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Moscow International Bell Exhibition

International Bell Exhibition Debuts in Moscow

by

Larissa Franczek

Editor's Note: Several months ago, Larissa communicated to members of ABA of the Russian Exhibition that was to open in April 2010. An announcement was placed in The Bell Tower in the last two issues. The organization sent the 2010 prototype convention bell for Larissa to present to the exhibition. Al McFarland wrote a letter of greeting. In addition, Alan Burgdorf sent his silver Gorham Women of History bells for the display. Larissa is a frequent contributor to The Bell Tower. She and her husband travel extensively all over the world.

The first international bell exhibition, a long anticipated and longed for event, was unveiled on April 27 in Moscow Museum of Folk Art Crafts. Its name is "The Journey of a Bell," a metaphoric expression meaning journey both through time and space.



Figure 1. Quartet plays for exhibition opening.

While participants and guests of the exhibition were gathering a chamber quartet played Rossini and Mozart creating a festive mood as shown in Figure 1.



Figure 2. Monastery priest blessing the exhibition.

The opening ceremony began with a real bell ringing. In order to do it, they brought a portable bell set from a monastery and a bell ringer played it very artistically. After a short service, a priest from that monastery blessed the exhibition (Figure 2).

The museum Public Relations director, made a brief speech introducing the subject matter and the purpose of the event. She read the greeting sent by Albert McFarland, and then Art Franczek as an ABA member gave the 2010 Convention bell to the exhibition. It was a very touching moment (Figure 3).

We also received greetings from Irine Lapine, a bell collector and journalist from Radio Canada International (RCI),



Figure 3. Art Franczek is in the center presenting the ABA bell to the museum director. Larissa is left of her husband in the picture.

and another greeting from the Russian Union of Studying Local History.

Bell collectors, masters, painters, museums and associations from Russia, Ukraine, Byelorussia, Bulgaria, Spain took part in the exhibition. The USA was represented by Alan Burgdorf's marvelous set of bronze lady bells "The Women who Changed the Course of History" displayed in Figure 4.

The wide theme of the exhibition enables visitors to appreciate small and large bells, rattles and chimes, the way they were used by people from Europe, USA, Canada, Latin



Figure 4. Gorham series of "Women of History."

America, Middle and Far East, Africa, India, Indonesia, CIS countries, and different regions of Russia.

Exhibits of one of the halls were dedicated to historical bells. They were given by three most well-known Russian bell collectors and researchers. Here you can see ancient cult bells, for example. They are Scythian (9-8 centuries BC), Finno-Ugric (5-3 centuries BC), Chinese (2 century AD), Japanese, Vietnamese (14-15 centuries BC). There are also bells mainly of the 19th century used on beasts of burden: a horse, a camel, a deer and an elephant. A collection of hand bells strikes you with its variety and artistic work (Figures 5–7).



Figure 5. Camel bells.



Figure 6. Desk Bells (end of 19th and beginning of 20th centuries).

For the 300th anniversary (1913) of the Romanov dynasty 50 memorial bells were cast. Now only two of them survived, one is exhibited here.

A special part of the exhibition is dedicated to Russian shaft bow bells. They had remained a symbol of Russian everyday life for more than a century (Figure 8). Skirts of these bells were decorated with inscriptions that bore information of *The Bell Tower—July-August 2010*



Figure 7. Part of the historical section of the exhibition.

who, when and even why cast them. A comprehensive catalogue dedicated to the history of these bells is available for sale in the Museum.

In the second hall “The Bell Gallery” the Internet community presented admirable souvenir bells from the private collections of its members. This year “The Bell Gallery”



Figure 8. Russian shaft bow bells.



Figure 9. Some members of the “Bell Gallery.”

turned five years old, so the opening of the exhibition was both marking a certain stage and a gift for the jubilee. Ten out of thirty-eight of its members took part in the event (Figure 9).

In this hall you can also enjoy masters’ works. Their bells are brought from different regions of Russia and CIS countries, made of various

materials and painted in famous traditional techniques (Figures 10–16).



Figure 10. A. Zotova, china, painting.



Figure 11. E. Mironova, highly glazed pottery, painting.



Figure 12. E. Mironova, highly glazed pottery, painting.



Figure 13. G. Kupavskaya, paper mâché.



Figure 14. N. Kostin, chess set, china, painting.



Figure 15. T. Terekhova, pottery, painting



Figure 16. Bells painted in the so-called Philimonovskaya technique.



