

# PARK CITIES PEOPLE

## Young DJ Keeps 'Killing It'

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Brian Roberts was taking in the boulevard tailgating scene before an SMU football game when he noticed a group of mostly girls staring at something.

"I was watching these people's reaction and couldn't tell what they were looking at," he said. "Then I see this kid DJ up there, and he was killing it."

The boy stopping the crowd was 10-year-old DJ Vex, also known as Episcopal School of Dallas fourth-grader Colin Koch.

"[DJing is] just fun in general, but it's also really different for someone my age," Colin said.

Colin loves EDM music, particularly the dubstep, house, and trap sub-genres. His favorite artists include Martin Garrix, Getter, and Skrillex. Collin's age prevents him from going to many of the venues where these styles are played, so he seeks out new music and inspiration on YouTube.

Colin first expressed interest in becoming a DJ about a year and a half ago, Leigh said. She'd used the Shazam app in spin class to identify a Skrillex song. Collin listened to it several times. Then he downloaded a DJ iPad app and started trying to mix it. Not long afterward, he asked his mom if he could take DJ lessons.



(Courtesy photo of Leigh Koch)

"I was like, 'Uh oh, I don't know where to go for that,'" Leigh said.

As fate would have it, Leigh ran into Julio Rivera, aka DJ S.O.U.L.jah, at a local charity event. Rivera was in the process of starting his own DJ school and was willing to give Colin a shot. He would soon become Colin's professional mentor.

"It's different being in front of an audience versus having a computer in front of you," Rivera said.

Most of his students are not there to pursue a hobby, Rivera said. They are people whose lives revolve around music and DJing. Rivera sees that passion in Colin, and notes that one of Colin's biggest challenges was learning to work through mistakes without getting too frustrated.

"Being perfect is what we strive for, but don't kill yourself trying to do it," Rivera says.

Rivera also helped Colin develop his own style. He said when Colin began, he would often mimic Martin Garrix.

"When you are that age, your brain is set on certain things," Rivera said. "I told him, 'You aren't Martin Garrix. You need to be yourself.' I believe I helped him grow a little."

By summer, Colin had progressed enough to graduate. He performed at a Disco Kids event in the It'll Do Club on Elm Street. The following month, he performed at Peace Day NTX at Klyde

Colin has performed twice on the boulevard and at his school homecoming pep rally. In November, Colin joined Rivera at the Miracle on McKinnon charity fundraiser for the Children's Medical Foundation. Rivers said it was his best performance yet.

The event was put on by REG Presents, a company founded by Brian Roberts, the guy who saw him on the boulevard a couple of months before.

"He absolutely killed it," Roberts said. "I'm still getting texts from people asking about him."

Roberts also marveled at Colin's professionalism, noting that he worked through a momentary power problem without the crowd even noticing it.

Roberts said his favorite part of the evening might have been meeting Colin's "tour managers," better known as his parents.

"I've produced events for a long time, and I've never seen anything like him," Roberts said. "His parents and family really rally around him and are truly supportive."

Colin plans to pursue his DJ dreams as far as he can. He said he might try to learn about the producing side of music at some point. He continues to train with Rivera, and hopes to work more gigs in 2017.