

SUMMER
2000

Center for Holocaust
& Genocide Studies
at Ramapo College

CenterNews

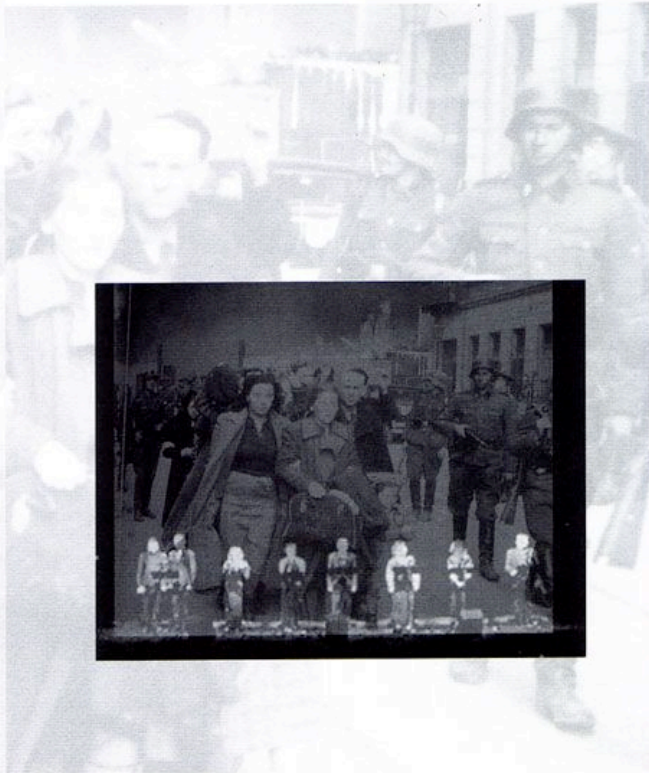
Musical Commemoration *From Death to Hope* Was Focal Point of Yom HaShoah Observance

The musical commemoration *From Death to Hope*, was the focal point of a Yom HaShoah (Holocaust Remembrance Day) observance on May 2 in the Sharp Theater of Ramapo College's Angelica and Russ Berrie Center for Performing and Visual Arts. Co-sponsoring the observance with Center for Holocaust & Genocide Studies were the Sisterhoods of Temple Emanuel of the Pascoack Valley and Temple Beth Sholom, Park Ridge.

Conceived and created by Michael Ficocelli *From Death to Hope*, uses a unique combination of words, original music and visual imagery to explore the meaning and legacy of the Holocaust or Shoah (Nazi Germany's war against the Jews). Most of the spoken text is from the works of Auschwitz survivors and authors Viktor Frankl and Elie Wiesel. Born in Austria and a psychiatrist by training, Frankl wrote the highly influential *Man's Search for Meaning*, based on his experiences in the Holocaust. Marci Shein Ficocelli, the composer's spouse, was the musical director and one of the performers of the piece.

According to composer Ficocelli, he created *From Death to Hope* to "tap the emotions of the audience, yet leave them with a feeling of beauty and hope." In order not to trivialize the tragedy and horror of the Shoah, Ficocelli, who is not Jewish, immersed himself in the history and literature before composing the piece. Although a full-time teacher at the Glen Rock (New Jersey) Middle School, Michael Ficocelli has published over 20 pieces of music. In addition to *From Death to Hope*, Ficocelli has been commissioned to compose other works by Temple Sharey Tefilo-Israel. They include a full-length musical, *Medina, A Dream Fulfilled* and *Shabat 2000: Jazz Service of the Century*. Most recently, the composer finished scoring the music for a three-part documentary, *Jewish America: The Civil War* (Black Dog Films), which soon will be aired on the History Channel.

From Death to Hope was first performed on May 7, 1997 at Temple Sharey Tefilo-Israel, South Orange, New Jersey as part of the Community Interfaith Service for Yom HaShoah-Holocaust Remembrance Day.



IN THIS ISSUE

- RAMAPO STUDENTS VISIT CZECH REPUBLIC
- 1999 WALLENBERG HUMANITARIAN AWARD WINNER
- THROUGH FILM AND LECTURES, CENTER PRESENTS NEW WORK ON SHOAH

