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Problems

By Joe Musaphia

Directed by Gavin Rutherford

Starring Simon Leary and Andrew Paterson

Circa One

May 11 - 26

Tues - Thurs 6.30pm,

Fri - Sat 8pm, Sun 4pm

\$25 - \$52



You think you've got *problems*? Check out these guys...

A World Premiere of the high energy, high anxiety New Zealand comedy by one of our country's finest writers. Featuring explosive performances from two of New Zealand's best & brightest comedy talents.

Joe Musaphia is back, premiering his latest hit comedy, *Problems* for a fortnight of hilarity from the 11th to the 26th of May, directed by the outstanding, Gavin Rutherford who is making his directorial premiere at Circa Theatre, starring the hilarious duo of Simon Leary & Andrew Paterson. Featuring the award winning design team of Ian Harman (*Hand to God*), Marcus McShane (*The Father*) & the fabulous Shelia Horton (*Switzerland*).

It's a politically tense & reformed world & the Great Leader is having a nap. Boris and Stephan guard his room with revolutionary zeal. But wasn't he supposed to be awake by now? The Great Leader's Wife says 'wake him!' The Great Leader's General says 'let him sleep!' & doesn't The Great Leader sleep with a gun?

A witty, silly & relevant comedy with a bang in the tradition of Tom Stoppard, Armando Iannucci and Monty Python with a New Zealand edge. *Problems* is a highly relevant hilarious high dive into a world of demagogues, mixed messages and Big Brother. Envisioned as a George Orwell '1984' inspired world of the Great Leader, we meet these 'Rosencrantz and Guildenstern' styled buffoons as they tackle their responsibilities and each other with twists, turns and surprises to shock & entertain you!



Andrew Paterson (Actor) Joe Musaphia (Playwright) and Simon Leary (Actor)



Image Credit: William Duignan (design) Stephen A'Court (photo)

Have a read of our exclusive Q & A with playwright Joe Musaphia on his new explosive comedy, *Problems*

Q. When did you start writing plays?

A. After finishing my education at Christchurch Boys High in 1953, I started working as a motor mechanic, a salesman & a commercial artist in Wellington & London. For three years I was a weekly cartoonist for the NZ listener. I decided to write my first play *Freein 1960* & I submitted it to Richard Campion at the New Zealand Players. He produced it in 1961 & I've been hooked on a writing career ever since.

Q. Tell us more about your career in Theatre?

A. In 1962 I joined Stagecraft, an amateur theatre company. Richard Campion saw me acting theatre & auditioned me for a national tour of *Oh What A Lovely War*. I then became a professional radio actor at Downstage & Radio New Zealand. My Stage plays have been produced throughout Australasia. In 1975 I acted in most my successful play *Mothers & Fathers*, the first NZ play at Downstage to be transferred to the Wellington Opera House. It has since been produced throughout NZ, Australia, Canada & South Africa.

Q. What made you want to create *Problems*?

A. *Problems* was inspired by British historian Simon Sebag Montefiore's book *Stalin - The Court of The Red Tsar*. The chapter covering the death of Stalin struck me as an electrifying view of paranoia, totalitarianism, cynicism and brute opportunism. It radiated black humour and I couldn't resist it!

Q. What drives you to keep writing new shows & stories?

A. For 56 years I've written millions of words and I love writing too much to retire! As Roger Hall said, 'They'll find me face down on my keyboard.'