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The Substance of Fire

by Jon Robin Baitz

April 13 - May 21, 1995

(previews April 11 & 12)

THE CAST

(in order of appearance)

Sarah Geldhart	Ellen COHEN
Martin Geldhart	Howard ROSENSTEIN
Aaron Geldhart	Howard BILERMAN
Isaac Geldhart	Maurice PODBREY
Marge Hackett	Marion GILSENAN
Director	Anthony AKERMAN
Set & Costume Designer	Marcel DAUPHINAIS
Lighting Designer	Guy SIMARD
Assistant to the Lighting Designer	Howard MENDELSON
Stage Manager	Lynn McQUEEN
Apprentice Stage Manager	Gretel G. MEYER

Act One

Spring, 1987

The offices of Kreeger/Geldhart Publishers, New York City

Act Two

Winter, three and a half years later

Isaac Geldhart's apartment in Gramercy Park, New York City

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Jon Robin Baitz

(Playwright)

JON ROBIN BAITZ was born in Los Angeles and grew up in Brazil, South Africa and the U.S. He now lives in New York City. He is the author of *The Film Society* (1987 - based on his childhood experiences in South Africa), presented at the Los Angeles Theatre Center, London's Hampstead Theatre Club and Second Stage in New York; and *The Substance of Fire* (1991), presented by Playwrights Horizons, Lincoln Center Theater and Mark Taper Forum. Three of his plays were published in *Substance of Fire and Other Plays* in 1993.

Baitz studied playwriting at the Padua Hills Playwrights' Workshop in Los Angeles; and is the recipient of several awards and fellowships including the L.A. Weekly Award for Outstanding Writing, the Charles Revson Fellowship from Playwrights Horizons in 1987, the Berman-Bloch Fellowship from Los Angeles Theatre Center in 1987, the Newsday Oppenheimer Award in 1989 for *The Film Society*, and a Rockefeller Fellowship.

He has written and directed the film *Three Hotels* for PBS Television's American Playhouse and is working on a screenplay for *The Substance of Fire* for Agnieszka Holland, director of *Europa Europa*. Other plays to his credit are *Dutch Landscape* and *The End of the Day*. Jon Robin Baitz is a member of New York's Naked Angels Theatre Company.

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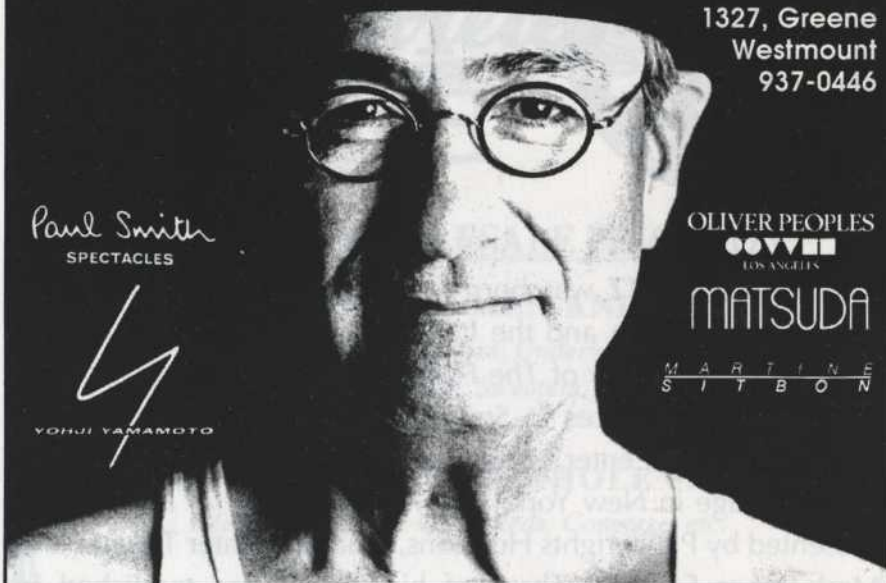


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Ellen Cohen (*Sarah Geldhart*) is delighted to be back at Centaur once again where she appeared as Rose in *Dancing at Lughnasa* and Mae in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. Ellen recently completed filming *Sirens*, the American series soon to be seen on CFCF and Télé-Métropole, in which she plays the regular role of Officer Amy Shapiro. Other television and film appearances include two seasons as Rachel Kane in the CBS/CBC series *Urban Angel*, Prudence Heward in *By Woman's Hand* (N.F.B.), Ellen Harris in *Are You Afraid of the Dark: Full Moon* (Nickelodeon), Lani in *Deadbolt*, Freda in *The Quarrel*, Marie in *The Final Heist*, Hélène in *Aux Voleurs*, and roles in *Mrs. Parker and the Vicious Circle* and *Love and Human Remains*. Notable stage credits include *I Hate Hamlet* and *On The Verge* (Theatre Lac Brome), *Accidents de Parcours* at Théâtre Denise Pelletier, *The Heidi Chronicles* (Saidye Bronfman Centre), *The Perils of Persephone* (The Piggery), *Extremities* for Elite Productions; as well as *Marat/Sade*, *Danton's Death*, and *Stella in A Streetcar Named Desire*, all in Toronto. Ellen dedicates her performance to the "father figure" in her life, her dad Louis Cohen, whose sense of humour, support and unconditional love gave her the "fire" to follow her dreams.

