

On Prime Trezvon

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In my opinion, any canonical trezvon can be reduced to a "prime trezvon," which is the warp and woof of traditional bell ringing.

This trezvon consists of:

- evenly spaced strikes of the leading bell, or blagovestnik (usually about 60 strikes a minute);
- single, evenly spaced strikes of the alto or *podzvonnye* bells (in any order), with two strikes of the alto to every one strike of the blagovestnik. In other words, the blagovestnik tolls half notes and the alto bells quarter notes, and
- ringing of two¹ *zazvonnye* or treble bells in alternation (or with two groups of small bells, interchangeably); there are four strikes of the treble per every one strike of the alto (sixteenth notes²).

Some trezvons require that the treble bells be rung more slowly, as eighth notes³. I think that one could easily imagine such a "basic trezvon": newcomers ring it first after acquiring the necessary skills.

One can hear these trezvons in modern recordings from Optina Pustyn.

When learning the "basic" trezvon, one must avoid following one's whim to ring anything more sophisticated (this desire unavoidably shows up) - that is, to get rid of this primitive *ta-da-lum, ta-da-lum*. The most important thing is to achieve equally spaced strikes of all the components of the "basic" trezvon, not to play "something creative or nice on the bells."

Only after one has acquired an intrinsic sense of what constitutes the prime and basic trezvon and the competent skills to perform it, can one attempt to move on to other trezvons- and even then only gradually. The main thing is never to lose the feeling of evenly spaced strikes at every layer of the trezvon. As soon as the fabric of the peal has been rent by a foreign rhythm, one must return to the "basic" trezvon.

The above is the excerpt from "Lavra Peal", K.A. Mishurovsky's article published by Eugene Volkov at: <http://www.zvonarhome.orthodoxy.ru/doc/lavr.htm>.

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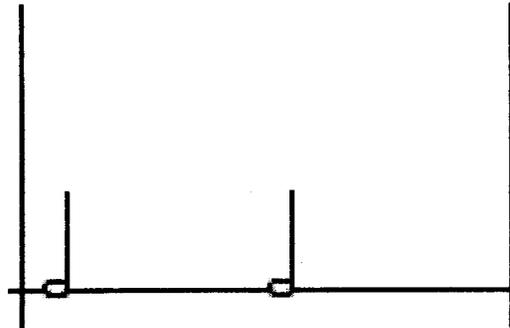
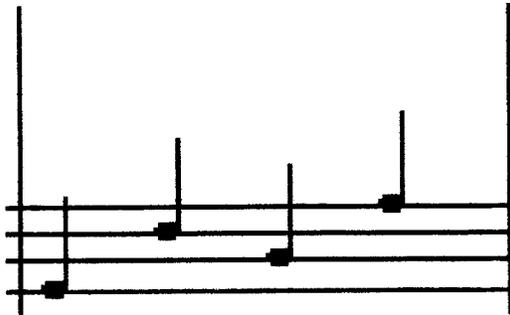
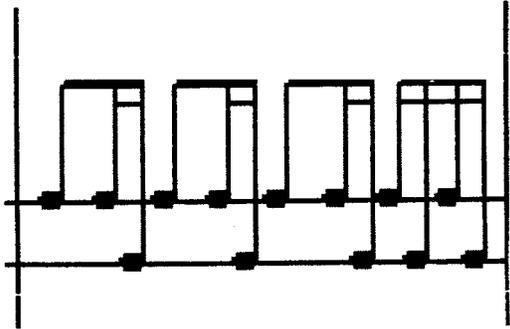
Translators' notes:

¹ This is the minimal trezvon.

² See Fig. 1.

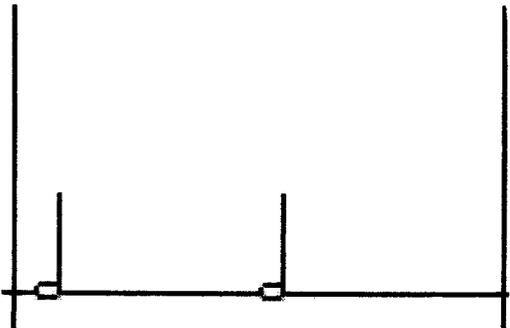
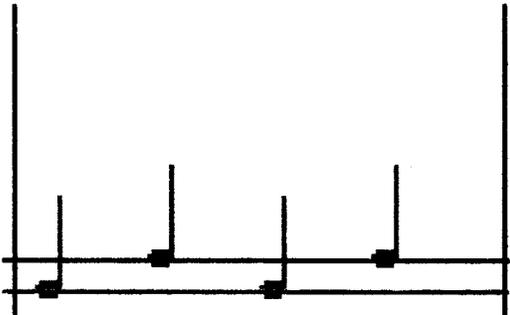
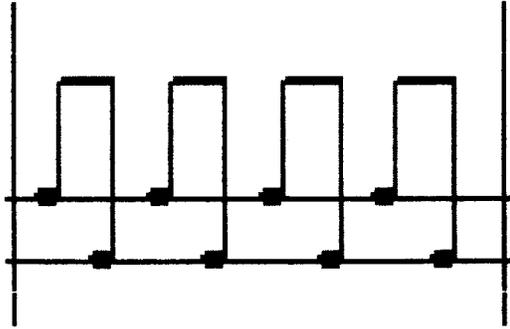
³ See Fig. 2.

Fig. 1. "Prime trezvon" - the warp and woof of traditional bell ringing.



Top to bottom: 2 zazvonnye bells, 2 podzvonnye bells, and blagovestnik.

Fig. 2. "Basic prime trezvon" – playing zazvonnye bells by eighth notes only.



Top to bottom: 2 zazvonnye bells, 2 podzvonnye bells, and blagovestnik.