

**Carol Henley – Final-Beginning Project      December 2020**

**Principles or skills:** I don't think I would have ever tried to do a video "performance" to share with others, had it not been for the encouragement and push in the Academy to do such a thing. What I loved about this project was the challenge to be creative, incorporating harp playing into a bigger presentation –integrating my harp playing with who I am. I have learned in the Academy to simplify, to play at a level that I am comfortable with.

**Give a short description:** Feeling physically isolated and somewhat scared in this time of pandemic, I needed to find comfort myself. The song, "In My Room", sung by the Beach Boys, was a comfort to me even prior to thinking about what to do for the Final Beginning Project. So, I am quite emotionally attached to that song. The second song, "I Whistle A Happy Tune" just seemed like a tune that would also fit in with my project. The challenge was in trying to sing and play at the same time!

**Freedoms and blocks:** As Deborah knows, I almost gave up on this project after sharing the Half-Baked. I felt so vulnerable and exposed in sharing where I was at that point in time. I wanted to pull back to a safer place, or give up all together. Deborah convinced me not to give up, so I kept working at it. I eliminated one song, "Me and My Shadow", which was difficult and really didn't fit musically. I simplified the transition from one song to the next, and just kept putting more of myself into the project.

**Challenges:** As I kept working on the project, I became more comfortable with what I was doing -- and that is, reaching out to some of my friends (who understand and appreciate my sense of humor) in this time of pandemic. It was a challenge to venture out and share this video.

**Personal "Ahas":** I was surprised at how deeply I felt like giving up after the sharing of my half-baked. For some reason, it was a major hurdle to get over – to continue on with this project.

**Other parts of my life:** I have learned so much in this class! Learning to break free of playing songs "as written", without even understanding the structure of the music. I think the freedom of expression I have learned in playing music has helped me to relax a little more, in general, and to appreciate what I can do – accepting who I am without needing to be perfect (as if I could be : ) ).

**Anything else:** Now that I have gotten through this project, I want to do more videos! I truly understand why Deborah calls what we were to do as a "Final-Beginning Project." I look forward to continuing the journey! Oh, and something else: I now view my harp as a friend, rather than as an instrument to be conquered.