

Graeme Leak, music-maker
biography 2018

Graeme studied piano and percussion in Sydney, New York and Melbourne. Performing career highlights include playing as a soloist for Olivier Messiaen in 1988; premiering over 100 newly commissioned solo and ensemble works through the 90s; and performing for a decade with the Spaghetti Western Orchestra, including tours to Montreal Jazz Festival and a BBC Proms Concert at the Royal Albert Hall.

Graeme's compositions explore and challenge notions of high and low art. He has written pieces that work equally well in comedy rooms and concert halls. Since he began composing in high school he has written over 50 works for instruments and voices, including commissions for the 2006 Commonwealth Games and the 2013 Canberra Centenary.

Graeme's work in community often involves a mix of composing, instrument making, rehearsing and workshopping with groups of all ages, skill levels and from all walks of life. In 2012, together with long-time collaborator Patrick Cronin, Graeme created 'Raising the Roof' for Arts Centre Melbourne, an event that brought together over 300 musicians with a part for the audience in the Finale.

Graeme has devised and produced events for Melbourne Recital Centre, the Melbourne Festival, Ten Days on the Island, the Queensland Music Festival and in the UK for the Watford Colosseum, Oxford Contemporary Music and Cornerstone Arts Centre.

A committed educator and workshop leader, Graeme believes participating in music can bring about positive social change, especially when it's simple, direct and joyous.