Earle Brown formulated general instructions for “open form” for earlier compositions, such as NOVARA (1962; published by Editions Peters), excerpted below:

**Novara (1962), Directions for Performance**

**PRELIMINARY NOTES**

Spontaneous decisions in the performance of a work and the possibility of the composed elements being “mobile” have been of primary interest to me for some time; the former to an extreme degree in *Folio* (1952), and the latter, most explicitly, in *Twenty Five Pages* (1953). For me, the concept of the elements being mobile was inspired by the mobiles of Alexander Calder, in which, similar to this work, there are basic units subject to innumerable different relationships or forms. The concept of the work being conducted and formed spontaneously in performance was originally inspired by the “action-painting” techniques and works of Jackson Pollock in the late 1940s, in which the immediacy and directness of “contact” with the material is of great importance and produces such an intensity in the working and in the result. The performance conditions of these works are similar to a painter working spontaneously with a given palette.

The conductor may conduct the events in any sequence or juxtaposition, in changing tempi, loudness, and in general mold and form the piece. The inherent flexibility of the materials allows the work to constantly transform itself and re-express its potential, while the sound materials and characteristics which I have composed contain the essential “identity” which makes this work different from any other.

I have felt that the conditions of spontaneity and mobility of elements which I have been working with create a more urgent and intense “communication” throughout the entire process, from composing to the final realization of a work. I prefer that each “final form,” which each performance necessarily produces, be a collaborative adventure, and that the work and its conditions of human involvement remain a “living” potential of engagement.

**SCORE AND STRUCTURE**

The conductor may begin a performance with any event on any page and may proceed from any page to any other page at any time, with or without repetitions or omissions of pages or events, remaining on any page or event as long as he wishes.

**TIME NOTATION**

There is a built-in factor of flexibility in the notation and scoring of this piece because the availability of forms is based on letting go of the idea of metric accuracy. This is achieved through the notational system used in this work. This system, which I have called a “time-notation,” is a development of the work in *Folio* (1952 and 1953) and most clearly represents sound-relationships in the score as I wish them to exist in performance, independent of a strict pulse or metric system.

**CONDUCTING**

The conducting technique is basically one of cueing; the notation precludes the necessity and function of “beat” in the usual sense (although the conductor does indicate the relative tempo). The number of the event to be performed is indicated by the left hand of the conductor — one to five fingers. A conventional (right-hand) down-beat initiates the activity. The relative speed and dynamic intensity with which an event is to be performed is implied by the speed and largeness of the down-beat as given with the right hand. Nearly all of the events in the score have been assigned dynamic values. These are acoustically accurate in terms of instrumental and ensemble sonority and balance and must be respected as written, although the conductor may “over-ride” the indicated dynamic values and raise or lower the over-all loudness.

The conception of the work is that the score presents specific material having different characteristics, and that
of the event to be modified with his left hand; then indicates
the modification — a hold or cut-off — with
only
his right hand.
(Events not indicated by the fingers of the conductor’s left
hand continue to proceed normally.) It is absolutely essential
that the orchestra members clearly understand this difference
in signaling: a hold or cut-off by both
hands affects an entire
group; a hold or cut-off by only
the right hand affects only
the
event indicated by the fingers of the left hand. Players whose
parts do not contain events signaled by the conductor’s left
hand must remain unaffected by his subsequent right-hand
indications.
As soon as the conductor initiates (by left-hand event-
signal and right-hand down-beat) a new event that appears
on the player’s part, the preceding event is automatically
cancelled. No specific stop-signal is required. The player
simply discontinues the event he is playing and, without break
between events, begins to play the new one.
With these procedures clearly understood by the conductor
and the musicians it is possible to achieve smooth transitions
and long lines of connected material of extreme complexity
and frequent modification. The first impression derived from
the score will be one of many sporadic fragments. This wealth
of fragments shows the numerous formal possibilities inherent
in the work, and it is this realization, not the fragmentations,
that must become the dominant characteristic of performance.