



MAESTRO!
TOUR MANAGEMENT

The Lofoten Islands - Chamber Music in the Arctic Circle plus Senja & Tromsø

7 - 16 July, 2019

£3500 per person sharing a twin or double room
£3980 double room for sole use

Includes: return flights from the UK to Svolvær, 1 night Bodo, 5 nights Svolvær, 1 night Finnsnes, 2 nights Tromsø all on bed & breakfast basis; 10 concerts during our stay in Svolvær, 7 dinners (or substantial late lunches), 3 light lunches and a full programme of sightseeing throughout the Lofotens, Senja and Tromsø inc. ferry and waterborn activities.

If you happened to hear BBC Radio 4 *Saturday Live* on November 24th you may have caught Sandi Toksvig talking about her honeymoon and arriving on the Lofoten Islands ***"It is as if you are breathing fresh air for the first time..it is so pristine and the sea so clear - I don't think I have ever been so happy"***. Milena Grenfell-Baines and I had a similar experience two years ago when Jean-Efflam Bavouzet (who was Artistic Director that year) encouraged us to travel 1,000km north from Oslo into the Arctic Circle and experience the Lofoten Music Festival. I hope that this coming July I can share the magnificent place with you as we enjoy chamber music of the highest quality with 10 concerts over five nights during our time in Svolvær.

We have set out to create a unique itinerary that combines some wonderful music with the breathtaking beauty of this archipelago situated within the Arctic Circle between the 68th & 69th parallels - as far North as the Canadian Yukon, Greenland and Siberia!

No matter what you read in advance about the Lofoten Islands the first-hand experience surpasses your expectations. Often when you see tourism photos of a place you think to yourself – *"we will never get to see that view without our own boat or helicopter"* but the reality on the Lofotens is that these beautiful views (as shown to the right) are completely accessible and you WILL see them with you own eyes!

We stay five nights at the 4* Thon Hotel in main town of Svolvær (pop. 4,500) which is situated on Austvågøy, the largest island of the archipelago. To the south (and reached by modern bridges and tunnels) lie the islands of Vestvågøy, Flakstadøy & Moskenesøy (you may have already figured that 'øy' is island).

Our adventure starts on Sunday 7th July when we fly from Manchester via Oslo to **Bodø** situated on the mainland coast opposite the islands. We stay one night here at the 4* Scandic Havet Hotel situated on the harbourside. We have dinner together this evening and, if the weather is clear, our first experience of the **Midnight Sun**.

On Monday we have the morning in Bodø and then make our way to the airport for our 20 minute semi-chartered 'Dash-7' flight across to the airstrip at Leknes on the island of Vestvågøy.

We are met here by our coach and driver for the next eight days and cross onto the island of Austvågøy and the town of **Svolvær** (about an hour's drive) getting our first impressions of the islands as we go. After time to settle in we have an early dinner and then make our way to the Lofoten Kulturhaus for the opening concert of this year's festival.

The final programme will be announced in January but we understand that the musicians gathering for the festival will include: **the Engegård Quartet, Doric String Quartet, Trio con Brio Copenhagen**, pianists **Ingrid Fliter, Sir Andras Schiff, Jan Lisiecki, George Tchaidze & Joachim Carr**; **Yuuko Shiowkawa** (violin); **Anton Dressler** (clarinet) and tenor **Torbjørn Gulbrandsøy**.

We have an astonishing 10 concerts included during our five night stay (including **Schubert's String Quintet performed in the caviar factory!**).

The programme of music is set to include: two **Mozart** violin concerti, trio's by **Beethoven, Brahms, Arensky & Haydn**, quartets by **Beethoven, Brahms, Suk & Ades**; quintets by **Dohnanyi, Brahms & Schubert**; piano works by **Chopin, Bach, Ravel** and vocal works by **Strauss, Schumann & Grieg!**

The concerts are 'itinerant' and take place in two different places each evening. Our first concert is at 7pm and the second at 10pm with just enough time for us and the musicians to move between the venues! We are working out how to best accomplish that without having to eat at midnight!! We expect to have late substantial lunches as our main meals (particularly when our concerts are on other islands) and then have some sort of snack either between concerts or during our coach journeys.

On the days that our concerts take place close to Svolvær we will venture further afield for our sightseeing and on the days when the performances take us to another island we will do our sightseeing closer to home.

Although we are here in high summer we need to take into account that we are in the coastal Arctic and the weather can change in a blink (Milena and I had two beautifully sunny days and two overcast ones but all four were glorious). We may therefore change days for the following inclusions depending on the local weather at the time.

Over the coming four days we will travel to the southernmost tip of the islands and **Å** (pronounced 'Ohr') seeing **Moskenes, Hamnoy Bridge & Nusfjord** along the way. We will visit the Lofoten Museum in **Kabelvåg**, take a trip by boat into the glorious **Trollfjord** (where hopefully we will see sea eagles circling the peaks); we head north from Svolvær to **Austnesfjorden** and hope to be able to include all of the most beautiful views and experiences of the islands.

On Saturday we drive North from Svolvær enjoying more wonderful views along the way arriving in the mainland town of Harstad. Here we have time for a lunchtime snack before we board a fast ferry and cruise 100km further north to the small town of **Finnsnes** - the gateway to Senja. Our luggage stays on the bus in Harstad and meets us at the hotel. Finnsnes has just two small 2* hotels adjacent to each other and we split across these hotels for tonight's stay. Our reason for coming here is to give us the delight of a full day on **Senja** tomorrow. Why Senja?

When Milena and I visited we started in **Tromsø** (where we will end) and discovered almost by mistake the astonishing **island of Senja** – second largest in Norway. If ever one wondered where the inspiration for tales of Norse Giants and Trolls came from then I would commend Senja as the answer. Rugged and baron, long finger fjords facing directly onto the Norwegian Sea with towering peaks resembling great giants turned to stone, often shrouded in mist but you can feel their presence; rough earthy road tunnels that look like they have been hewn by trolls cutting through from one fjord to the next. Even in poor weather (which we had on the day we spent there) **Senja is magnificent!**

On Sunday we spend the day discovering **Senja** heading out to the coastal hamlet of **Hamn** (where we will have lunch) and then exploring the fjords heading north to **Bergsbotn, Skaland, Mefjordvaer, Senjahopen** and eventually **Botnhamn** where we join a ferry for the 60 minute crossing back to the mainland and Brensholmen. From here it's a 45 minute drive into **Tromsø** and we stay for two nights at the 3* Thon Hotel. We have dinner this evening.

Our final day is spent discovering this most northern city of Norway. We will include a visit to the splendid **Arctic Cathedral** and (weather permitting) a ride up the **Fjellheisen** cable car. Our farewell dinner this evening concludes our visit to this magical & unique part of the world.

Notes on food arrangements:

Breakfast is included every morning. On at least seven nights we will have one other main meal (either dinner or a substantial late lunch). In addition a light lunch will be included on 3 days. Wine will be served with the Welcome and Farewell dinners but otherwise it is beer and soft drinks (and wine can be purchased locally if you wish).

On Tuesday we have our final morning free and depart for the airport at 1130 to join our flight to Oslo with connection to Manchester.

Flight timings

Sunday 7th July	Manchester T1 – Oslo	13:10 – 16:05	SAS
	Oslo – Bodø	17:25 – 18:50	SAS
Monday 8th July	Bodø – Leknes	12:40 – 13:05	Wideroe
Tuesday 16th July	Tromsø – Oslo	14:00 – 15:50	SAS
	Oslo – Manchester T1	18:05 – 19:10	SAS

Connections are also available from Heathrow.