Howard Rosenstein (*Martin Geldhart*) is pleased to be making his Centaur debut. Montreal theatregoers will remember Howard from his recent performance as Sganarelle in Splinter Productions' *Death, Delirium & Desire*. Howard has also performed with the Stratford Festival in *The Government Inspector*, *Twelfth Night*, *King Lear*, and *Measure for Measure*;



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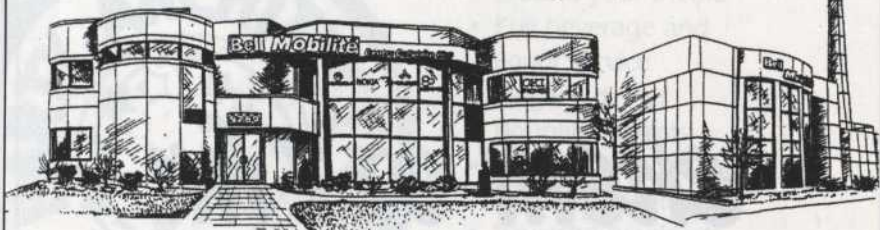
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and more recently with Montreal's Esperance Theatre in *The Fairground Booth*. Select film and television credits include *Zero Patience*, *Mathica's Mathshop* (TVO), *Mrs. Parker and the Vicious Circle*, *E.N.G.* and *Top Cops*.

Howard Bilerman (*Aaron Geldhart*) returns to Centaur, where he delighted audiences with his energetic and humorous portrayal of Eugene M. Jerome in the 1991 production of *Broadway Bound*. Howard is a graduate of the Dome Theatre (Dawson College) and has trained at the Yale School of Dramatic Art (1986). He has performed extensively in and around Montreal with Geordie Productions in *Andrew's Tree*, *Going Back*, and *The Paper Bag Princess*; and with Theatre Lac Brome as the drum-pounding, money-loving Manny Bridgeman in *Rock and Roll*. As a graduate of the Concordia Communications Program, Howard produced *Hamlet* for Big Art Productions, a company which he founded with Alain Goulem (last seen in Centaur's *Tall Tales of a Generation*). Howard also records music under the name *eavesdropper*, and runs the *bumble bee* record label.

Maurice Podbrey (*Isaac Geldhart*) is celebrating his 26th Anniversary as Executive and Founding Artistic Director of Centaur Theatre Company. Over the years, Maurice has directed numerous productions, including *Master Harold...and the Boys*, *K2*, *Woman in Mind*, *My Children! My Africa!*, *The Affections of May*, and *Someone Who'll Watch Over Me*. He has also portrayed Vanya in *Uncle Vanya*, "Captain" Jack Boyle in *Juno and the Paycock*, Stalin in *Master Class*, Mordecai Weiss in *A Shayna Maidel*, and Pontius Pilate/Professor Stravinsky earlier this season in *The Master and*

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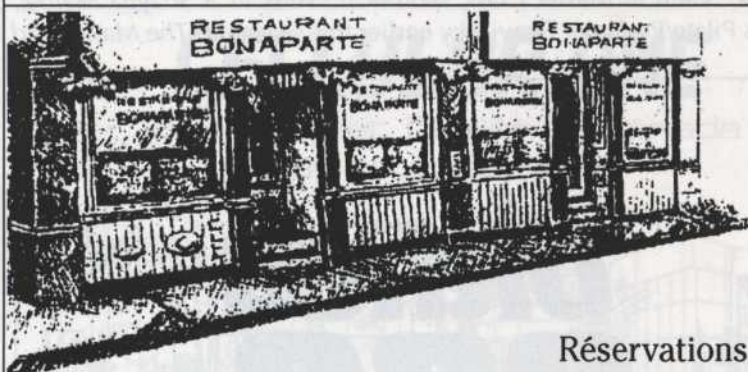
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Margarita. Maurice Podbrey has acted as Chairman of the Professional Association of Canadian Theatres (PACT) for two terms and is currently a member of the Board of the Directors of the National Theatre School of Canada and of Alliance Quebec. He is a recipient of the Order of Canada and of an honorary Doctor of Law degree (1992) from Concordia University.

