. That's the first date I ever saw Charly Records stuff, it was on the *Live* album back in 1989.

MM: How do you feel about the quality of the releases from Charly Records?

JW: Well, the best that I've heard are the LP's they reissued.

MM: On vinyl?

JW: On vinyl. 180-grain vinyl. That's the best sound that I've heard. The CD's are a bit trebly, a little too thin. They were taken off tapes back when CD technology was not up to what it is now. Who ever did it then didn't really have a very good ear. But the vinyl, that's where I can make sense of the music. I still have those at my house...I still have the record player my mother bought me in 1965 to play our first album. I have the album, unopened, one of them, that the record company sent to her.

MM: How ironic, nowadays, that the best sounding Elevators music can be found on vinyl, and not on CD.

JW: Yeah, (the vinyl reissues) are much better.

MM: The same year that *Psychedelic Sound* came out, 1966, the Beatles released *Revolver*, Bob Dylan gave us *Blonde on Blonde*, the Beach Boys put out *Pet Sounds*, and Simon & Garfunkel released *Sounds of Silence*. Now that must have been a pretty magical time to be involved in music, both as a listener and a performer. What is your take on the 1966 music scene, not just nationally, but in Texas, where really, country was still king?

JW: Well, when *You're Gonna Miss Me* hit in California, it was number one in a lot of places. In fact, it was number one in Sacramento, where we played our first California gig. And we were committed to the Avalon Ballroom and we played there quite a bit. The scene there was (long pause)...you see, when we were playing in Texas, there wasn't much rock and roll going on at all. We were one of the few rock bands around. We left shortly after we formed (and after the release of *Psychedelic Sound*) for California...

MM: San Francisco?

JW: Yeah, to play the Avalon Ballroom. That's where we spent 3 or 4 months there, and then we came back to Texas and pretty much disbanded because it was hard to make money as a band in Texas. There were so many bands in Texas that weren't making enough to live on, it was impossible. I mean, I lived with my parents when we came back, there was no way anybody could pay rent with what they made playing in Houston, and it's still pretty much that way. If you're not playing a sit down job, or you're a road band (sic), you won't get enough gigs to survive. Don't quit your day job. No matter, if you get a new CD out, don't quit your day job.

MM: Looking back though, how does it feel to be mentioned in the same breath as the other albums released in '65 like *Blonde on Blonde* and *Revolver*?

JW: Well, it was fun at the time and it was new, but we were dodging the law half the time in Texas because we were the first longhaired people in Texas...

MM: Longhaired musicians?

JW: No, just longhaired people. After the Beatles came out, we were playing in Port Aransas as the Lingsmen. This was before we met Roky...it was Benny Thurman and myself, and Stacy. It was a pretty tense time. There were times it was very, very tense...I mean, we were playing one job in River Oaks in Houston at a private party when our band boy, Joe Hernandez, comes up to me while I'm playing drums and said there were a couple of policeman there at the deal. He said, 'Okay, the cops are in the dressing room and they found the dope and now they're coming to get y'all.' You know, there were a lot of tense moments like that during that time. Actually, it was very hard to relax among that group because we picked up so much heat from the cops. Part of it was hard to enjoy actually because we had no cover, we had no protection from the law. One time down in Kingsville, Benny and Stacy decided to walk downtown while we're there for a college gig and they (the police) picked them up. They just picked them up and took them in because Benny had an earring and Stacy had a goatee and their hair was little bit long and they were walking down the street, so they just picked them up, put them in the squad car and took them down to the police station and started questioning them. Asking them why they were in town, and that they looked freaky. They released them and they walked back to the gig we had at A&I College. So it was pretty hard on us emotionally because of the police.

MM: If the Elevators had been born in California, instead of Texas, do you think things might have been different?

JW: If we had *stayed* in California, yeah, because they didn't care what people did because there were so many people that nobody cared (what you did). You know, down here, the police department was alerted about us--the name of our band, and what we looked like, and what was happening around (the release of) *Blonde On Blonde* and all the other music that was coming out--people were getting upset. It was hard for other people and groups too, which is why a lot of us didn't stick around. Janis Joplin had to move. Janis came to California to play the Avalon right after we left (Texas) and she showed up and put together Big Brother and the Holding Company and they would open up for us. Moby Grape opened up for us, Quick Silver (Messenger Service) too.

MM: Speaking of Janis Joplin, according to what I've read, she played a couple of gigs with the Elevators. Is that true?

