



RAMAPO COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY
Office of Marketing and Communications
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Ramapo Alumnus Scores Big with Disney Movie Tune

MAHWAH, N.J. -- About halfway through the recently released Disney Channel Original Movie “Descendants 2,” two of the main characters find themselves at a crossroads in their relationship. And like in every good made-for-TV Disney musical, the BFFs sing about their angst and how the world is changing but they’ll remain true to each other.

The lyrics and music for the song – “Space Between” – are the product of Ramapo alumnus Stephen Conley ’15 who said he’s surprised by the sudden popularity of both the tune and the movie.

“I can’t believe how it has all taken off so fast,” said Conley, who graduated with a degree in Music Production from the School of Contemporary Arts.

By fast, Conley actually means meteoric. Within the first three days of the song’s release on Disney’s YouTube channel, it received more than 3 million hits.

Conley, a North Arlington, N.J. native, said his experience at Ramapo truly shaped what is turning out to be quite a successful young career. “I transferred in from another school and had no idea where I wanted to go,” he said, noting that he was on the verge of giving up hope after what he called a rocky start. “Basically, I was a train wreck. But my advisor Ben Neill and the professors in the department took the time to steer me in the right direction. They really cared about me and my future. Even when I felt like I was wasting my time, they told me to stick with it. Coming to Ramapo was the best decision I ever made.”

Conley said he moved to Los Angeles shortly after graduation because “That’s the place to be to get into the music or movie business.” Currently a freelancer, he stated that he works hard, admitting that it’s a tough go sometimes. So when this opportunity came along, he jumped at it.

“I received an email along with maybe a hundred other people to submit a song for this particular movie. The email included very specific details about what was going on in the scene,” Conley said. “I reached out to some other musician friends and we came up with ‘Space Between.’ Needless to say, we were thrilled when we got a call that the Disney people were really excited about it.”

The rest, as they say in the biz, is history. “Descendants 2” is a bona fide hit with youth demographics, especially the tween and teen set, recording more than 21 million views in TV simulcast airings in the first week alone after its premiere on July 21. It continues to smash social media records and DisneyMusicVEVO views, and Conley is enjoying the success. “I’m glad I got the chance but I’m more grateful for the support I got along the way.”

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Ranked by *U.S. News & World Report* as one of the top in the Best Regional Public Universities North category, Ramapo College of New Jersey is sometimes viewed as a private college. This is, in part, due to its unique interdisciplinary academic structure, its size of approximately 6,000 students and its pastoral setting in the foothills of the Ramapo Mountains on the New Jersey/New York border.

Established in 1969, Ramapo College offers bachelor's degrees in the arts, business, humanities, social sciences and the sciences, as well as in professional studies, which include nursing and social work. In addition, Ramapo College offers courses leading to teacher certification at the elementary and secondary levels. The College also offers eight graduate programs as well as articulated programs with Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, New York Chiropractic College, New York University College of Dentistry, SUNY State College of Optometry and New York College of Podiatric Medicine.