

JAMES E. GARDNER

# CHARGE

A Member of The Oboe Family of Instruments



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AI SI 008

# James E. Gardner

(1962-)

James Gardner was born in Liverpool in 1962, and spent much of the 1980s in London playing keyboards and programming synthesizers and samplers for a variety of well-known artists. He worked both live and in studio, as well as writing and co-writing music in many groups. These included Pete Shelley's band and Howard Devoto's band Luxuria. In 1990 he co-founded the band and remix team Apollo 440, reworking tracks by artists such as U2 and Scritti Politti. Apollo 440 boasted an embodiment of musical open-mindedness and a wide diversity of output. Its self-professed goal was 'to explore the meaning of life'.

The group's name was taken from the Greek god Apollo, the frequency of concert pitch (A440 Hz), and the Sequential Circuits sampler/sequencer, the Studio 440. Gardner is credited with 'having prepared the ground for their subliminal stealth sonic sound synthesis'.

Since his mid-teens, writing notated music had gradually developed into an analogous flow simultaneous with the rest of his improvisatory work. In 1991 his virtuosic solo piano piece *Shattered/Blue Ground* (performed by Joanna MacGregor), was runner-up in the Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival Composers' Competition. Encouraged by Michael Finnissy, James Gardner left Apollo 440 in 1993 in order to concentrate on written composition. The same year he attended Brian Ferneyhough's classes at the Viitasaari Summer Academy, Finland.

Gardner emigrated to New Zealand in 1994, and, two years later, set up the contemporary music ensemble 175 East, of which he was Director and occasional conductor until April 2010. The group (175 East is more or less the longitude of Auckland) has since earned an international reputation and given many acclaimed world *première* performances of music by New Zealand and overseas composers. Radio New Zealand Concert frequently broadcasts their concerts.

Gardner's compositions have been performed and broadcast throughout the world notably in New Zealand, Australia, UK, mainland Europe, Asia and North and South America. He was the recipient of the 2003 CANZ Trust Fund Award, which is awarded annually for compositional achievement by the Composers' Association of New Zealand. Gardner was the inaugural Creative New Zealand/Victoria University composer-in-residence (2004-2005) and held the Trans-Tasman Composer Exchange residency (2005/2006). During this latter period he also worked with Australia's foremost new music ensemble, Elision. In 2007 the New Zealand Trio performed his trio, *blessed unrest*. James Gardner teaches at the University of Auckland (post-war art music history) and Unitec (music technology) and is a regular performer at the Vitamin S evenings of improvised music in Auckland.

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This short piece was written in 1997 as a twenty-first birthday present for clarinetist Esther Smaill. The melodic fragment heard at the outset soon skitters over its own unstable surface, mutates into fanfare-like repetitions, is spliced with momentary cantabile inserts, becomes interrupted by slow motion signposts, and blows itself out in a final burst of energy.

The version for the oboe family was written in 1999 and dedicated to the renowned oboe d'amore soloist Jennifer Paull for her work in instigating and presenting music for all the rare oboes and members of the oboe family of instruments.

The *première* of this version was given by the Chilean oboist of French descent, Jorge Postel Pavisic, at the International Double Reed Society Conference in Buenos Aires (2000).

James E. Gardner  
1999



## Legend

- ≡ Flutter tongue
- ◇ Breath only
- ◆ Breathy tone
- ✱ Slap tongue (a violent stacatissimo may be substituted)



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