

Marci and Michael Ficocelli hit high notes

BY DOUG LANG
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BLOOMINGDALE — M stands for Marci, Michael and music.

The husband and wife singing-songwriting team of Marci and Michael Ficocelli is a musical dynamo.

With their catalog of 250 songs, they can — and do — perform everything from their own original songs to current rock hits to the works of Cole Porter to Faust, with Marci handling the vocals and Michael, literally a one-man band, on the synthesizer.

The couple, who live in Bloomington with their two-year-old daughter, Barbara, have performed at various clubs and lounges in New York and New Jersey, including Trump Castle and the Tropicana in Atlantic City, and the Bitter End in Greenwich Village, where they opened for comedienne Elayne Boosler.

Locally, they have been seen at the Woodcliff Lake Hilton, where they've performed on a regular basis for the last three years, the Marriott Hotel in Saddle Brook, and Victor's Lounge at the Holiday Inn in Wayne.

They've also appeared on a show carried over Manhattan Cable called *Career on the Line*, hosted by Sid Bernstein, "the

man who brought the Beatles to Shea Stadium," said Michael.

Both multi-talented, the Ficocellis realize that diversity is the key to success in the music world. They are open-minded when it comes to accepting musical work, including the time Michael had a "muzak" version of one of his songs recorded.

Michael, a member of ASCAP, has five published songs to his credit, and plans to attend a workshop in the near future where his work will be judged and critiqued by Stephen Sondheim, among others.

Michael, a music instructor at the Richard E. Byrd Elementary School in Glen Rock, has used his teaching experience as a vehicle for his musical aspirations. Last year, he wrote a musical, *The Fall of Freddie the Leaf*, based on a book by noted author Leo Buscaglia, which was performed by his students.

Buscaglia sent Michael a note of praise after watching a videotape of the production, which was also broadcast over UA—Columbia cable television earlier this month.

Michael's other works include the published song *Showing Us the Way*, which he penned as a graduation song for his students when he was a teacher in the Bronx, and *Hold On*, a song he said, "helped me to purge the

feelings I felt when I lost my father to cancer last year."

His latest musical is titled *Wild Imagining*, about two teenagers who pursue musical careers, but one is held back because of his lack of musical knowledge.

Michael said the point of the show is that it "demonstrates the importance of not only being musically talented but being acquainted with all aspects of music such as knowing how to read it, its history, the different kinds, and so on."

Like Michael, Marci is a graduate of the musical program of the University of Bridgeport, Connecticut. She includes Barbra Streisand and Whitney Houston among her musical idols, and like those two singers, has a beautiful voice.

"I'd love to sing in a Broadway musical," she said.

Michael gave Burt Bacharach, Marvin Hamlisch, and the Doors as his personal musical favorites.

Marci and Michael work anywhere from three to six nights a week, and although it's their ambition to work together — hearing Marci perform Michael's songs on the demo tapes they've made, certainly demonstrates their professional compatibility — Michael said, "Whatever happens, that's fine. We're going to keep going. We love music."