

# Beaverbrook displays varied works of Verner

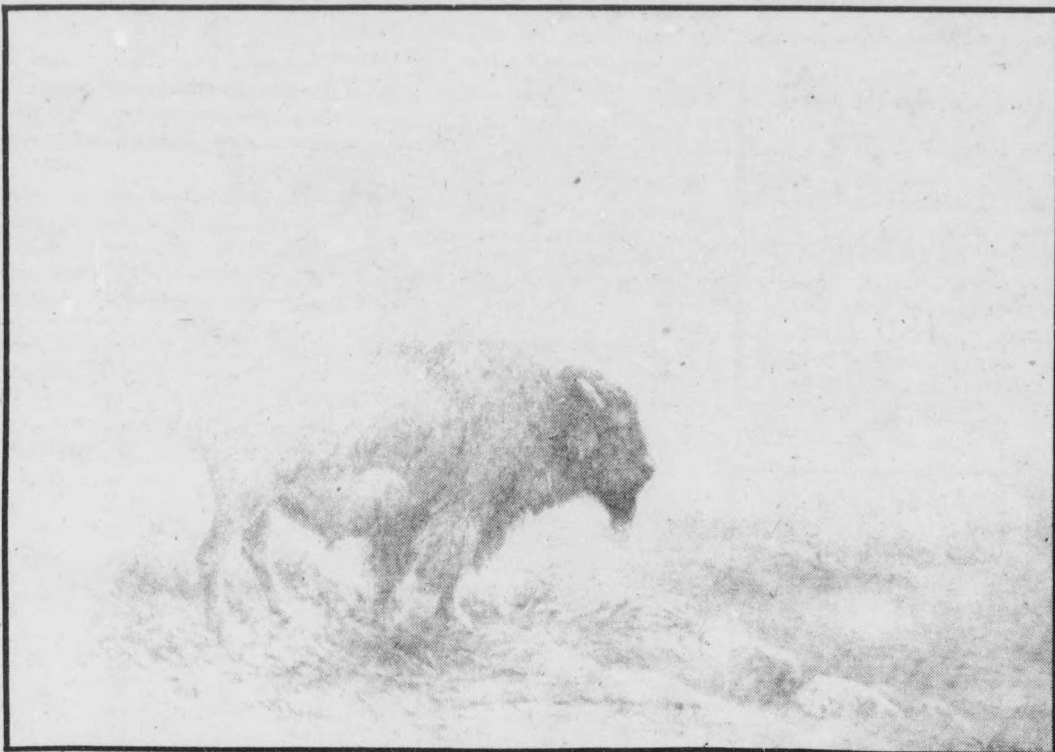
F.A. Verner: Paintings, Watercolours, Drawings

December 15, 1976 - January 16, 1977

Frederick Arthur Verner, a Canadian artist born in 1836, is known primarily as a painter of the Ojibway Indians, a tribe which inhabited the Canadian prairie in the 19th century. In 1862 Verner made his first trip west by foot, some sixteen years after Paul Kane left Toronto on his sketching trip.

Verner's reputation as a painter of the Ojibway and the prairie buffalo in the manner of Paul Kane is only one facet of his artistic career. It is with the intention of showing the diversity of his subject matter and his stylistic evolution from a tight realism to a form of neo-Impressionism, to which the watercolour medium so readily lends itself, that Margaret Annett put together this exhibition for the National Programme, The National Gallery of Canada.

As a school boy in Guelph, Upper Canada, Verner was constantly drawing. By the age of fourteen, he was preparing paintings for various competitions and exhibitions. In 1856, Verner



"Turned out of the herd" watercolour over black chalk is presently on display at the Beaverbrook Art Gallery.

left for London to study art at Leigh's Academy. By 1858, Verner was granted a commission as ensign in the Third West York Infantry Regiment of militia and in October 1860 landed in Naples to

join Garibaldi.

Shortly thereafter, he returned to Toronto where he set up a studio which was to be used as a base for the next two decades, where he returned to "paint-up"

his sketches from his various trips to the west coast.

Verner was active in art circles in Toronto, being one of the founders of the Ontario Society of Artists (OSA) in 1872. Like so

many of his fellow artists, Verner worked as a photographic colourist for the firm of Notman and Fraser at this time.

Verner's oeuvre comprised such atypical subjects as portraits of Charles Dickens (1860 - 1862) and of Sir John A. Macdonald (c.1890), commissioned by Manufacturers' Life, both of which are included in this exhibition.

When comparing the work of Kane and Verner one can readily see that Kane portrayed the North American Indian as a European romanticist would, as a noble savage. Verner showed a greater degree of empathy and perception through his portrayal of the Indian and his relation to the land.

