



Circus Harmony Alum Makes Stellar Debut With WWE

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ST. LOUIS - “What a challenging year 2020 was and what a strange year 2021 is starting to be!” exclaims Jessica Hentoff, Circus Harmony’s Artistic/Executive Director. “When we closed our circus ring at City Museum on March 16 last year we had no idea how the rest of the year would develop.”

With their alumni performing around the world in all in different situations, a notable standout is Sidney Iking Bateman. Sidney Iking recently made his move from the circus ring to the wrestling ring in January, after he caught the eye of the folks at WWE during a publicity stunt that partnered circus performers and wrestlers. While his current employer, Cirque du Soleil, was shut down, wrestling was considered an ‘essential service’ in Florida. WWE NEXT christened him Akeem Young and then he began his wrestling career as a sommelier with WWE’s Carmella. Someone at WWE thought Reginald was a better name for a sommelier and he became Reginald Thomas - Reggie for short. Sidney Iking – aka Reggie – made his national primetime television debut on *WWE Smackdown* on January 22, 2021, when Carmella’s rival, Sasha Banks (recently seen on *The Mandalorian*), challenged him to a match. To date, this [Sasha Vs Reginald](#) video has had over 1.5 million views!

Sidney Iking's training began with seven years at Circus Harmony and then another three years at Ecole Nationale de Cirque (an international circus school in Montreal) and he toured the world with **Les 7 Doigts de la Main's** *Cuisine and Confessions* as well as **Cirque du Soleil's** *Luzia*. His first official WWE fight showcased his impressive acrobatic skills and was reflected in the comments on the video. Sidney Iking has always loved WWE. When asked about becoming a wrestler, he replied "I'm still flipping! I'm still entertaining. It's just a square ring."

More importantly, Sidney Iking had been posting his life story online, including a hard-to-watch video poem, ["We Matter"](#) about growing up Black in America. Quoted from his Facebook page: "I am so beyond blessed, I can't say it enough! I've realized awhile back that it's much bigger than me. It's about inspiring the youth, giving back, helping kids see the bigger picture and the endless possibilities in life. It's my job to wrestle, do circus, real estate investing...but it's my DUTY to pass on all the lessons I've learned along the way. I found my purpose in life a long time ago and it's really nothing to do with me but more about what I can do for a bunch of people. Changing a culture, the mindset of a group of kids that have very little hope. I'm walking this path for every person around the world who may be afraid to do so. Be the light the people need you to be." And being part of the WWE gives him a platform he could not have found in the circus."



Circus Harmony's Hentoff points out, "Any teacher or parent will tell you that no matter what you think is best, every child has their own path and they need to find it and walk it themselves. In the end, what we really want is for our children to be happy and successful." She continues, "Faye Alexander passed his lessons on to Warren Bacon who shared his knowledge with me and then I started Circus Harmony which was able to provide a path for Sidney Iking, who has taken the torch and is blazing his own trail!"

My own biological children don't believe I am watching WWE. I can't believe that I, myself, and Circus Harmony were featured in a video about the WWE: [*The Truth About WWE's Reginald \(Carmella's Assistant\)*](#), which itself has over 100,000 views!"

The past crazy, unpredictable past 10 months has proved positive for Sidney Iking. Professional wrestling uses the term 'kayfabe' which means presenting staged performances as genuine or authentic. It is hard, these days, to tell what is fake and what is real, what is staged and what is natural. At a time in history when reality seems like a movie script that no one would believe, maybe a youth circus performer turned wrestling star is just the person to tell the truth!

You can follow Sidney Iking on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).