

# Mozart wearing antlers

## York Region moose wades into Toronto

BY FRED SIMPSON  
Staff Writer

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart died penniless in the 18th century, despite being a recognized genius. Now he has come back as a moose.

And he'll be taking up residence in front of Roy Thomson Hall.

Believe it or not, Thank Richmond Hill watercolour artist Valerie Kent, who submitted a design for Toronto Mayor Mel Lastman's campaign to decorate his streets with moose designed by area artists.

Her successful creation is named Wolfgang Amadeus Moozart.

In fact, Kent is on a moose roll. She also entered a watercolour of another moose, by the name of Moosketeers, in the competition.

"This design was also accepted," Kent said, "but it hasn't got a sponsor yet, so you could say it's a moose-in-waiting."

Incidentally, her first entry, titled Blue Moose, was rejected.

This puzzles Kent. Not so Wolfgang, who is being sponsored by the internationally known Sotheby's auction house.

"It happened that Sotheby's was looking for an artist to do Wolfgang Amadeus Moozart and I was it," Kent continued.

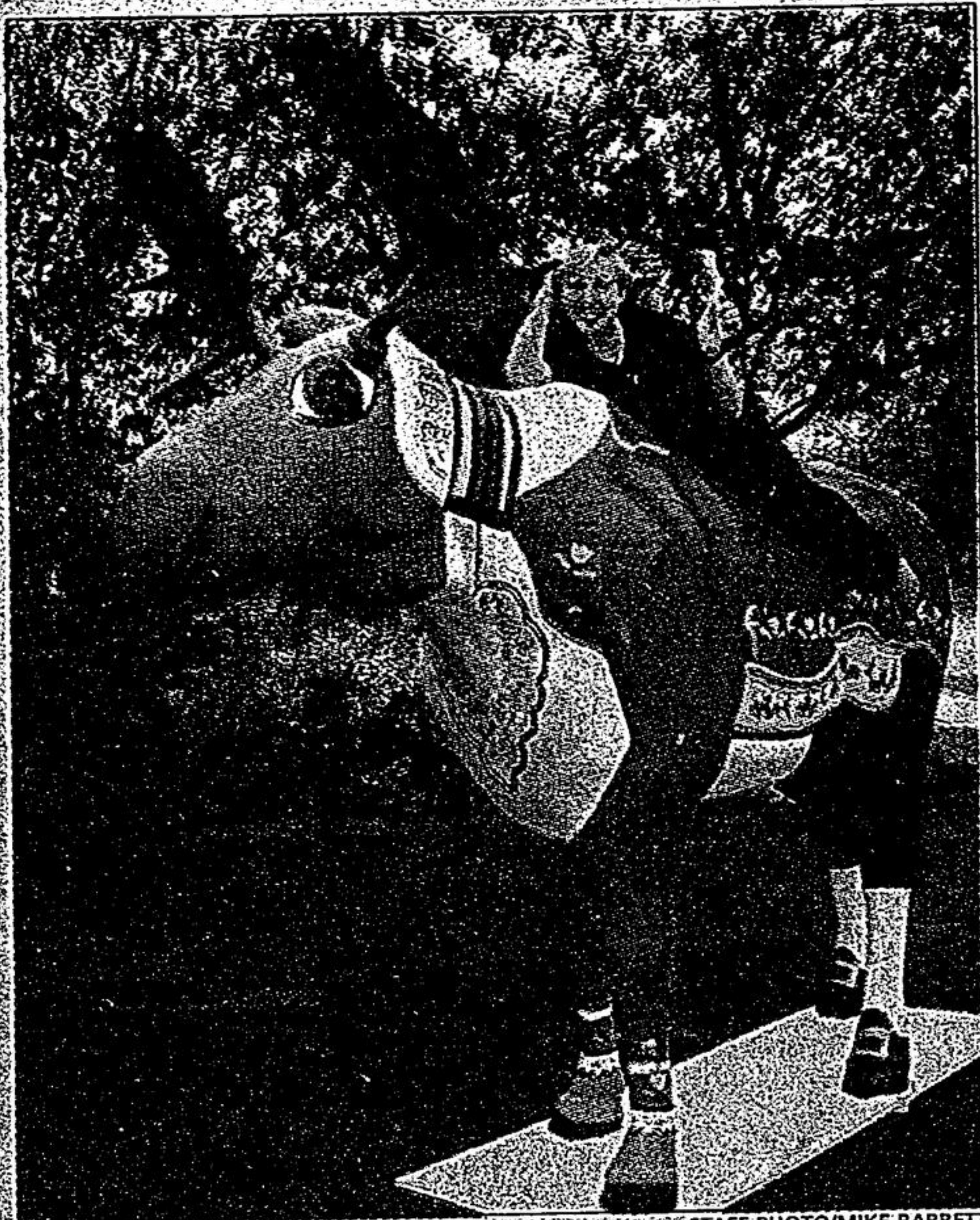
Her long day's journey into moose country began last Wednesday when a truck deposited a 200-pound giant fibreglass moose in her friend's driveway.

"I had the choice of two moose," Kent said. "I could have had one with its head down or the other with its head up."

"I chose the moose with its head up because I always like to look my moose in the face."

Kent made a foray out to some paint shops and came home armed with Wolfgang's favourite colour: red.

Benjamin Moore donated six quarts of paint to each of the moose artists, which was a nice touch, but not the kind of red



STAFF PHOTO/MIKE BARRETT

Richmond Hill watercolour artist Valerie Kent perches atop her creation, Wolfgang Amadeus Moozart, which will soon be seen in the wading pool in front of Roy Thomson Hall in Toronto.

paint required.

She explained, "When Mozart died penniless, about all he had left to his name were five red jackets in his closet. He had a real love of red jackets."

Kent proceeded to paint a red jacket on her Moozart and outfitted him in some black britches.

To complete the solemn occasion, she added a white wig on his head and a white shirt.

"The costume is appropriate to the age Mozart lived in," Kent said.

A final touch will see her painting piano keys on each side of his two front feet to make him look like he is standing on a piano.

For authenticity, she has made Moozart's eyes blue, in keeping with the eyes of Wolfgang.

Kent estimates it took her a total of 60 "grueling hours" to bring Wolfgang into the 21st century, but it was worth it.

"It was really a lot of fun."

The original Wolfgang was unavailable for comment.

She has been told that Wolfgang's temporary home will be at Yorkville, along with 80 other moose exhibits making up Lastman's collection.

"I believe my moose is ultimately destined to be set up and installed in the wading pool at Roy Thomson Hall and stay there until at least some time in October," she said.

Painting moose is a new way of life for Kent, who has been a watercolourist for "quite a while."

"I usually stuck to landscape painting around the area. I try to paint things that are precious to us, such as fields and barns, which won't be around for too much longer."

Meanwhile, she has no intention of hunting.

"I'm enjoying doing this because not everyone gets the opportunity to paint a moose every day."

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