(Photo by Roman Hankewycz)
Ivan Thomas, who makes his Baltimore debut as an opera performer in the Baltimore Opera production of "Carmen" this week-end, Oct. 22, 24 and 26.

Baritone here in 'Carmen'

Ivan Thomas aims for the 'Met'

By Sue Williams
AFRO Staff Writer

Ivan Thomas says without blinking an eye that he is "never" worried about blowing anything.

Meaning that somehow, the 29-year old operatic baritone manages to handle the apprehension associated with any form of entertaining with eclat, confident poise, and conviction.

Thomas, in town for his debut in the Baltimore Opera production of Carmen this week-end, talked with the AFRO extensively about his past and the lure that led him to a singing career.

"I grew up in an environment described as black middle class," Thomas said, his rich voice oozing with resonance.

"My mother used to listen to the Metropolitan Opera over the radio...."

The sounds filling his ears, Thomas said he soon began to try to imitate the voices he heard, all the while keeping up his interest in classical piano, which he studied for years.

"When I went to college," the St. Louis native said, "I wanted to be a concert pianist." After taking a few voice lessons, however, and trying his hand at a college opera production, Thomas knew his niche had been found.

"I really did not like the first opera I performed in," he said, "I thought it was stupid...the storyline did not make any sense." But the response to his performance was good, he remembers. And within him there was a glow that he could not ignore.

He continued his classical music training, graduating from the University of Kansas with two degrees—one in music education and the other in physical education. He travelled to Europe where he studied in the Netherlands and Belgium, before returning to the United States to try his hand here.

"Europe was the place to study," he says, adding that the low frequency of black performer presence in operas was "more a question of numbers than anything else."

"A lot of time, they (the producers) were looking for people who looked the part rather than for people who could sing the parts," he said.

But after a while, that tendency would not work anymore.

As people grew more interested in opera, they wanted to be entertained more. It became necessary to find people who could sing as well as act, to bring to the people the deep levels of emotion and feeling most operatic parts held.

Blacks began to be more accepted and used at that point, he says.

He describes his training and work as a singer as strenuous, if not taxing. He must do voice exercises daily, in addition to receiving extensive dramatic coaching and must forever polish his language skills.

"It's a dedication," he says. "You really have to want it. It's a case of practicing enough to be ready for anything . . . there's no such thing as too much too soon."

It was by being "ready" that Thomas landed his dual - roles as Dancaire and Zuniga in "Carmen." Most of his roles, here and abroad, have been "lucky breaks."

He expects, with all due candor, to reach the Metropolitan some day. It was not for nothing, he says, that he used to sit and listen to the Met recordings on the radio when he was small. And it was not for nothing again that his piano teacher in college thought his voice outstanding enough to encourage him to begin voice lessons.

According to Thomas, it's all beginning to take shape now. And, since he's not worried about "blowing" any stage of his career, the beginning has no choice but to lead him to his own defined heights of success.

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Deltas present 24th annual Ebony Fashion Fair

EBONY FASHION FAIR MODELS are seen wiring just a few of the many stunning fashions which were shown during the twenty-fourth annual Ebony Fashion Fair sponsored by the Baltimore Alumnae Chapter, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Sunday, Oct. 18, at the Hill Field House, Morgan State University. The show is held annually to benefit the Sorority's Scholarship Fund.

AFRO Photos by Roman Hankewycz

By Pattie Hodges,
AFRO-Women's Editor

The Ebony Fashion Fair — 1981, sponsored by the Baltimore Alumnae Chapter, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., was held Sunday, Oct. 18, in the Hill Field House, Morgan State University, at 5 p.m. It was the Delta's twenty - fourth year of sponsoring the event.

The show, was done in eight segments — Scene I, "What's Elegant'; Scene II, 'Casual Highlights', (featuring sports), Scene III, 'Glamour — Going to All Lengths', (featuring day wear); Scene IV, 'Lavish Indulgence', (featuring loungewear), all during Act I.

Act II included 'Sweet Nothings (swimwear) in Scene V; 'Shimmering and Sumptuous' (Early Evening Wear), Scene VI; 'The Real Gems' (Grand Evening Wear) in Scene VII and 'Paradise Begins' (wedding attire for bride and groom) in Scene VIII.

Models aired numerous glamorous garments done by many, many designers, both from in as well as out of the country. This year's collection included designs by several black designers, including one of Baltimore's own — Charlene Hyman. One dress with fur stole was priced at $26,000.

The extravaganza was quite spicy at times, veering sharply from the theme, and marring to some degree, the usual high standards of the show.

There were many see - through tops modeled, which left nothing to the imagination, and during the swimwear segment, the two male models who came on the runway in loin-cloth outfits, stripped to bikini trunks; which, in the back, left nothing to the imagination.

But who am I to judge . . . the audience seemed to enjoy it all.

During the intermission, Ernestine Jolivet, chair for the affair welcomed everyone and introduced Charlene C. Boston, Delta president, who acknowledged the help of those in attendance in making the affair a success.

Julia Woodland, chair Awards Committee, presented the Sorority's Public Service Award to Milton A. Dugger (who is on the sorority's scholarship board) for his community service. He got a plaque.

Winner of the seven - day, six night, round - trip to Honolulu Hawaii (a gift each year from American Airlines) was Robin Fry. The bonus along with this trip was the Hertz Car Rental Company's donation of a week's free car rental. What a win — and with accommodations at the Hyatt Regency in Honolulu.

Delta Beryl Williams, who has worked very hard down through the years for the event, was presented flowers.

