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**Title: Fort Ross Russian Bells**

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**July 30, 2016**

**Fort Ross Festival 2016**

**The U.S. First Lay Solo Performance of Russian Bell Ringing**

**Bell Ringer– Victor V. Avdienko, Percussionist of San Francisco Symphony Orchestra**

**Orchestral Russian Bell *Zvonnitsa*– courtesy Blagovest Bells, Novato, California**

**Producer– Mark D. Galperin, General Manager, Blagovest Bells**

Traditional Russian bells, during their 9-century history, played three different roles:

- ✚ as church bells, they accompanied Divine Services, being the only liturgical musical instrument of the Russian Orthodox Church;
- ✚ as signal bells, they served as city assembly (*veche*) bells, ship's bells, Russian coach (*yamschitskiye aka valdayskiye*) bells, buoy signal bells, military sentry bells, fire bells, tower clock bells, and later as railway station and locomotive bells, etc.;

and during the last two centuries,

- ✚ as orchestral musical percussion instruments actively used by Russian composers in their musical pieces, one of which, 1812 Overture, composed by Pyotr Il'yich Tchaikovsky (1880, Op. 49), became very popular in the U.S., often performed during the Independence Day holidays.

Since the Fort Ross' inception in 1812, Russian bells already served Fort Ross in the first two capacities— first as sentry bells at both of the Fort's sentry boxes located diagonally in its Northern and Southern corners, and after 1824 as the church bells at the belfry of Fort Ross' Holy Trinity – Saint Nicholas Chapel.

Today you will hear Russian bells used in their third role, as a soloing orchestral musical instrument *zvonnitsa* rung by Percussionist of San Francisco Symphony Orchestra, Bell Ringer, Victor Avdienko.

Blagovest Bells of Novato, California, the sole promoter of Russian bells and bellringing in the U.S., made the *zvonnitsa* in 2015 and is providing it for the Festival on a free loan.

Blagovest Bells The 6-bell peal for the instrument was cast in 2014 in Urals by Pyatkov & Co., a famous modern Russian bellmaker.

Victor Avdienko is a graduate of The Juilliard School, where he earned his Graduate Degree in Percussion, studying with members of the New York Philharmonic. Prior to that, he earned his Undergraduate Degree with top honors in Music Performance from San Jose State University.

A regular guest member of the San Francisco Symphony, Victor has performed, recorded, and toured with the Symphony for 20 years. Awards include several Grammys and an Emmy.

Raised in the Russian Orthodox Church in San Francisco, when live bell ringing in the United States was still a rarity, Victor currently enjoys performing Russian Bell Ringing from the perspective of a Symphonic Percussionist. His performance of Tchaikovsky's "1812 Overture" with the San Francisco Symphony in Summer 2014 was the first time real Russian Bells were ever used for that piece in the United States.

The selections Victor will be performing include some traditional Liturgical Zvons, or peals, and a few contemporary Zvons along with some improvisations.

- ✚ Perezvon. Chain peal - largest bell to smallest in order.  
Used at Blessing of the Water.
- ✚ Festal Lenten Zvon— a traditional Russian Peal from Rostov Velikij
- ✚ Optina Zvon
- ✚ Krasnyj Zvon by Vladimir Petrovsky
- ✚ Egorievsky Trezvon
- ✚ Improvisational Trezvon

