

# Interview with P.G. Six

By: Jessie Romero Silver

Pat Gubler, a.k.a. P.G. Six, was first introduced to the Harp at age 17 by his older brother. Now, over the course of three decades, he has taken his knowledge of string instruments to play alongside the likes of Yo La Tengo, Ghost, and Slint. After releasing several albums as a member of the rock band “Tower Recordings,” he left the group in the early 2000’s to pursue a solo career. Now, for the first time in 12 years, Pat has released two albums, *Murmurs & Whispers*, and the expanded editions of *Parlor Tricks And Porch Favorites*. I spoke to Pat Gubler to learn more about his latest folk inspired album, his love for the harp, and his plans for his music career in the new year.

**Jessie: Hey Pat! Thank you so much for sitting down with me to talk about some of the new music you have been working on in 2023. I saw that you recently performed at Angry Mom Records in the Commons where you sang and played the harp. It really stuck out to me and was such a moving performance, but I have to ask, why the harp?**

Pat: Well, you have a few singers out there who play the harp. Notably you have Joanna Newsom who plays the concert harp or the pedal harp. The style of harp I play, some people call it an Irish harp, or a Celtic harp, or folk harp. It's more of an assessable harp partially for financial reasons, but also because it's a little easier to move around. Lots of people who go on to play the pedal start on something smaller, especially if they are a young child.

**I was listening to your latest album; *Murmurs & Whispers* and I was wondering what inspired it? How would you describe this album compared to some of your earlier work?**

Pat: Some of the songs I have had for a number of years. When I finally got around to making the record, I wound up doing it in a very stripped-down way. There are other people on it and there's collaboration involved, but a lot of it is just me, keeping it pretty simple. I think that's partially how it turned out, but it was maybe something I was being steered toward that way to try, a very simple and intimate presentation. A lot of the songs are really just an instrument and a voice, maybe a few little touches but not something that's fleshed out with a full band arrangement. My first record that I did was a little over 20 years ago and it was similar in a way, it was mostly home recorded and pretty stripped down as well. In the time in between I did recordings that were a little bit more elaborate with a band line up, so this is kind of going full circle.

**Yeah, I really liked that it was just you and the harp. I enjoyed the simplicity of it and the stories that you were telling in the album. After listening to it for the first time I went to YouTube to watch your music video for the song *I Have a House*. What inspired you to incorporate stop motion into the video?**

Pat: You know I wouldn't have thought of doing a stop motion animation video, but my girlfriend has done some stop motion and we have done some collaborative work. We have done 3-D and clay

animation and props but what I wound up doing was, y'know, watercolors and pencil drawings. I don't think about myself as a visual artist, but I have enjoyed drawing and I haven't been doing much of it in years. I wound up doing some drawings for the cover of the record and somewhere along the line I thought it would be an interesting idea to try and incorporate and animate some of those things. That song is a little over five minutes so I was thinking of doing something more like a visualizer—like a loop, that would have been a lot easier! But it somehow wound up being this little sort of fanciful fantasy, with a little plot with little characters that move around this fantasy world.

**That sounds like a lot of fun!**

Pat: It was a lot of fun to do it! I definitely bit off more than I could chew. We literally made it using the stop motion app on iPhone and doing a little bit of editing on iMovie. There's a lot of other stuff that could have made our lives easier. Its naive in the way it is executed and there's a lot of things— you wind up shooting them and test the 20 seconds and end up laughing at it. It's a really fun project. I have been doing those for the gigs I've done this year, but I don't think I will continue making little adverts for gig announcements, but they're pretty fun.

**Watching the video was cute. I loved watching the little harp, chess piece, and the ruby walk around and transform throughout the video. The story really matched the music well. I noticed that you have a very soothing energy about you. Do you believe that your mellow personality has influenced your music or vice versa?**

Pat: If there is a calmness to the character of the music that's probably the best part of myself. The other parts are more anxious or cynical, that's a lot of who I am. Spending time making the music sort of forces you to take a breath and it definitely influences me in a positive way. I can't say that happens all the time because I might be frustrated about how things are turning out.

**This might be back tracking a little bit, but how did you come up with the name P.G. Six?**

Pat: Oh, well that came from one of my bandmates. I was in a band called Tower Recordings. P.G. are my initials but this guy, Matt Valentine, was reading a book by Brion Gysin and there's a character named P.G. Six. There was also a P.G. five, just a series of P.G. characters. But anyway, it became like a nickname and when I started making a solo recording, I couldn't think of anything better so I was like, “well I guess I will just stick with this.”

**I found a video of you performing in Tower Recordings. I looked at the timeline of when you have put out music and I noticed this year you released two albums, *Murmurs & Whispers* and the expanded editions of *Parlor Tricks And Porch Favorites* for the first time in 12 years. What drove you to begin releasing music again?**

Pat: You know I think having the reissue (*Parlor Tricks And Porch Favorites*) in the works did provide some motivation and inspiration to sort of get it together. In making these re-recordings that became *Murmurs & Whispers* I did have a few false starts. One of them was because of the pandemic and I had gotten ill, not deathly sick but it definitely shut down my plans for a while. In the meantime, for 12 years, I played with other people and worked on other collaborations. I definitely didn't plan on there being a 10-year gap, wait 12 I think, but it kinda just turned out that way. I sort of feel like it's a miracle that it got

done at all! But at least it got done.

**Since you have already gotten into the groove of releasing music and with the New Year just a little over a month away, what plans do you have for your music in 2024 and so on?**

Pat: I have been looking at an archive of unfinished older recordings. They are on different formats, some of them are on 4-track cassette or on these weird digital things that saved the audio on zip discs. There's all kinds of crazy formats out there. I've been looking at some of that stuff and there's some pieces that I have an affection for and wanted to dig them up to see if I could make something out of it. Go through the past and see if I could assemble something. There are other projects that I'm involved with, there's the band Garcia Peoples, that I play keyboards with. There is new music in the works for that band. I'm kind of an additional band within that band but I have contributed a song.

**For upcoming music updates follow P.G. Six on Instagram @theepgsix and make sure to stream *Murmurs & Whispers* wherever you listen to music**