

arts

Good play, fine staging

by Kevin Gillese

It's hard to find a dramatic production which is not "great" but is so well-done one walks away from it with a sense of having witnessed a powerful, moving work.

Equus is such a production. Thankfully held over an extra week at the Citadel Theatre (until Jan 15), *Equus* is not "great theatre" in the sense of being an artistic work which forcefully confronts an audience with insights into the human condition.

Nonetheless, *Equus* manages to communicate significant themes through the use of intense, natural dialogue, flawless stage technique and powerful dramatic moments.

And with excellent acting from the young male lead, Ian Deaking, who plays the mentally-disturbed juvenile, Alan Strang, and strong acting in supporting roles, *Equus* is one of the best pieces of theatre the Citadel has staged in the last two years.

Director Kurt Reis moves English playwright Peter Shaffer's work briskly through its complicated scenarios, keeping the audience taut with anticipation and allowing *Equus* to live up to its advance billing (it won

kudos from New York and British critics three years ago when they voted it "play of the year" on Broadway and in London's West End).

Equus is an experimental play which works - and works well - on many levels of meaning, yet unravels a gripping story to bind the work together into a well-defined whole.

The use of staccato dialogue, flashback scenes juxtaposed in collage fashion, intricate ballet-like manoeuvres with the "horsemen" of Alan's worship, and other innovative theatrical devices are done naturally and in no way jar the performance. In fact, Shaffer's use of staging innovations encouraged a wave-like movement of emotion throughout the performance, sweeping to crescendos at appropriate moments in the action.

The technique is so effective that when Alan and Jill, the village girl, become entangled in their frontal nude scene, the audience is so caught up in the heightened action, the culmination of events, that taboo reaction is negligible (although apparently some Edmontonians at previous performances have taken offence).

And the result, with Alan standing literally and figuratively naked before Martin Dysart (Kenneth Haigh), his psychiatrist, is a powerful climax which sustains the denouement of the work, a lengthy, impassioned soliloquy by Haigh.

One of the unfortunate aspects of the performance, I felt, was Haigh's acting which seemed a bit too smooth and without perhaps the depth of emotion the part called for in the work. Alan's mother and father (Doreen Brownstone and Antony Parr, respectively) also seemed a bit weak in their roles, although not jarringly so.

As usual with Citadel productions, lighting and set design were clean and very well done.

Noontime poetry

The Shocter Theatre will be presenting a noontime poetry reading January 7, 1977. Kenneth Haigh presents: *The World is too Much With Us*. With Diane Stapley, Kenneth Haigh and John Neville.

Buy your tickets now; avoid disappointment!! Admission: \$1.00.

Big Beast bares beauty's breasts

by Dave Samuel

King Kong — a Dino De Laurentiis film (Capitol Square cinemas) Yes, some of the aspects of the new King Kong are, in themselves, improvements on the 1933 original.

Jeff Bridges, as a righteous, counter-culture paleontologist from Princeton, does an excellent job of preparing the viewer for the coming of Kong. He conveys such an impression of candor, sense of purpose and intelligence that one expects some crucial act of heroism from him. Unfortunately, the movie doesn't provide him with an opportunity to fulfill this poten-

tial, and his importance dwindles as King Kong progresses.

Jessica Lange's Dwan is a more complex character than Fay Wray's heroine. She is literally and metaphorically a drifter — an amiable, sexually hip, party-girl type who seems to view the world through a slightly out-of-focus lens. Vacuity is Lange's substitute for Wray's innocence. Her inability to comprehend her circumstances tends to give the viewer the shuddery but always enjoyable sense of anticipation which arises when he knows what is going to happen, but the victim of the impending happening doesn't.

Dwan's affection for her paleontologist may be a result of

the attraction which his stability holds for her, but the fact that her I.Q. appears to fall about fifty points short of his tends to rob the relationship of its credibility. Dwan's concern for Kong is believable and occasionally touching. Unfortunately one has the impression that if the big fellow were just a little, you know — smaller, Dwan's reaction to his sexual advances would be radically different.

The most obviously improved features of the new Kong are its cinematography and special effects. The landscape shots are often remarkable, and the simulated background shots are well done. Naturally Kong himself is the major technical triumph. This King Kong is both life-like and awesome in his sheer bulk. His movements are fluid, and the sound effects which sometimes accompany them, for instance his gargantuan breathing, are decidedly a plus. His snarl is true marvel.

One of the attributes of the original Kong which is most difficult to reproduce is the schlocky, campy humour which the passing of thirty-odd years has enhanced. The makers of the new Kong have ingeniously attempted to achieve a similar effect through the deliberate use of intentionally putrid lines and bits of obviously irreverent dialogue. Occasionally this dialogue is funny, at other times it represents some of the worst lines ever uttered on the screen.

Can. artist exhibition

Jack Bush: A Retrospective will be on view at the Edmonton Art Gallery from January 8 to February 15. Organized by Terry Fenton, Director of the Edmonton, Art Gallery, for the Gallery of Ontario, the exhibition will have 56 works of the Canadian artist from the period 1958-1975. This exhibition was funded in part by The National Museums of Canada.

