During this custom-designed program centered around the Aldeburgh Festival, spend five nights embedded in the beautiful and inspirational landscapes of England’s Suffolk Coast. Explore historic manors and award-winning gardens as well as out-of-the-way charms of coastal and market towns with the opportunity to attend memorable classical music performances at the Festival. During its annual June run, the festival takes over the tiny seaside town of Aldeburgh, with world-class concerts performed in the event’s superb concert hall, a renovated Victorian era malt house, but also in charming local churches and historic venues. A full day will be dedicated to exploring the legacy Britten has left in this coastal town.

GROUP SIZE: Up to 24 guests

PRICING: $4,995 per person double occupancy / $5,990 single occupancy

STUDY LEADER: JOHN STEWART, a composer and music theorist, earned degrees from the New England Conservatory and Harvard University, where he studied with composers Earl Kim, Leon Kirchner, and Lukas Foss, among others. A composer of chamber, vocal, and orchestral music, Dr. Stewart taught at the New England Conservatory for many years before joining the faculty of Harvard University, where he taught courses in harmony, counterpoint, composition, and musicianship for over 25 years—until his retirement in 2008. While at Harvard he received both the Harvard Phi Beta Kappa Teaching Prize (1994) and the Joseph R. Levenson Memorial Teaching Award (2008). He was named a "Favorite Professor" of Harvard College class of 2009 (the 6th such designation in nine years), an honor that includes a farewell statement to graduating seniors in the Harvard Yearbook. In addition to his Harvard activities, Stewart was the Founder and Director of the “Young Musicians’ Program” at Oregon’s Ernest Bloch Festival. As a member of the Composer’s Symposium at the Festival, he received numerous premières of his music (1998-2006).

In fall 2009, Stewart was lured out of retirement for a two-year Visiting Professorship at the Frost School of Music, University of Miami, Coral Gables, Florida. Invited by the Frost School Dean to guide the establishment of a new undergraduate theory curriculum, Stewart also taught undergraduate and graduate composition students and a Stravinsky Seminar for graduate students. Recent premières of his music have included choral works at the University of Mississippi and a Piano Trio at the University of Miami. Now happily re-retired, he divides his time between composing, painting, writing, gardening, hiking, and birding.
SCHEDULE BY DAY
B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 12
DEPART U.S. FOR LONDON

THURSDAY, JUNE 13
ARRIVE LONDON / ALDEBURGH

Upon arrival in London, take a group transfer east to the coastal town of Aldeburgh and check-in at the elegant Brudenell Hotel, your home for the next five nights.

The afternoon is at leisure to rest or begin exploring on your own. Enjoy a welcome dinner this evening at one of the most popular restaurants in town.

Overnight: Brudenell Hotel (D)

FRIDAY, JUNE 14
ALDEBURGH

Today, follow the footsteps of Benjamin Britten. Begin this morning with a visit to the modest Red House, where Suffolk’s iconic composer lived with his partner and singer Paul Pears. View the gallery with permanent and changing exhibitions, Britten’s composition studio, their historic library, and the house they lived in with the beautiful gardens.

A possible visit to the archives may be arranged to view collections assembled by Benjamin Britten and Peter Pears comprising Britten’s music manuscripts, annotated libretto drafts, books and printed music, photographs, correspondence, concert programs, press cuttings, and set and costume designs.

Later, embark on a guided walking tour. See The Scallop, a metalwork sculpture by Maggie Hambling dedicated to Benjamin Britten. Next, visit Aldeburgh Parish Church where the first concert of the first Aldeburgh Festival was held in 1948 and where Britten and Pears are buried side-by-side in the church’s grassy graveyard.

Continue to Moot Hall, one of the most important timber-framed public buildings in England now housing the Aldeburgh Museum and still the meeting place for the town council. Along Aldeburgh’s beach, see the town’s distinctive fishing boats, many of which are still independent and active, and walk by Crag House, Britten’s home from 1947 to 1957. Along the way, pass other Aldeburgh festival sites including the Aldeburgh Jubilee Hall, Peter Pears Gallery, and the Aldeburgh Baptist Chapel. Finally, walk along the north bank of the River Alde for great views of the Martello Tower, the largest and northernmost of the chain of defensive towers built around the coast in the early 19th century.

