

Singers sparkle at Merryall

By Carol Ann Wilcock
STAFF REPORTER

With a program featuring the best of Broadway, Marci and Michael Ficocelli created an entertaining night out for a standing room only audience at Merryall Center for the Arts in New Milford Saturday.

Through most of the concert, Mr. Ficocelli, a middle school music educator by profession, showcased his wife's singing with some wonderful piano arrangements, and they sang a couple of well-chosen numbers together.

In these numbers — "Somewhere Out There," "Wind Beneath my Wings" and "Under the Sea" — the charisma this couple have together as performers was most apparent. There was no mistaking the admiration they have for each other and one another's talent.

Their banter with the audience between numbers was charming. It helped them establish an immediate rapport with people they had never seen before and helped the audience

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know them, not only as performers but real people with real lives behind their showmanship.

Along with being witty and cute, Mrs. Ficocelli is a talented singer. She has a stunning voice, which she used best when she sang her music straightforward without stylizing it.

In "I Am What I Am," Sondheim's "More" from the movie *Dick Tracy*, "Alexander's Ragtime Band" and "On My Own" from *Les Miserables* she moved away from the nightclub glitz and sang with true feeling, unlike her stylized rendition of Gershwin's "Summertime" from *Porgy and Bess*, which almost seemed to eliminate the passion from

it.

As for presentation, the Ficocellis don't need glitz and frills in their attire nor in their mannerisms, like Mrs. Ficocelli's attire and her playing with the microphone, which were distracting.

The Ficocellis have it all where talent is concerned. Their keeping their attire simple would serve to create a sense of more professionalism and greater respect for their wonderful abilities.

Programming is this couple's strong point. They know how to present a song and how to please an audience. This is so important they should capitalize on it.

As a bonus, they have the sparkle some performers only dream about.