In the Exhibition Catalogue, Mr. Fenton explores the influences on Bush's art and traces the development of his work from the 1950's to the present. Mr. Fenton claims that Jack Bush is

the first Canadian artist to command an international reputation without leaving the country. He feels that Bush's art is an important part of art today and that it is the product of a unique background and training, together with an entirely individual pictorial imagination.

Official opening of **Jack Bush: A Retrospective** is Friday, January 14, 1977, 8:30 p.m. at the Edmonton Art Gallery. The artist will be present at the opening. Following this, there will be an opening of the artist's one-man show at the Art Mart/Downstairs Gallery on Monday, January 17th.

sports

Bears take consolation honours at Golden Boy

by Steve Hoffart

The holiday basketball schedule started off on the right foot a week ago in Winnipeg, as the Golden Bears regained their early season form in winning 2 out of 3 games at the highly competitive Golden Boy Classic Tournament.

The Bears used the run and gun offence in defeating the number 8 ranked McMaster team, 92-80, and upsetting the number 1 ranked team in the nation, the Laurentian Voyageurs 105-89 to win the consolation final of the tournament.

Manitoba Bisons beat Waterloo in the final 78-67, to capture the tournament trophy. The Bears only loss was a close 85-81 loss to the 5th ranked Waterloo Warriors in the opening game. The difference in the game was the foul trouble that the Bears got into because of their tight man to man defense that they used most of the time due to their lack of height. The Bears outshot Waterloo from the floor, but the Warriors had twice as many foul shots, and this along with poor second half rebounding, prevented the Bears from winning.

Top scorers were Doug Baker with 15 points, (all in the first half before he fouled out) Brent Patterson added 12 points, and his usual eight to 12 assists per game, while Doug Lucas put his game together for 12 points and a strong defensive effort. Keith Smith popped in 9 before he too fouled out.

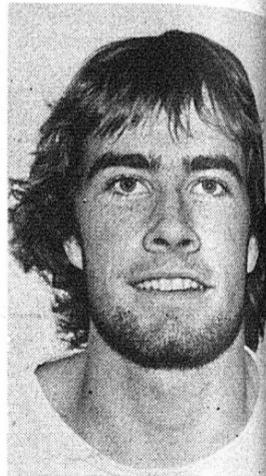
In the McMaster win, the team did the things coach Gary Smith asked for - fast break and rebound, and won easily as Baker scored 17, Lucas and Mike Abercrombie 12, and Steve Panteluk 11.

The switching defenses

Hoop Bears split in Calgary

The U of A Golden Bears opened up the Dino Classic in Calgary with an 88-75 loss to the Lakehead University Nor'Westers Sunday night.

The Bears, who dropped to the consolation side took on the



Brent Patterson

employed by the Bears at McMaster and they were a solid team which Alberta capitulated on with their fast break.

Six Bears shot 100% from the foul line, to help in the victory.

The consolation final was filled with end to end action as the Bears stealing the ball 31 times to open up a 16 point lead at the end of the game.

The fast break never worked better and despite a defensive lapse in the first half when the Voyageurs tied the score, the Bears gained complete control.

Shooting 52% from the floor as a team the scoring saw Baker with 26, Keith Smith and Rooney with 19, and Gary Shockey with 15 points. Patterson ran the offense like a general with 15 assists, and Rooney had a good 2 way game, playing against men who seemed inches taller than him.

Bear Facts: Doug Baker was first team all-star, "Snake" averaged 19 points a game. The Bears should be ranked in the top ten teams in the nation if they continue to do well in the Calgary Classic, Jan 2-4 in Calgary.

It might appear that the sum of these improvements and adaptations should constitute a better film than the original.

This is not the case.

The dimensions which have been added to the characters made them more interesting as individuals but detract from the movie as a whole. Fay Wray's heroine was not meant as a realistic representation of a woman's personality but rather as a flat allegorical figure standing for innocence mixed with beauty. Anna Lange's violation by Kong would be a gruesome physical act, but not a morally shocking one as Wray's would have been. As the male and female leads are more convincingly portrayed, as the relationship between them becomes more genuine, Kong himself is more the interloper. He becomes a monster breaking up a romance. De Laurentiis only avoids this pitfall by making some unfortunate alterations in Kong's character.

The basic flaw in the movie is the misuse of the new Kong's superior acting ability. The

bestial snarls and grimaces are fine but some of his other expressions are distressingly human. The audience knew old Kong had an underlying savage passion for Wray because he slew a dinosaur for her. The new Kong explicitly demonstrates his affection for Dwan by assuming a more expression more appropriate to a love-struck adolescent than the mythic hero. Kong simply crushes on Dwan.

One can't help but feel somewhere inside the beast was a pimply, hairy-pated teenager pushing the levers of buttons. For the true Kong aficionado this sort of thing never replace the savagery and inscrutability, the primal quality of the first King Kong.

This is not to say that the Kong is not entertaining. The power of the basic storyline comes through and the realisation is worth seeing. The final path of Kong's fall to the New York pavement remains. The Kong is clearly a cut above "Jaws" and the other monstrous horror movies.