Enjoy lunch at a popular local restaurant followed by an afternoon at leisure.

Gather for your first festival performance this evening (exact program and location TBD).

Overnight: Brudenell Hotel (B, L)

SATURDAY, JUNE 15
BURY ST. EDMUNDS

Today, drive west to Bury St. Edmunds, a beautiful quintessentially English market town at the heart of East Anglia.

Take a guided walking tour of the town’s medieval streets to admire its architecture and Georgian squares. Highlights will include a visit to St. Edmundsbury Cathedral as well as the ruins of Abbey of St. Edmund, once the richest and largest Benedictine monasteries in England. The site still includes the complete 14th-century Great Gate and Norman Tower.

After lunch in Bury St. Edmunds, drive to the nearby Ickworth House Park and Gardens, a Georgian Italianate palace set in an idyllic English landscape.

Tour Ickworth’s impressive Rotunda, an architectural marvel commissioned by the 4th Earl of Bristol to house his collection of treasures from his travels around Europe in the 18th Century.
Return to Aldeburgh in time for dinner on your own, followed by your second festival performance (exact program and location TBD).

Overnight: Brudenell Hotel (B, L)

SUNDAY, JUNE 16
FRAMLINGHAM / HELMINGHAM

Depart this morning for a drive northwest to Framlingham to explore its magnificent late 12th-century castle on a hill overlooking a quiet lake. This is where Mary Tudor was proclaimed Queen of England. Take a walk along the castle's outer walls and 13 towers to gain the best views of the county and learn about the castle’s colorful past in the company of a local historian.

In the afternoon, drive north to Helmingham and enjoy a light English lunch buffet at Helmingham Hall’s former Coach House. Then, take a guided tour of the award-winning Helmingham Hall Gardens, redesigned by Lady Tollemache and set within a 400-acre deer park surrounding the moated Tudor Hall. The Tollemache Family has been the guardian of Helmingham since 1487.

Continue on to nearby Otley Hall, a stunning 16th-century moated hall, which is still a private home and has been voted one of the top 20 Historic Houses in the UK. Take a private guided tour of its impressive interiors and equally impressive gardens, which include parts of an important design by Francis Inigo Thomas (1866-1950).

Return to Aldeburgh in time for dinner on your own followed by your third festival performance (exact program and location TBD).

Overnight: Brudenell Hotel (B, D)

MONDAY, JUNE 17
LAVERNHAM / ALDEBURGH

Today, visit to picturesque Lavenham, a remarkably well-preserved Tudor village in Suffolk. On your guided tour, learn about the woolen-cloth industry that turned the town into one of the richest in the country during the 15th century and also visit the Church of St. Peter and St. Paul, a prominent ‘wool church’ built from the proceeds of the local industry.

Enjoy lunch on your own and time to explore the small shops and quirky tearooms, plus the National Trust’s Guildhall of Corpus Christi.

Later, continue to Kentwell Hall, one of England’s finest moated Tudor houses, developed in stages between 1500 and 1578, and substantially restored in the late 20th century by the efforts of the Phillips family. The house remains a lived-in home with a traditional-style farm with rare breeds, including the Suffolk Punch (horse) and Norfolk Horn Sheep as well as gardens that have been recreated by the owners.

Next, head to a stunning National Trust property that is the family home of the Hyde Parkers, who lovingly restored Melford Hall after it was destroyed by a fire in 1942. Learn about Melford’s long and varied history, and explore its diverse collection of furniture, porcelain, and Beatrix Potter memorabilia (the author was a cousin of the Hyde Parkers).

Return to Aldeburgh in time for a celebratory farewell dinner followed by your final festival performance (exact program and location TBD).

Overnight: Brudenell Hotel (B, D)

TUESDAY, JUNE 18
DEPART FOR U.S.

After breakfast, transfer to London’s Heathrow Airport (LHR) for independent flights returning to the United States.