Marion Gilsenan (*Marge Hackett*), one of Canada's leading actresses, comes to Centaur having just starred in Timothy Findlay's *The Stillborn Lover* at Theatre Passe Muraille in Toronto. Ms. Gilsenan has performed in theatres across the country and for six seasons at the Shaw Festival in such roles as Gabrielle in the *Madwoman of Chaillot*, Mrs. Birling in *An Inspector Calls*, and Mme St. Pé in *Waltz of the Toreadors*. She has also appeared at Centre Stage as Gilberte in *Bonjour la Bonjour*; at the Manitoba Theatre Centre as Mrs. Stanton in *The Speckled Band*; at Canadian Stage in *Richard III/ The Queens* and *To Grandmother's House We Go*; at Theatre Aquarius in *The Dresser* and at Theatre New Brunswick in *Safe Haven*. Amongst her numerous radio, film and television credits are principal roles in *The Canadians* and *Vanishing Point* (both for CBC Radio), Vera Wade in *Getting Married in Buffalo Jump* (CBC Television), and Miss Marsden in *The Road to Avonlea*. Most recently, she starred in the Gemini-nominated *Coming of Age*.




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Anthony Akerman (Director)

Anthony Akerman was born in Durban, South Africa, in 1949. While a student in the Drama Department at Rhodes University he directed his first production, *The Maids* by Jean Genet. After completing an Honours degree in English Literature, he left for Britain where he did the Director's Course at the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School and postgraduate Theatre Studies at the University of Cardiff.

In 1975, the Dutch Anti-Apartheid Movement invited him to Amsterdam to direct Athol Fugard's *Statements After an Arrest under the Immorality Act*. It was the first Fugard play to be performed in Dutch and during the next seventeen years Anthony was to spend in Holland, he went on to direct the Dutch-language premieres of *Boesman and Lena*, *A Lesson from Aloes* and *My Children! My Africa!*

During his years in Amsterdam, Anthony also directed for companies such as Poëzie Hardop, De Nieuwe Komodie, Theaterunie, Werk in Uitvoering and Toneelraad Rotterdam. Although most of his work was with new Dutch writing, he also directed plays such as Caryl Churchill's *Cloud Nine* and Emily Mann's *Still Life*. He has also directed in Paris (Fugard's *People Are Living There*), Mexico (Fugard's *A Lesson from Aloes* for the 1988 Cervantino International Festival) and had work produced in Germany (*Somewhere on the Border*, Stuttgart, 1988). From 1986 to 1990 he worked as Literary Manager for RO Theater in Rotterdam, where his stage adaptation of Horace McCoy's *They Shoot Horses, Don't They?* was performed. He also has a number of translations to his credit, including Howard Brenton's *Hess is Dead* (English to Dutch) and Inez van Dullemen's *Write Me in the Sand* (Dutch to English).

In 1983 he founded Thekwini Theater in order to work with South African actors in exile. In the same year he directed his own play, *Somewhere on the Border* (an anti-war play then banned in South Africa), for this company. In 1984 he directed Athol Fugard's *The Blood Knot* and in 1988 *A Man out of the Country*, his own play set in the South African exile community in Amsterdam, both for Thekwini.

Anthony returned to South Africa in 1990 to direct *Somewhere on the Border* for the Loft Theatre Company in Durban. In 1992 he settled in Johannesburg, where he directs and writes for theatre and television. In 1993 he directed Jon Robin Baitz's *The Substance of Fire* for PACT (Performing Arts Council of the Transvaal.) In March 1995 his Spanish-language production of Fugard's *The Road to Mecca* opened in Mexico City. He returns to Johannesburg at the end of April to direct his award-winning play, *Dark Outsider*, for PACT and the Grahamstown Festival.

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Marcel Dauphinais (*Set & Costume Designer*) graduated from l'École des Beaux-Arts in Montreal and l'Ecole des Métiers d'Art in Paris, where he later lived and worked for four years. His work also took him to London, England, for ten years, where he set up his own free-lance design studio, and to New York to create sets for the Robert Stigwood Organization. In Montreal, in addition to running his own graphic design studio, he has created some 80 sets for the following companies: Café de la Place des Arts, Compagnie Jean Duceppe, Conservatoire d'Art dramatique du Québec, Les Grands Ballets Canadiens, la Nouvelle Compagnie Théâtrale, l'Opéra de Montréal, La Licorne, Showbiz International, The Piggery (North Hatley), Théâtre d'Aujourd'hui, Théâtre de Marjolaine (Eastman), Théâtre Populaire du Québec and Théâtre du Rideau Vert. This is Mr. Dauphinais' 14th set design for Centaur Theatre Company which began with *Piaf* and includes such favourites as *The Leonard Cohen Show*, *Empress Eugénie*, *K2*, Michel Tremblay's *Albertine in Five Times*, Neil Simon's *Biloxi Blues*, Fugard's *My Children! My Africa!*, Fennario's *The Death of René Lévesque*, and Marie Laberge's *Aurélié, ma soeur*. Mr. Dauphinais was also Artistic Director and Designer of the *Gala Pavarotti* for l'Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal.

