

## Leon Gray

Born and raised in Taranaki, Leon enjoyed piano and theory lessons from a young age, going onto get the highest mark in University Entrance music in New Zealand. He moved onto composition studies at the University of Auckland, completing a Bachelor of Music degree, then completing a Diploma in Teaching (primary teacher). During his time in Auckland, he built a profile as a skilled accompanist and musical director, working with a wide range of groups including *North Shore Operatic Society*, *Centrestage Orewa* and *Auckland Music Theatre*. At this time, he also completed postgraduate studies in business and administration (PGDipBus Admin) and education research (PGDipEd).

After appointment as head of primary music and drama at Kadimah College, he headed to Scotland, eventually securing position as a music specialist classroom teacher for West Lothian Council. Upon returning to New Zealand, Leon took on new roles as a journalist and a resource developer, as well as continuing work as an accompanist and musical director. After moving to Tauranga in 2011, he continued his composition studies, as well as a BMus (Hons) dissertation focussed on adapting literacy teaching practices to classroom music teaching.

He moved to full time studio teaching in 2013, which allowed him time and freedom to explore game and memory-based ideas around music theory teaching. In 2015, he developed some of these ideas into a holiday programme called *Staveblasters*, which he later adapted and trialled for teaching in classrooms. All of which helped him complete his Master of Education (First Class Honours) degree; the findings of which informed the development of the ATOM programme and its illustrated resources. He went onto complete his Master of Music (First Class Honours) degree, and now operates a highly successful studio in Tauranga. He continues to work as a musical director, composer and accompanist in and around the Bay of Plenty.