Figure 18. Logo of bell gallery and museum on bells.



Figure 17. Demonstration of bell painting.

A master-class was given by one of the painters and visitors could see a bell born right in front of their eyes (Figure 17).

Three memorable bells were made for the opening and given to each participant “The Bell Gallery” member. The first bell was ordered by Irina Koltakova (ABA member from Ukraine). It bears the name of the exhibition “The Journey of a Bell”, Moscow. It’s a handmade pottery work by Ukrainian masters, each bell was painted differently.

Two other bells were ordered by Olga Popova, a hostess and webmaster of “The Bell Gallery,” in Ekaterinburg, Russia. One bell bears a logo of the “Bell Gallery.” The other one shows a logo of the museum where the exhibition is taking place (Figure 18).

We are very glad that we managed to publish two booklets for sale. A bigger one was included into the International Book Catalogue, and one copy of it will go to the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.

The exhibition drew a wide response and got good reviews in mass media. A list of links of newspapers, radio and TV channels with announcements, articles, and programs about it is very long.

It is hard to describe every bell as there are over 1,000. And it was equally hard to choose pictures for this publication as bells are gorgeous, magnificent, and superb. Here are just a few other bells that were displayed at the exhibition (Figures 19 through 31).

Photos by L. Franczek and by courtesy of O. Popova, A. Sal-kutsan, N. Stepanova and E. Vedekhina. My special thanks to A. Franczek, O. Popova, N. Stepanova, and G. Melnichuk for their help in writing this article



Figure 19. Desk set, 198 x 175 millimeters, metal, made in Austria.



Figure 20. Case 1 of the Moscow International Exhibition.

Figure 21. Case 2 of the Moscow International Exhibition contains the bell donated by the ABA.



Figure 22. Additional cases of the Moscow International Exhibition.



Figure 23. A girl in a dress with ribbon, 110 x 65 millimeters.



Figure 24. Girl, 185 x 110 millimeters, clay, glaze, modelling.



Figure 25. Noble woman walking, 160 x 70 millimeters, ceramic, made in Russia.



Figure 26. A girl with a yoke, 120 x 40 millimeters, china, painted.



Figure 27. A bell with a handle in a shape of a traditional Irish ring (Claddagh ring), 120 x 45 millimeters crystal/metal bell made by Killarney Crystal, Ireland.



Figure 30. Russian crystal, 150 x 75 millimeters, crystal, bronze, made in Russia.



Figure 29. From Pskov region, 80 x 50 millimeters, china, modelling painting.



Figure 28. Czech Crystal, 85 x 45 millimeters made in Czech Republic.

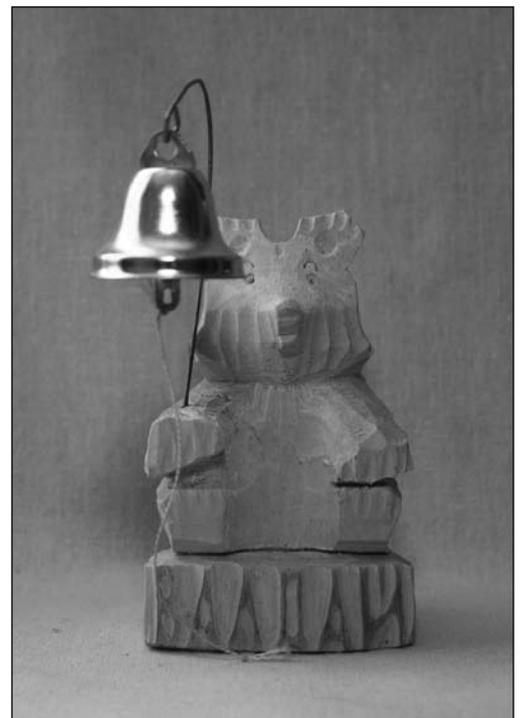


Figure 31. A bear is fishing, 117 x 55 millimeters metal, wooden carving, made in Russia.

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A noble girl, 95 x 40 millimeters, bronze, made in Russia, one of the many bells from the International Exhibition in Moscow.

CALENDAR

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St. Louis, Missouri
Hilton Frontenac Hotel
www.stlouisfrontenac.hilton.com

June 27-30, 2012 **67th Annual Convention**
Hilton Scottsdale Resort & Villas
Scottsdale, Arizona
www.scottsdaleresort.hilton.com

September 10-12, 2010 **Mid-America Regional**
Branson, Missouri

WIMI Spring 2011
Location to be Announced