Guy Simard (*Lighting Designer*), a native Montrealer, has an impressive depth of experience as lighting designer, technical consultant and technical director, participating in well over 250 productions with distinguished theatre companies since 1971. Resident lighting designer for l'Opéra de Montréal for many years, Mr. Simard's most recent credits range from the Festival international d'Opéra's *Aida* which toured stadiums in Japan, Australia, and Canada, to avant-garde productions such as *Woyzeck*, *Robert*



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Zucco, and *La Trahison orale* for Theatre Ubu, a Canadian-based company which regularly performs in the French European community. An associate of Trizart Consultations, a company which offers theatre design, theatre equipment and architectural lighting services, Mr. Simard has been the senior consultant on many prestigious projects including the renovation and restoration of The Monument National in Montreal and the Theatre Capitol, a designated World Heritage site in Quebec City. A graduate of The National Theatre School of Canada, Mr. Simard has been teaching lighting design at the school for several years.

Howard Mendelsohn (*Assistant to the Lighting Designer*), in his fifth season at Centaur, is currently the company's technical director. He has designed the lighting for several Centaur shows including *The Royal Baccarat Scandal*, *Someone Who'll Watch Over Me* and most recently, *Love & Other Games*. Some of his other lighting design credits include *Macbeth* for Repercussion Theatre, *Danny and the Deep Blue Sea* for Stagehead Productions in Calgary, Don Harron's *Charlie Farquharson's Magic Lantern Show* at Place des Arts, and *The Ecstasy of Rita Joe*, *Tartuffe*, and *The Servant of Two Masters* for McGill University. Howard is also a fanatic fisherman who's thrilled that spring is here - more fishing stories to follow...

Lynn McQueen (*Stage Manager*) stage managed Centaur's first show this season, *The Master and Margarita*. Previous Centaur credits include *Come Good Rain*, *Blokes Two*, *Uncle Vanya*, *Arms and the Man*, *Playboy of the West Indies*, *Karla and Grif*, *Blokes*, *The Death of René Lévesque*, *Our*

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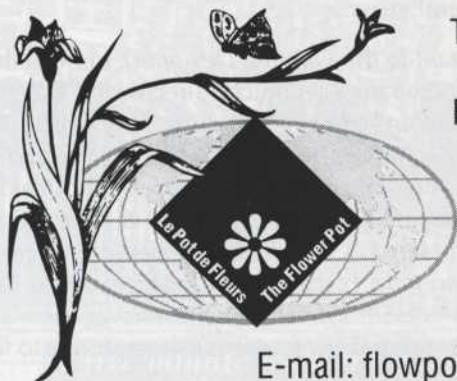
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Gretel G. Meyer (*Apprentice Stage Manager*) began working in stage management during the 1990 summer season at the King's Playhouse in Georgetown, P.E.I. (her home province). There she was Assistant Stage Manager and Props Master for *Harvest Moon Rising*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, and *White Weddings*. Though relatively new to the city of Montreal, Gretel is no stranger to the nearby Eastern Townships. She spent four years in Lennoxville studying drama at Bishop's University and working as a technical apprentice and projectionist at Centennial Theatre. In 1993, she spent the summer in neighboring North Hatley as Props Master for *Lend Me A Tenor* and *The Best of Bowser and Blue* at the Piggery Theatre. Gretel began her apprenticeship at Centaur with *Blokes II* in March 1994. Since that time Centaur credits include a remount of *Blokes II*; the Canadian drama, *Someday*; and the recent collective, *Tall Tales of a Generation*.

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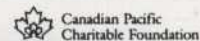
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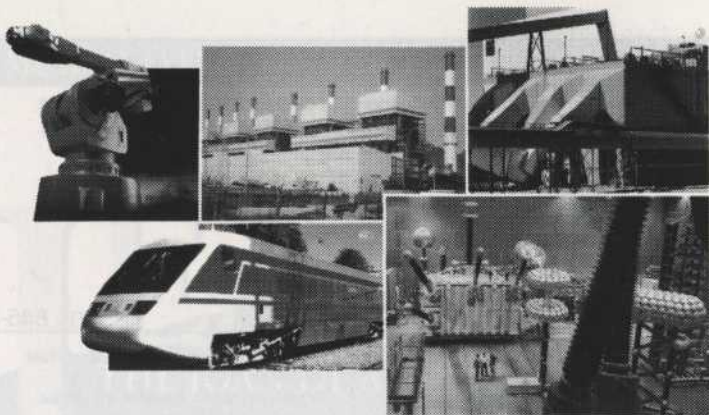
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