Other door prizes were won by Betty Ann Simms, who got a gift certificate to Ina's in Pikesville; Bertina Sorrell, who got a gift certificate for service at Bobby's Place, and Eleanor Holland, who won Fashion Fair Cosmetics.

It was an entertaining evening for the nearly 3,000 who attended.

Ticket chairperson was Gladys Bragg. Co - chair for the affair was Gertrude Neale. The Fashion Fair, benefits the Delta's Scholarship Fund.

(Continued on Page 12)

AKA's host Card and Games Night

ENJOYING A GAME OF CARDS during the AKA's Games Night hosted by the Epsilon Omega Chapter at The Brentwood, Wednesday, Oct. 14 are (L to R): Mrs. Edith Henry, Mrs. Helen Quarles, Miss Terri Parker and Ms. Yvonne Holt.

AFRO Photos by Roman Hankewycz

IN THE CHIT-CHAT CORNER are (L to R): Mrs. Anita Turks-Hunter, Dr. Norma Jones, Mrs. Myra Jackson-Lann, Miss Danette Conner and Mrs. Blanche Booker.

ON THE GAMES NIGHT COMMITTEE are (L to R): Mrs. Gilda J. Garrett, basileus; Miss Denise Douglass and Miss G. Corina Alston, co-chairpersons of the Reactivation Sub-Committee; Mrs. Geraldine Dorsey, Mrs. Henrietta Harcum, Miss Bertha McCloud, Dr. Maxine Wood, Mrs. Brenda Johnson, chairperson, Membership Committee and Mrs. Heloise B. Frazier, anti-basileus.

The Epsilon Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority hosted inactive sorors at a Card and Games Night, Wednesday, Oct. 14 at The Brentwood, 25th and Barclay Sts.

One hundred soros attended the affair, which was part of the Membership Committee's effort to reclaim and reactivate local sorors.

The Three R's — Recruit, Reclaim and Retain is a national program of the Sorority under the direction of the Membership Committee in each chapter.

Epsilon Omega's Membership Committee greeted the inactive sorors upon their arrival and pinned them with an ivy leaf adorned with pink and green ribbons (AKA colors).

Games played were pinochle, bridge, Uno and pokeno. The four highest scorers in each game were given gifts of AKA paraphernalia wrapped in pink and green paper and ribbons.

Two group games were played — the Pairs' Game under the leadership of Soror Kathlyn Jacobs and the Package Game under the leadership of Soror Maxine Wood. Gifts were given to the first pair, pink and green and Epsilon-Omega.

The Committee had prepared as refreshments for the occasion homemade Chili Con Carne, vegetable trays, cheese trays, dip and chips and a variety of homemade cakes.

Gift given to Soror Gail Lee, who was the first inactive soror to arrive and who also won the "Top Drawing" of the evening was a gift certificate to pay half of her chapter dues for 1982.

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Partyline

Retirement celebration hosted for 37-year longshoreman

By Pattie Hodges,
AFRO-Women's Editor

On Sunday, Oct. 18 a surprise retirement party was hosted for Walter W. Phillips (a 36 - year longshoreman) by his wife, Dorothy, at their E. Lanvale St. home.

The festivities which got underway at 2 p.m. were attended by the honoree's family, friends and godchildren. Several came from out - of - town.

Phillips and his guests enjoyed a scrumptuous buffet dinner prepared by Marian Perry, one of his goddaughters.

Presentations made to the happy retiree included two beautiful plaques — one made from the Crawford and Hill families, (which included relatives of both Mr. and Mrs. Phillips), the other from the honoree's godchildren.

Mrs. Phillips gifted him with $100 and a plane ticket to Ann Harbor, Mich. where they will vacation.

Phillips, a native Baltimorean, had worked out of Local 333 for the entire 36 years, was truly surprised and exclaimed, upon entering his retirement fete, "Oh, no! Oh, no!" in a state of happy shock.

Other gifts and cards were presented by family members and friends.

Attending the celebration from out - of - town were: the Rev. Walter Crawford (the honoree's father - in - law); Mr. and Mrs. Fitzgerald Gittens and Mrs. Glennie Henson and family and Gloristen Myers, all of Burlington, N.J. and Gladys Henson of New Haven, Conn.

Others in attendance included Willie Russell, Walter Little, Mr. and Mrs. Eddie Hill and family; Mrs. Jane Brown and family; Mrs. Martha Harris, Phyllis Marshall, James D. Langley and many others.

Birthday Fete

On Saturday, Oct. 17, a surprise birthday party was hosted for Mrs. Mary Ross by her husband and daughter, Vance and Veronica, Ross at the honoree's Cadillac Ave. home.

Seventy - five family members and friends came out to celebrate with Mrs. Ross, who was quite thrilled.

Party festivities began at 8:30 p.m. The honoree and her guests enjoyed a buffet dinner of barbecued spare ribs, barbecued chicken, ham, roast beef, Swedish meat balls, pickled pig's feet, assorted salads, peas, macaroni and cheese and sweet potato pudding.

There was also a special 'Sweets Table' with delicious pies and cakes on it — and all food was prepared by Mrs. Ross' husband and daughter.

The birthday cake was a white sheet, decorated in blue and pink, inscribed "Happy Birthday to Mary Ross."

Mrs. Ross received many lovely gifts and cards. Of her celebration, she said, "I was very, very happy and had a lot of fun."

So did her family and guests, who lingered until the wee hours.

(Continued on Page 10)

HAPPY RETIREE — A beaming Walter W. Phillips poses happily with his wife, Dorothy, holding two plaques presented him during the surprise retirement fete hosted for him by Mrs. Phillips Sunday, Oct. 18.

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