

Laban's Shaping

The shapes you make with your body while you ring communicate a message to your audience.

1. Open vs. Closed Body

Examples of an **open** body posture would be:

1. **exposing** – as if proudly displaying a new necklace
2. **releasing** – as if throwing a pile of laundry onto a table
3. **greeting** – as if opening your arms wide to greet an old friend
4. **accepting** – as if willing to be engaged in a group discussion

An open body posture communicates to others that you desire to engage with them. A person with an open body posture might be a pageant contestant, a proud bride walking down the aisle, an elementary teacher as she greets her students on the first day of school, or someone with his/her arms open wide in worship.

Examples of a **closed** body posture would be:

1. **concealing** – as if hiding a scar on your neck
2. **capturing** – as if clutching a pile of laundry
3. **shunning** – as if avoiding being noticed by someone you don't want to see
4. **withdrawing** – as if being unwilling to join in a group discussion

For the most part this body shape is interpreted as a non-communicative posture.

2. Gathering vs. Scattering

Our bodies can make movements that either pull things toward us – **gathering** – or send energy out toward others - **scattering**. When we send energy out away from our bodies through movement there is an outward flow of energy. When we make movements that come toward our bodies we are drawing energy in, or taking energy from our environment. There is an inward flow of energy.

There is a noticeable visual difference between an ensemble whose ringing style gathers more than scatters, or alternatively, scatters more than gathers. A “**gathering**” ringing stroke has a more **vertical** path, and appears to be **taking** energy from the audience. Whereas a “**scattering**” ringing stroke has a more **sagittal** path, and appears to be **giving** energy to the audience. **A scattering type of stroke communicates our desire to communicate with our audience.**

3. Stance

Besides the physical stability that it provides when supporting and ringing an instrument out in front of us, ringing with **one foot in front of the other** simply expands our physical kinesphere. Shifting weight from the back foot to the front foot, and back again as we ring, makes the SPACE we are using behind the table larger.