



skills and teaching music while his wife, Bronwyn worked.

"It was helpful to me. I learnt a lot from that experience."

The next step took him across the sea to the Guitar Institute of Technology in Los Angeles.

He believed there he could achieve more in one year than was possible in 25 years in New Zealand. But it was no easy task.

"Four times I came close to coming home. It was quite a revelation to me, I've never felt that lonely before, all there was was eating, sleeping and music.

"When I got pictures of the kids it would be real bad. When people talked about music I was fine but as soon as they talked about family I just had to get up and leave.

"In a place that's as big as that you get the feeling nobody would notice if you dropped dead in the street. People become inhuman."

He pauses and casts an appreciative eye over the street.

"Musically it was just what I wanted but on the personal side it was a real revelation."

He laughs: "When I came home I crossed the road and had eight conversations with people, in LA that was the number I'd had in three months."

From LA it was back to Grey Lynn to open the School of Creative Musician-ship.

"I opened the school for three reasons — because I love it and I wanted to demystify music. People think it is out of reach but anyone can play. Two, because I wanted to help people develop a professional attitude instead of just being technicians. A lot of people aren't interested in being original but I think it's important.

"And thirdly, because I wanted to work against the idea that commercial musicians need not be taught. I think that's incredibly shortsighted."

"The school is the only one of its type in the country and it's achieving good things. The first 10 played for years and they have to sit down and take apart what they have been doing — it takes time and that shocks them."

The learning process takes place in a cold, untidy room in Ponsonby. Watched by his students Taura paces the floor issuing instructions: "Write — pah, pah-pah pah pah-pah pap-pap-pap-pah..." Foreheads crease as students stare at pieces of paper as if waiting for the magic formula to appear.

The school is doing well but Taura is still kindling that fire.

"I'm writing music for two independently made movies and I'm talking to the Education board about teaching non-classical music in schools.

"At the moment I've got lots of pokers in the fire but nothing has actually ignited... but it's only a matter of time."

Debra Reweti