JW: No, that's not true, Janis never played with us. One time at the Methodist Student Center (in Austin) she and her guitar, by herself, opened for us. That's the only time that she as a solo artist opened up for us. Travis Rivers took her out there (to California) and they put together Big Brother and the Holding Company and then they would open up for us.

MM: At the Avalon or Fillmore?

JW: First at the Avalon, and then at the Fillmore. Great Society played before us one time, you know, with Grace Slick. Let's see, who else? Oh, there were some other groups that were really good. The Charles Lloyd Quartet, they were a great jazz group. And one night after we were through, The Electric Flag and Buffalo Springfield came in after hours and they played. They were outstanding. Buffalo Springfield was pretty good, but The Electric Flag were astonishing. And they had so many pieces to the band and they played so well together. Steppenwolf was at our motel, when they were John Kay and the Sparrow, and they pulled up to the motel and saw that we had "13th Floor Elevators" in little letters on the side of the station wagon window, and he pulls up and had this CD (sic) which sounded like *Eight Miles High*, but by John Kay and the Sparrow, and we had just finished our album, *Psychedelic Sound*, and he was wearing sun glasses at night and he asks, 'Are you guys a band?' and we say yeah. We had this little record player and he came in and played his record for us, then we played our album for him. (After that) they were always at our performances.

MM: And so, Janis never considered joining the Elevators?

JW: That never came up that I know of. She was hooked up with Travis Rivers. He latched onto Janis Joplin's talent immediately out of Austin. We were in California for a while, and he and her took off for California. But there was never any talk of Janis joining our group, no, because we had our thing and she had her thing.

MM: What was she like?

JW: I don't think I've ever even talked with Janis Joplin. I don't think we even met openly. I mean, we might have shook hands before we went on at the Methodist Student Center, but I didn't know Janis Joplin. Tommy knew Janis Joplin. He had a tape of her that I heard at his house in Austin and she was singing that song, *I'm A Woman*. I was lying there and Tommy played that tape and he said that she was a local singer. I said that (tape) was unbelievable, the power you can hear in her voice, and her guitar was just unbelievable.

MM: Now, it is well known that Tommy Hall was instrumental in putting the 13th Floor Elevators together back in '65...

JW: Well, he brought Roky into the band. We were actually a band before that.

MM: Right, he met you, Benny and Stacy when you all were the rhythm section for the Lingsmen on the gulf coast. How did you meet Tommy?

JW: At a service station in Port Aransas. Stacy went up to him and started talking and Tommy had some weed, so we went down to the beach to smoke some weed. And then, Tommy went back to Austin and he says that there was a singer up there that we should come hear. So we left Port Aransas, went to Austin, and then heard Roky. Tommy brought Roky over to his house and we got together and we jammed. We did some blues tunes and some sixties covers. Then Tommy convinced Roky that he needed to fire his band, they were all his friends, and then come play with us. And he did. He had a gig at the Jade Room with the Spades backing him up, and then Roky replaced the Spades with us and we started playing the Jade Room.

MM: That was in '65?

JW: Yeah, in '65.

MM: What was your initial reaction when you met Roky? And when you heard him sing for the first time?

JW: We were amazed because he could play guitar, lead guitar, rhythm guitar and sing. He was just incredible. Stacy made this comment, he said, 'If we can get that kid, we'll go somewhere. We'll be somebody if we can get that kid to sing for us.'

MM: Tommy didn't actually play an instrument when the band was formed, right? It's said that one day he picked up a jug, put a microphone on it and then blew into it and the rest, they say, is psychedelic music history.

JW: Yeah, and he got the lyrics for the songs from a book called *All and Everything* by G. I. Gurdjieff. That's where that stuff came from. All of that wasn't really coming from Tommy Hall. What he'd do is he'd read...he'd carry that book with him everywhere, and it was a big book...and he'd sit down with a piece of paper and he'd open it up and read a section and he would write basic ideas and thoughts of this philosopher, G. I. Gurdjieff. And Dylan was reading Gurdjieff at the time too. And then Roky would take those lyrics and put his music to it because Tommy had no musical ability at all.

MM: Is it true that you, Stacy and Benny convinced him that he had to play an instrument to be in the band, and so he chose the jug?

JW: No, no...We were jamming and all of a sudden we heard this...(Walton expertly mimics the familiar sound of Hall's jug)...he had picked up one of the microphones lying around and put it up to his mouth and the jug while we were jamming and starting doing this and, uh...

MM: Just blowing into it?

