



Myla Toaster accepted into prestigious dance program



Special to The Clinton Courier
Myla Toaster of Clinton will attend an intensive and prestigious summer dance program at the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater in New York City.

By Brenda Wilder

Myla Toaster of Clinton was recently accepted into a summer program at the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater in New York City. Alvin Ailey has been in existence since 1958 and only takes the "best of the best."

Alvin Ailey is a cultural ambassador for the United States, so anyone accepted into the program must be pre-professional.

Toaster is a rising tenth grader in Clinton and plans to attend Howard University, where she hopes to cultivate dancing skills that will one day allow her to dance with Beyoncé. Clinton school officials say Toaster is an outstanding student and was the recipient of Sumner Hill's Rising Arrow Award for the fourth nine weeks.

During her ninth grade year, Toaster was a member of the National Junior Honor Society, Student Council, Peer Guidance, and Model United Nations. She also was Co-Captain of the Sumner Hill Jr. High School cheerleading squad, where she assisted in choreographing routines for pep rallies. During the 2019-20 school year, Toaster will be a member of the Clinton High School cheerleading squad.

Toaster enrolled in dance at Dance Works Studio at age seven, where owner Adriana Heindl says Toaster has always been a devoted student and worker.

"Early in Myla's dance career, it was evident she was an amazing turner and very powerful in her movement," said Heindl. "She has developed and excelled in every genre, including Ballet, Jazz, Hip Hop, Tap, Pointe, African, and Acrobatics, while at the same time managing to balance school, cheer, dance and extra performances. Her parents, Chris and Sonya Toaster, are amazing supporters of her and sister Mackenzie, age ten, who also dances. Both have per-

formed with the Legends Competitive Team in numerous locations, including a cruise ship and Times Square."

Toaster is a member of the Legends Competition Team and has been performing for local audiences for the last seven years in numerous dance productions with Montage Theatre of Dance at Hinds Community College. Some of the dance productions include Michael Jackson Forever!, Willie Wonka and the C & C Dance Chocolate Factory, The Dance of Egypt, The Dance of Oz, Lion King, Princess and the Frog, and Nutcracker in the Neighborhood. She also had the opportunity to perform at the Grand Ole Opry House and at the Lincoln Center with Montage Theatre of Dance. In 2017, Toaster attended the New Orleans Ballet Association and the New Orleans Ballet Theatre Summer Intensives. Also, Toaster attended the USA International Ballet Competition Summer Intensive during the summer of 2018.

During visits to New York with Legends and Montage, Toaster had the opportunity to attend several Alvin Ailey performances. Those performances sparked her interest in Alvin Ailey and inspired her to audition for a summer intensive at Alvin Ailey. Toaster said she knew this was not going to be an easy accomplishment, and she immediately began taking dance classes, workshops, and intensives to prepare her for the audition process. She auditioned in Memphis, Tennessee, and received her acceptance letter in March 2019. She will be training for five weeks in ballet, modern dance and jazz.

"This is a big opportunity to be trained by some of the best professional dancers and teachers in the world," said Toaster. "I am humbled and happy about such a great experience. I cannot wait to work hard and learn as much as possible."

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