



**BLAGOVEST BELLS**

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**SATURDAY, JULY 28, 2018**

**Fort Ross Festival 2018**

**Russian Bell at Fort Ross State Historic Park**



**Bellringer– Victor Avdienko, San Francisco Percussionist**

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

**Russian Bell Zvonnitsa– courtesy Blagovest Bells, Novato, CA**

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 a.k.a. 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 Fort Ross' inception in 1812, Russian bells already served Fort Ross in the first two capacities— first as sentry bells at both 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 both as an Orthodox church music instrument, and in a third role, as a soloing orchestral music instrument *zvonitsa* rung by Victor Avdienko, a well-known San Francisco Percussionist and Bellringer.

Blagovest Bells of Novato, California, the sole promoter of Russian bells and bellringing in the U.S., made its first wooden *zvonitsa* in 1999 and is providing it for the Festival on a free loan.

The 4-bell peal used in the *zvonitsa* was commissioned in 2012 by the Citizenry of Tot'ma for the belfry of Fort Ross Chapel and cast in the Urals by Pyatkov & Co., a famous modern Russian bellmaker, to complement the existing Fort Ross Chapel bell.

