



Orthodox Bells Workshop

St Basil the Great Orthodox Church
Castle Hayne, NC

V8 11/8/2020

Overview

- History
- Bell configurations
- Ringing Technique & Basic Ringing Patterns
- Basic Pattern Demonstration and Exercise
- Special Ringing Patterns
- St Basil Current Operating Practice
- Future Practice
- Examples
- References

History of Orthodox Bells

- Origin & Significance

- After early Church persecutions ended: a way to call faithful to services was needed
- Bell pealing became preferred method
- First Christian use was in Western Europe
 - *Tradition: Late 4th century, St Paulinus Bishop of Nola (Campania Italy)*
 - *Recorded: Early 7th century*

- Later

- *Late 9th century, Eastern Greek Church (originating from wooden Semantron)*
- *Late 10th century, introduced into Russia at Baptism of the Rus (988)*
- *Pinnacle of foundry in 18th century*
- *Bells destroyed & foundry virtually stopped by Soviets at Bolshevik Revolution*
- *Production resumed after fall of Iron Curtain*
- *Interesting fact: St Innocent (America's 1st Orthodox bishop) brought a bell ringer with him to Alaska for service along with a priest, deacon, subdeacon & reader!*

History of Orthodox Bells, continued

- Relevance & Application

- Services

- *Announce & summon faithful to Divine Services*
 - *Express the triumphal joy of the Divine Services*
 - *Announce timing of important moments during Services for those not present (e.g., Creed)*
 - *Announce the death of church members, arrival of important persons & Funeral Service progress*

- Monastics

- *Awaken monks*
 - *Signal daily task schedule*

History of Orthodox Bells, continued

- Relevance & Application, continued
 - Spirituality
 - *“Singing Icons”*: Define the Temple acoustic space (as painted Icons & Hymn define visual & noetic space respectively)
 - *“Trumpets”*: Likened to OT Battle of Jericho, NT Revelation
 - *“Scripture in Sound”*: Symbolic of Gospel proclamation.
 - *Strengthen Christian piety & faith by their sound, believed anointed with Grace to dispel & destroy demonic forces in spiritual warfare*
 - Significance demonstrated by
 - *ritual blessings of bell towers & foundations, each bell*
 - *tonsure of bell ringer*
 - *blessing of ringer by Priest before addressing the bells*
 - *making sign of the cross before ringing*

Bell Configurations

- Bell Types/Names
 - Zazvonny-Soprano/ smallest bells
 - Podzvonny-Alto/ middle bells
 - Blagovestnik-Bass/ largest bells
- Bell Structures
 - Bell immobilized, clapper mobile (Russian tradition)
 - Bell mobile, clapper immobile (Western Europe tradition)

Bell Configurations, continued

- Sample Configurations



Semantron



*Tsar Bell-
Moscow*



*St Nicholas-
Wash DC*



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Bell Configurations, continued

- St Basil Configuration-donated through generosity of parishioner Mary Ferko
 - 1 row of 3 Soprano bells
 - 1 row of 2 Bass Bells (Alto/Bass?)
 - Russian tradition-Stationary bells with mobile clappers



Ringling Technique & Basic Bell Ringing Patterns

- Terminology & Basic technique
 - Tzvon-peal on one or more bells
 - Tzvonar-bill ringer
 - “Chiming”-Russian tradition using mobile clapper on stationary bell
 - Technique varies with structure of the bell tower
 - *Loose ropes or with handle device:*
 - *Pulleyed/pedaled ropes (struck with hand or foot)*
 - Foundation is “polyrhythmical” rather than “melodious”

Ringling Technique & Basic Bell Ringing Patterns, continued

- Blagovest "call to worship"
 - 12 peals before service
 - 12 peals during the Creed
 - Demonstration
 - Exercise
- Trezvon "Triple Peal"
 - Before & after Liturgy
 - Before Great Vespers
 - Basic principles (complexity, length, etc)
 - Open with 3 peals largest bell; close with 3 peals on all bells together
 - Rhythm peal on 2 bass bells; alternate for interest
 - Demonstration
 - *Basic rhythms*
 - *More Complex Rhythms*
 - Exercise

