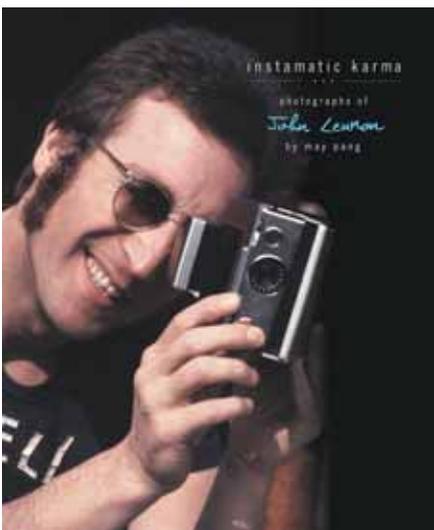


Instamatic Karma

By Helen Marketti

"People will know the truth," John said to May. The time has now come for that truth to be told. If a picture is worth a thousand words then each of the photographs included in Instamatic Karma are worth a thousand more.

May Pang was the special person in John Lennon's life from 1973-1975. May had



"Instamatic Karma" book cover (John Lennon)

worked in the offices of ABCO (Apple Corp) in New York City beginning in the late sixties. Projects, assignments and circumstances guided her in various directions until she found herself completely working as John Lennon and Yoko Ono's personal assistant. May often traveled to England to assist them with projects such as being part of the film, Imagine.

It was also a time that tension and strain were coming between John and Yoko. During their separation it was Yoko who suggested and even encouraged May to be in John's life. As ridiculous as it may have sounded and as much as May resisted, the relationship between she and John eventually evolved into a loving and trusting union where life would never be the same for either one of them again.

The proof is in the photos and in the thoughts that were shared with John's trusted confidants. On one occasion, George Harrison had told May, "I'm glad you're with him." On another occasion John and May were spending time with Keith Moon (The Who) and Keith said to May privately, "I am so glad you're with him. This is the John that I remember." Still there were more treasured stones to overturn as author Larry Kane (Ticket to Ride) and (Lennon Revealed) had interviewed John Lennon in 1975 where John refers to his time with May as "the happiest times of my life."

"John was hanging out with his son (Julian) and hanging out with his friends. He had his first number one album (Walls & Bridges) and a number one single (Whatever Gets You Through The Night). I was with him during all of this," May Pang recalls as we

settle into our conversation over the telephone. "John's inspiration for "Whatever Gets You Through The Night" came from watching Reverend Ike on television. He also wrote a song for me, "Surprise, Surprise (Sweet Bird of Paradox)"... so I have something I can think about...something I can keep," she said quietly.

1973-1975 is a time frame referenced in post-Beatle history books as John Lennon's lost weekend. Naming it the "lost weekend" was a label that John gave that time because he knew how the media operated and he felt he needed to call it something before they did. However, "being lost" was the furthest thing from the truth.

"It's very important to do this," May said firmly in regards to her book. "I wanted to dispel the myth of what has been said about John during that time."

In addition to working in the record company industry May also developed a knack for taking photographs. "John encouraged me to take more pictures," May recalls. "He liked the way I took pictures. The pictures tell the story of what was going on. You can see the vulnerability in him in the photos."

The photos that capture moments of a very special time were collectively stored away in a shoebox underneath the bed and would only be brought out now and then to illustrate a story that would come up in conversation about John. May had been encouraged before by close friends to publish the photos and let the public see how it really was. She always felt she would do so when the time was right and now over thirty years later the timing is perfect as is the title of book.

"My friend Mario and I were thinking of what to call the book when I finally decided to do this," May said. "Mario had been friends with John and I so he was also aware that a play on words would be perfect. I wanted the title to be as clever as John was."

The moments caught on film are of someone enjoying their life with family and friends. May was able to capture images of John where he is in the moment of "just being."

During this time John reconnected with his oldest son, Julian, from his first marriage to Cynthia. At that time John had not seen Julian in four years. "He needed to see his son. Cynthia and I shared a bond which in part was to get John and Julian together," May recalls. "I had John call Julian every week. It was important for them to spend time together."

Fans may also be surprised that some of the treasured photos are of John spending time with Ringo, George and Paul. "He was very happy to reconnect with them," May remembers. "Things were not business related. They shared stories and talked about what projects they were working on."



May, Julian Lennon (John's oldest son with first wife, Cynthia) and John (1974)

There was also a gentle stir about John and Paul writing together again. May remembers John approaching her and asking what she thought about that possibility. She happily recalls saying to John, "The two of you are really good as solo artists but together you two are magical!"

The time that John Lennon and May Pang were together were perhaps some of the most creative, productive and loving times of his life. Her life stays full and rich in friendships, her children and love for what she does. Her heart felt thoughts on John

are clear. "We all have our emotions...no matter how famous you are. These photos are a gift. You are seeing John through my eyes...the way I knew him...this is the John that I remember. I wanted to put things together for him. This was for John as well as for myself. Life is short and I wish he was still here."

May has delivered on allowing the public to see what was once a very private and personal time. "People will know the truth," John said to May...and now we do.

In addition to Instamatic Karma, May also will have a gallery showing of her photography work on June 11 in New York City where nine of her prints will be for sale. She also designs and sells Feng Shui jewelry.



May Pang, today

For more information: www.maypang.com and www.instamatickarma.com

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