JW: Yeah, just blowing into it. His wife (Clementine) started raving about how great it sounded and so...Tommy did essentially pull us together--he hooked us up with Roky--and all of a sudden,

he (Hall) was a musical part of the band going...(Walton again expertly mimics the jug sound for a few seconds)...that was the jug. That's how the jug came about. There was a lot of contradictory stories as to how that came about like, that we asked him to or that we loved him so much that we wanted him to play an instrument. That's not how it happened.

MM: It's funny how a stereotypically country music instrument like the jug would help start up the psychedelic genre.

JW: Yeah, well there were some bands in Austin...back in that time, there were, you know, a few guys that would play the jug and the wash tub bass and the basic instruments of that type. But they weren't really instruments.

MM: What was it like to play at the Fillmore in San Francisco?

JW: At the time, the Fillmore was a real dump. It was the worst of any place I think we've ever played. Old and dampy (sic), it was upstairs and old--let me tell you this: that gig (the Fillmore) was Bill Graham's first attempt at anything--but I had noticed a poster (on the wall) that the next week after we were playing there, was a *Pink Floyd*. And I thought, how weird the poster's geometric designs were and, why would anybody...who is *Pink Floyd*? Who could that be?

MM: And a lot of people have compared Roky to (original Pink Floyd lead singer) Syd Barrett as far as the similar paths they took and the choices they made. They were both musical geniuses. They both experimented heavily with LSD and then, kind of self-destructed along the way.

JW: Yeah, they did, and Tommy and Stacy...Stacy had an incredible tolerance for drugs. He could punch in completely stoned. But Roky and Tommy were taking acid about three times a day, seven days a week. One night, Roky showed up at the Avalon Ballroom and he was on a bad trip and we had an audience of about three thousand people out there, and he turned around to his amplifier and squatted down and he wouldn't sing. He'd just sit there. So, basically Ronny and I and Stacy just started jamming in E and A--and just, you know, your garage band basic beginning stuff. We'd just play that because our lead singer had freaked. He's down there sitting in front of his amplifier, and he'd sit and mope and get the feedback going and just sit there.

MM: What was Tommy's reaction to that, seeing that he looked at LSD not so much as a recreational drug but as a learning tool to explore or get in touch with your...whatever?

JW: His reaction was a little later after we came back...after that (Roky's Avalon freak out episode) we came back to Texas to record our album (*Easter Everywhere*), and I talked to Lynn Powell. And he said that Tommy came to him one day while Roky was pretty spaced, almost catatonic, and said, 'I don't know what to do with Roky's mind.' And then Tommy took off for California. When Roky couldn't produce any more money, wasn't able to play, there was no more income for Tommy and the record company couldn't make any more records because Roky was just too spaced. Then Tommy went to California.

MM: Is it true that Tommy broke Roky out of a mental hospital?

JW: Now this is what I heard, and I've heard so many contradictory stories, but I heard that Tary Owens and Tommy Hall unbolted the door to his lockup (sic) but I really don't believe that and I'll tell you why. I think the reason they sent him to Rusk (State Hospital) was Dana would go in there (Austin State Hospital) and pick him up in a convertible...

MM: Who's Dana?

JW: His wife. They eventually wound up getting married at Rusk--they got married at a criminally insane mental hospital--but Dana would go in there and get him and take him out of there. She would go in there and pick him up because you could just drive out with somebody, you know, and Roky would be walking the grounds and he'd get in the car and they'd take off. And they did this about three times and his brothers would take him back because they knew that he had criminal charges that had been deferred for mental institution treatment. They brought him back and they did this about three times, and then they (the hospital) sent him off to Rusk because they did not like this happening. They didn't want this trend starting with people coming in and picking up patients and taking them out.

MM: Was he admitted into the hospital by his family, or by the court?

JW: It was a court commitment because they had found him guilty of possession of marijuana and his attorney pleaded him insane. And so that's how he got up there and then his girlfriend kept getting him out and so he wound up at Rusk.

MM: Wasn't he caught with just one joint?

JW: Well, he and this kid were smoking up on top of Mt. Bonnell in Austin and they let the kid off if he would say that his drugs belonged to Roky Erickson--to pin the case on Roky. He had been arrested before that on possession of marijuana and they were trying to make another arrest.

MM: Is it true that after the first bust, your parents came down and gave you a choice to...

JW: My parents came down because they were very concerned--my father saw us get busted on television--and they came down very concerned and they hired the ex-D.A. Les Proctor to handle my case. We didn't even know what the penalties were for marijuana, and then we were caught.

MM: And so, your parents didn't give you an ultimatum to leave the band.

JW: No, not at all. They were part concerned about what was going on...but they were supportive even after the bust. They bought Stacy an amplifier and bought the PA system and a van and everything for us. We just had to get out of Texas and my parents were very supportive of getting us out of Texas.