Special Ringing Patterns and Orders

- Perebor/ Funeral order
- Holy Friday/ Saturday
- Ring of 7's/ Paschal Service Order
- Blessing of Water – Chain Peal

St Basil Operating Practice - Current

- *All occasions: Obtain blessing of the Priest (sacred function)*
- Liturgy
 - Blagovest call to worship before Hours
 - *Start 9:07 am*
 - *Strike every 15 seconds*
 - *End 9:10 am*
 - Trezvon before Liturgy
 - 9:28 to end 9:30 approximately
 - Cue: 6th Hour “More honorable than the cherubim ...”
 - Ring for 1:15-1:30 minutes
 - Creed Blagovest peal
 - See Appendix
 - Trezvon after Liturgy Post-Communion Prayers

St Basil Operating Practice – Current, contd

- ***All occasions: Obtain blessing of the Priest (sacred function)***
- Great Vespers
 - Blagovest call to worship
 - *Start 5:56 pm*
 - *Strike every 15 seconds*
 - *End 5:59 pm*
 - Trezvon
 - Start 5:59
 - Ring for 1:00 minute approximately
 - Complete at 6:00 pm
- Vespers
 - Blagovest call to worship
 - *Start 5:57 pm*
 - *Strike every 15 seconds*
 - *End 6:00 pm*

St Basil Operating Practice – Current, contd

- *All occasions: Obtain blessing of the Priest (sacred function)*
- Compline (Small, Great)
 - Note: update still required
 - Blagovest call to worship (5:57 to end 6 pm)
- Blessing of Water (Chain Peal)
 - See Appendix
- Funeral
 - See Appendix
- Pascha
 - See Appendix
- Other:
 - At direction of Father

St Basil Operating Practice - Future

- Holy Friday/Saturday
- Other

Appendices – Creed Peal

- *I believe* in One God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven & earth & all things visible & invisible.
- And *in One LORD* Jesus Christ the Son of God, the Only-Begotten, Begotten of the Father before all ages
- *Light of Light*, True God of True God, Begotten not made, of One Essence with the Father by Whom all things were made
- Who for us men & our salvation *came down from Heaven* & was incarnate of the Virgin Mary and became man.
- And *He was crucified* under Pontius Pilate, suffered & was buried.
- *The Third Day* He rose again according to the Scriptures *& ascended into Heaven* & sits on the Right Hand of God the Father Almighty. *He shall come again* with Glory to judge the living & the dead.
- And in *the Holy Spirit*, the Lord & Giver of Life Who proceeds from the Father
- Who with *the Father & Son* together is worshipped & glorified, Who spoke by the prophets
- In *One Holy Catholic & Apostolic Church*.
- I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins.
- I look for *the resurrection of the dead* and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Appendices – Chain Peal (Blessing of Water)

- Sequential, alternating peals; 7 peals each bell total
- Start with largest bell: ring 4 times
- Follow with next bell; ring 4 times alternating with first bell (3 peals remain)
- Move to next bell with same pattern: start 4 peal sequence alternating with previous bell (3 remaining).
- Last bell: ring 3 remaining peals
- See demonstration:

https://share.icloud.com/photos/063ngqigUa5v3Z4zFGrP_oKuA#Skippers_Corner

Appendices – Funeral Order Rubric

- Sequential ring of each bell from smallest to largest
- Allow each bell resonance to complete before chiming next bell
- Complete sequence with a peal of all bells together
- Repeat until funeral procession segment is complete

Appendices – Paschal Order Rubric

- TB Documented

Bell Ringing Examples



<https://youtu.be/s32yB4KX8to>



<https://youtu.be/hrj8TwuipI8>

References

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