

## Interview

# An Oasis Inspired By Music

An Interview with  
**Jeffrey P. Haydon, Chief Executive Officer,  
 Caramoor Center for Music and the Arts**



Jeffrey P. Haydon

**EDITORS' NOTE** After nearly a decade as the Executive Director of the Ojai Music Festival, Jeffrey Haydon was recruited to become the CEO of Caramoor Center for Music and the Arts in 2012. Haydon previously held positions with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Fort Wayne Philharmonic and Aspen Music Festival. As part of the League of American Orchestras' Orchestra Management Fellowship Program, Haydon worked with the Baltimore Symphony, Fort Wayne Philharmonic and Seattle Symphony. He also ran the Cultural Events performing arts series in Tacoma, Washington. Haydon earned a Bachelor of Arts in business administration through the Business Leadership Program and a minor in music from the University of Puget Sound. He also completed the Stanford Business School's Executive Non-Profit Leaders in the Arts program in association with National Arts Strategies.

**ORGANIZATION BRIEF** Caramoor Center for Music and the Arts ([caramoor.org](http://caramoor.org)) is a destination for exceptional music, captivating programs, enjoying the spectacular gardens and grounds, and sharing memorable moments with friends and family. It enriches the lives of its audiences through innovative and diverse musical performances of the highest quality. Its mission also includes mentoring early professional musicians and providing educational programs for young children centered around music.

## What is the mission for Caramoor Center for Music and the Arts?

At Caramoor we believe that music opens hearts and minds, igniting curiosity and joy within ourselves and each other. We invite audiences and artists to leave the challenges of daily life behind, cultivate their curiosity, and be inspired by live music experiences shared with others in this enchanted setting. This was the vision of Caramoor's founders and still continues more than 70 years later.

## How has Caramoor evolved over time?

Caramoor was created by Lucie and Walter Rosen in the 1920s. They loved music, art, architecture, gardens, people and ideas so this was their creative oasis outside of Manhattan. As more guests found inspiration from visiting, they decided to gift their 100-acre estate as an important cultural destination to the public in memory of their son who was killed in WWII. From its beginning, Caramoor has attracted the leading artists of the day and continued to adapt the estate for public use. During the past 10 years, the trustees and senior management have led a renaissance in building Caramoor's leadership base, strengthening its finances, and revitalizing its historic Italianate buildings and gardens.

## How critical has it been to build a leadership team with a common vision for Caramoor's future?

Vision always comes first because it attracts interested people and answers why they should support an idea. I'm impressed with how the Board and senior management united around a shared vision for Caramoor's future, which galvanized a key group of legacy leaders and attracted a new generation of leaders. It is rare that new and past leaders work together effectively and this has been an important ingredient in Caramoor's current success.

## As you upgrade the property, how important is it that some of the history is preserved?

Caramoor's founders left a trove of documents and a legacy that continues to inspire us decades later. Caramoor was originally a home and every restoration and improvement we undertake needs to preserve the feeling of it being a home, since homes convey values. Recently, we discovered a booklet written by the founder in 1966 where she laid out a compelling vision for Caramoor. As we carefully read her words, we were elated to realize how her vision has endured decades later and is just as relevant today as it was then.

## How broad is Caramoor's target market?

With nonprofits, we need to look at our markets in a broad sense. Yes, we do have a core audience base, which is within a 45-minute drive and extends further for our larger programs. However, we also look at our market in terms of our impact on schools within a 90-minute drive through our education programs, where we demonstrate how music is a powerful tool in teaching other subjects. We also work closely with the music departments



Guitar concert in the gardens of Caramoor Center for Music and the Arts

in area schools to bolster their important work and provide important connections for their students. Finally, Caramoor has an international impact through our Rising Stars young artists programs. We select promising early professional artists for residencies at Caramoor where they are given time to focus on their craft, work with the world's leading mentors and give performances. Our 25 years of alumni are among today's most sought after musicians who influence the future of music around the world.

## How many performances are you putting on each year and how do you secure the necessary funding to bring in top artists?

We produce over 125 events each year, which include concerts, education programs and events in our historic Rosen House, plus four Rising Stars residencies and several private events. While Caramoor is historically known as a summer destination, we now have public events year-round.

Funding is always the biggest challenge, because even robust ticket sales don't cover the full cost of these programs in this unique setting. Caramoor is an intimate place, which makes for a very memorable experience, but doesn't allow for the scale needed to offset the costs of producing classical, jazz, Great American Song Book and American Roots programs. Part of what also makes an experience at Caramoor so special are the verdant gardens, Italianate architecture and historic home with its art objects. The reality today is that funds from corporations, foundations and government sources are less available so it is increasingly incumbent on individual philanthropy to ensure Caramoor thrives now and for future generations.

## What is the value in making sure that young people are being exposed to music education?

Creativity is one of the most important skills needed today. Very few problems present easy solutions. Music and the arts offer an effective way to develop the skills needed in future leaders by not only fostering creativity, but also discipline, independent thinking, teamwork and valuable connections. Increasingly, arts organizations have to think beyond just producing technically excellent and entertaining performances, but to also deliberately foster deeper listening skills, which could have a transformational impact on the world. ●