The fluid impressionistic watercolour interpretations of the Indian and the bison are among Verner's finest work. Unlike the transplanted European, Verner truly appreciated the quality of the Canadian light. An example of Verner's work of this period, "Morning Mist, Lake Superior" is in the permanent collection of the Beaverbrook Art Gallery.

The exhibition consists of ninety works supplemented by documentary material. A National Gallery of Canada Journal has been published to accompany the exhibition.

# 'King Kong' a disaster movie par excellence

From the depths of a tropical forest the giant gorilla strides menacingly into a native village where he is worshipped as a god, only to confront modern man waiting to ensnare him. Almost immediately we recognise that 'King Kong' is not merely the greatest of the many monster movies but a metaphor for a much larger struggle between raw animal instinct and the sophistication of a technological society.

Perhaps this explains the lasting appeal of 'Kong' and the reason why it has recently been re-made at a time when many people are questioning the benefits which our scientific culture has brought us. Like Rousseau's noble savage the giant ape carries with him our

unconscious identification with simple animal passions.

Whilst the movie can be viewed as 'high camp' or comic in the same sense that the gorilla suits are in 'Morgan-a Suitable Case for Treatment' or in Don Martins' cartoons for 'Mad' magazine, we are continuously reminded that King Kong is a flesh and blood beast. Like Frankenstein's monster before Learning and Nowlan he has had a bad press but emerges doubly triumphant as a tragic hero. Few people who have ever seen the closing sequence can ever have forgotten or have failed to have been moved by it.

King Kong is a paradoxical movie. It purports to be no more than an adventure fantasy and,

indeed, it is a disaster movie par excellence beside which mere earthquakes pale by comparison. At the same time it appeals to something deeper in its audience.

Although made at a time (1933) when the enthusiasm for technological progress had willed under the impact of wide-scale unemployment, the film succeeds almost in spite of itself in questioning the very values of the industry and the society which

produced it. We see the ape manacled and on display not even as a scientific specimen but like the medieval dancing bear and one feels as if one is witnessing not the beginning but the passing of an age. Kong is an innocent subject to simple emotions of love and hate caught up in a society which first ridicules him and then tries to destroy him. Foredoomed as he is, the ultimate irony rebounds on his captors who dubbed him 'King' when they put

him on display. By the last frame the jungle god has become truly majestic.

The Film Society presents 'King Kong' in Head Hall, room C13 on Saturday, 8 January at 8 p.m., Sunday, 9 January at 6:30 and 9 p.m. (Admission by season ticket obtainable at the door.) and Monday, 10 January at 6:30 and 9 p.m. Admission to Monday's performance is open to the general public, price \$1.

**Sleeping bags extra!!!!**

Neptune's King Lear, the distinguished Canadian actor, Eric Donkin, has arrived in Halifax and the excitement of a new production, a new season, and a new year, is gaining momentum at Halifax's only professional theatre. Considered by many critics as Shakespeare's greatest work, King Lear heralds the start of Neptune's 1977 season on Monday, January 10.

A dark tapestry of passion and power, the play storms with the elements of evil and treachery that threaten Lear's destruction. Eric Donkin in the challenging title role brings to the Neptune production his extensive experience in films, on radio, television and the legitimate stage.

# 'King Lear' premieres

A native Montrealer, Mr. Donkin has performed in virtually every regional theatre in Canada. As a member of the Stratford Festival Company for ten seasons, he has toured Europe and Russia and received great acclaim for his work in such productions as *The Crucible*, *Hamlet*, (as Polonius), *The Importance of Being Earnest*, (as Rev. Chasuble) and *The Three Sisters* (as Ferapont). As a member of the Neptune Theatre Company, Mr. Donkin will be quickly remembered for his many outstanding performances including his appearance as John Tarleton in the Neptune's popular production of *Misalliance* last season, Augie in *Tunnel of Love*, the dual role of Adam/William in *As You Like It* and *Uncle Vanya*. In addition, Mr. Donkin has accepted

numerous engagements in the United States during his fifteen year career as a leading actor. Following his appearance at the Neptune Theatre in the role of King Lear, Eric Donkin will be featured at Stratford in *Richard III*, *The Guardsman* and *Ghosts*.

Preview performances of King Lear will be presented at the Neptune Theatre on January 3, 4 and 8. The production will open on Monday, January 10 and run through Saturday, January 29. Curtain time for all performances will be 8:00 p.m. Tickets for Neptune's King Lear will be on sale at the Box Office (422-7441) beginning Monday, December 27. Neptune's Box Office is now open Monday through Saturday, 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Four years of demise from Theatre of New Company begin another season of performances.

Paul Hanna, director, and announced a season to be performed in the province from May of 1977. In 1976, the Young in Campbellton Riverview, Saint John's schools within radius of Fredericton will be areas in 1977.

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# Frontier

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