



## Collin College alum strikes gold

Every minute, about 100 hours of video are uploaded to YouTube and more than six billion hours of video are watched each month. Songwriter/musician and Collin College alumnus Cody Tarpley knows how difficult it can be to break into the big leagues.

With singer and co-writer Joseph Somers-Morales, also known as SoMo, Tarpley penned the hit single, "Ride," which premiered on YouTube and has been certified gold and platinum and reached number 76 on the Billboard Hot 100 chart and number 20 on the U.S. Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs.

"The whole process is so gratifying," Tarpley said. "It feels like it happened so quickly, but it took two years for the song to really take off. Sometimes the song was really viral in certain parts of the world."

Tarpley had an interest in music from a young age. While in high school, he discovered recording music as a solid career option. "I wanted to pursue a degree program designed for audio engineering and music production," he said. "I was trying to stay in the Dallas-Fort Worth area so I chose Collin College."

He began attending Collin College in 2008, and honed his skills by taking classes such as audio engineering and music theory.

"The professors really taught me about the basics of audio engineering and how to get things accomplished," Tarpley said. "I really learned a lot about the philosophy of music."

After being introduced to SoMo by another Collin College student, the two hit it off and began recording covers of songs along with original music. The first mixtape was finished in 2012, which included "Ride."



"The experience of writing that song was crazy, yet really cool," Tarpley recalled. "The song was written in a bedroom and we didn't have a big fanbase. It was unreal watching the song progress from nothing to a well-known song. When it was certified gold, we all said, 'Wow.'"

For Tarpley, the writing process is a detailed endeavor full of collaboration and editing. First, if he's working with another writer or artist, he'll discuss the focus of the song and try get a clear concept and direction. After that, he starts with basic chord progressions on a piano or guitar to find different melodies.

"A lot of the songwriting process for me is literally just jamming," he said. "You let the microphone run, you listen back and see where to expand. From there you make a song."

In addition to his work with SoMo, Tarpley now lives in Los Angeles and is working as a producer and songwriter developing young artists who don't have original music.

"I love writing, producing and playing instruments because it's all part of creating," said Tarpley, who in addition to his songwriting credits, plays the guitar and drums among other instruments. "I really like having my hands in every aspect of the song. If there's any way I can contribute to building a song, I'm interested."

When working with young artists, Tarpley strives to understand who they are as people and creates a song that reflects them.

"Sometimes the hardest thing with songwriting is to keep going," Tarpley said. "Everyone gets writer's block and great artists aren't writing great songs every single day. You have to finish what you start and not let yourself get in the way of your own success."

For more information about the Collin College department of music, [www.collin.edu/departments/music/](http://www.collin.edu/departments/music/). ♦

*Holly Harvey is a public relations writer at Collin College.*

*Photos are courtesy of Cody Tarpley*