MM: Did you leave the band because you didn't like the direction the band was going? I heard that you preferred being a session player.

JW: Actually, no. You see, Tommy would come up and say, 'We got a gig in Houston and it pays fifty dollars a man.' And to me, that didn't make financial sense to pack up and drive to Houston and possibly break even. At that time, money meant a little more than it does now. I mean fifty bucks now is a couple of meals out. Back then, fifty dollars was something--you could come home with a twenty and be happy. But Tommy kept this thing going and gets really involved in it and he had Roky helping. But Ronny and I, we really didn't care because there was so much struggle for so little money that we'd...I had a Martin 750 Atlas Straddler and Ronny had just bought a Honda and we'd rather ride our motorcycles up here in the hill country and not bother with driving down to Houston to play a gig.

MM: Stories of non-payment of royalties are rampant in this industry. Why is that, especially in this day of high tech accounting?

JW: Not with a major label that has a good reputation, but if it was somebody that was just beginning...look, here's the thing: the distributors of cd's are constantly swamped by people trying to get national and international distribution. And if you don't have a whole lot of money behind you and a good product, you're just going to get local airplay. And you know, most of these Texas musicians in these mags you read about, they run around and they play a lot of gigs and they sell their cd's off the bandstand. But there weren't no major record companies that I know of in Texas that actually had the power to get the distribution done. Back then there weren't many bands around. Lelan Rogers got in because he had been doing that as a record producer for years and he had some connections with some of the distributors. But your cd's have got to go first to a major distributor in the major cities and put it on the shelves. But they're not going to put anything out that's not getting airplay. You have to have airplay, and this is the hard part. In Texas, it's really tough because of the competition and there's so many bands.

MM: One last question about the Elevators: any regrets?

JW: Hmmm, any regrets? No, it just happened. It's just something that happened back then and (long pause, then silence)...

MM: Do you stay in touch with Benny?

JW: Yeah.

MM: And Stacy's family?

JW: Yeah, I see Mrs. Sutherland occasionally. I saw her a little bit before we were put into the Texas Music Hall of Fame. I saw her about two weeks before that when her husband was still alive. He died the day before we were inducted and so she couldn't make it to the awards ceremony.

MM: And Tommy Hall? I understand he is living in some kind of...

JW: He's living on social security and disability in San Francisco on Van Nuys, I think. I have his address and phone number somewhere, but it's in the tenderloin district in San Francisco and he lives in a room by himself. Paul Drummond, who came over from England to write a book about us, went and visited Tommy and told me of his disability.

MM: Is it true that he refuses to speak about the Elevators today? That he'd rather talk about his project on horizontal thinking, or whatever it is he is calling it nowadays?

JW: No, that's not true, he talks about the Elevators sometimes. I heard about two hours of a six-hour interview with Tommy. And I don't think Paul asked him a whole lot of questions about the Elevators. I think he asked him questions about what he is doing now...I couldn't make a whole lot of sense out of that interview. But I haven't seen Tommy since he left for California. He was in Austin and I was in Kerrville and I just heard that he had gone to California and I haven't talked to him since then.

MM: And Benny?

JW: Now, Benny, I saw him. He came to the awards ceremony and then I saw him one more time. Lynn Howell brought him to the Austin Music Awards and...

MM: Who is Lynn Howell?

JW: Lynn Howell was Roky Erickson's next-door neighbor. He knew all of the Erickson boys and everything. But Benny was very defensive (sic) but Margaret Moser of the (Austin) Chronicle wanted Benny to come to the awards ceremony and so I called Benny's best friend and he put a bug in Benny's ear and then all of a sudden, Benny shows up. I was standing there and someone kicks me in the butt, and it was Benny and he says, 'Oh, excuse me. I thought you were Ray Benson.' (laughs) He was dressed up like a cowboy and he kicked me real hard! I hadn't seen him in years and Lynn brought him to the ceremony.

MM: John, catch us up on what you're doing today.

JW: Well, right now we're getting a rental unit ready to rent, and there's a fellow in Harper who is interested in making the finger dulcimers. He is a NASA aerospace engineer, retired, and he's got a shop out there.

MM: Tell me about the instrument that you make and sell, the finger dulcimer.

JW: Well, it's three octaves, and it's...(excitedly) if you can find me anywhere, I have the DVD's and the cd of the kalimba played by Stan Morris and I have them for sale for five dollars apiece.

MM: What is it called? The kalimba?

JW: It's actually an African kalimba, but I call it the finger dulcimer because people will come up to me when I'm playing it and say, 'I know what that is, it's a hammer dulcimer.' So I finally just gave in and decided to agree. Instead of trying to explain to them that it is an African kalimba, of which they had no concept of, the dulcimer was working for them. So I just joined with them and said, 'Okay, it is a dulcimer.' It's a finger dulcimer, rather than a hammer dulcimer, and so I just decided that it's easier to give in and call it a finger dulcimer. But it is technically a kalimba, which has 37 keys and three octaves, which is enough to play any song that you want to play. Stan will play it for you over there at Melody Corner music store. Just go in there and ask him to and he will.

MM: What motivated you to make them?

JW: A friend of mine, who was our attorney--our defense attorney over in Austin on the weed charge--was making one of these in a very crude form. Mine is a very polished version--I've been working on them for forty years and it's polished now and I have the stamping dies, which make the keys. My mother came up with the money to get the dies made and have them set. They're steel and there's five different dies that cost eleven hundred dollars apiece. I have those dies and that fellow there in Harper, that aerospace engineer, is very interested in making the boxes...in making the whole thing. Because he can run a punch press, and sharpen the dies as a machinist. I saw a picture of him climbing up the shuttlecraft. He worked on the shuttlecraft--the guy's a genius. Plus he's a cabinetmaker--he's got a degree in cabinet making. Hopefully, that will pan out. Hopefully he doesn't have to leave the hill country for lack of income like a lot of people have to do. They come up here thinking they can make a living with the action here. But they can't do it; they gotta have some money if they want to make it here.

MM: Until he gets set up, are you going to continue making them by hand?

JW: No, I've turned that over to him. I gave him two new ones, and I gave him the prototype to take the dimensions off of. I'm not making them right now, I'm doing the electrical wiring and plumbing, and Alice is doing tile setting. We're finishing off a house to have another rental unit. And then, when we get that rented out, we're going to move to the place where we lived and finish that out. Her brothers are carpenters and they built that house. We have two rental units, this will be the third rental unit that we'll have up there and then, after we finish the big place, which has two bedrooms upstairs--a two bedroom, two bath--and when we have that rented out, then we'll go on the road with the kalimba and the Zulu drums to sell them.

MM: Will you be selling them and playing them at festivals and such?

JW: Festivals and everywhere there's little booths where you can do something...because Alice is an excellent drum player and her brother, Bobby Delery...that's the story you should get to. He's an incredible songwriter and mentor and great singer. He's real class.

MM: Perhaps another time and interview. One more last question, John: Having seen it all, the good and the bad and the highs and the lows, what would be your advice to today's aspiring musician?

JW: (long pause)...Just do whatever you want to do as a musician. My mother told me this, she said, 'John, music is okay as a sideline, but you need to learn how to do something,' because all I was doing was working on my hot rod...a '34 Ford with a Pontiac engine it and I was always out there tuning it up...I built it...it took me six years to build it when I was a teenager. I was obsessed with that kind of stuff, and playing drums was a lot of fun. So, I don't really have much direction to give to anyone that would be of any value than what they're doing musically right here or anywhere--there's just so many musicians--and I don't know. Shelly King is a friend of ours, and she sells her cd's off the bandstand, and I learned that musicians are going to sell more cd's off the bandstand because it's so difficult to get enough airplay. Like, you go to Waterloo Records (in Austin)...there's (sic) ten million records at Waterloo Records...that's the only place that has our cd's. And our vinyls, I just send everybody to Austin to get our stuff. (It's hard to find) because Charly Records is distributing it all. Kids today are more advanced today in their own marketing techniques--I can't even turn on a computer. (Alice mentions the limitless possibilities the Internet provides today to anyone who wants to market their music to anyone in the world, and thereby bypassing scrupulous record labels) Look what happened to Creedence (Clearwater Revival). Something like a hundred million cd's (sold) and not getting any money, getting totally ripped off. Because here's why: when you bring in a whole lot of money in one year, you have to pay taxes on that. Say, you're a producer and you go out and get yourself a group and they have a hit record and it brings in a whole lot of money. Well, you have to pay taxes on that, or you have to just disappear. And that's what happened to so many one-hit wonders. They weren't just one-hit wonders. The managers that were supposed to pay them all that money on that record ripped them off. They probably got a big puddle of cash and living in the Caribbean...on a yacht and they're hanging out down there. That's the way I see it.

MM: Thanks John for clearing up some of the myths and stories surrounding the Elevators, and for catching us up with what you're doing nowadays. Good luck with the remodeling and with the kalimba.

JW: That was fun.