

On People

by Hope Noah



Marci and **Michael Ficocelli's** romance began the day they met. The year was 1980 and Michael was performing as a musician at Yale University on matriculation day, to entertain those waiting in line. He was looking for singers for the program, and was given Marci Schein's name.

"It only took moments for both of us to realize there was an extremely strong attraction between us," he says today. "Our music blended and our relationship clicked. We shared this unusual love for music and it wasn't long before we knew this specialness was our destiny."

Michael Ficocelli was born and raised in New Haven, Connecticut. His sister **Paula**, two years his senior, is a dance therapist. She became involved in dance as a youngster, and while their parents watched her skills develop, they decided to give Michael piano lessons.

"Actually," he continues, "it took only one lesson before I knew this was something in which I could excel. My teacher was a Yale University graduate, and her pleasant manner made me love music. Although I was raised on the classics, she'd often slip a more contemporary piece into the lesson."

Ficocelli continued to explore various types of music, playing in the high school jazz band, as well as other groups. He went to Boston University and received a degree in philosophy with a minor in music composition.

"I wrote my first classical sonata at Boston University and learned a lot about musical forms. After graduating, I worked with emotionally disturbed students and wrote a musical for the institution. I received many letters of recommendation about the project and I guess that was when I decided to go back for a master's in music education at the University of Bridgeport. I started writing songs and getting involved in small musical projects. Then Olivia Cole, the actress/singer, was to perform at the Yale University theater and I was recommended to her as musical arranger. It was a wonderful break."

Marci is from Spring Valley, New York, and was a student at the University of Bridgeport when she and Michael met that fateful day. She majored in music with a specialization in voice. Ms. Ficocelli sings both classical and jazz in five different languages.

Michael was accompanist for his future wife in a recital of classical, jazz and pop music. He even wrote some of the numbers especially for her.

After completing their degrees, the Ficocellis moved to Edgewater, New Jersey (they now live in Bloomington), and did several demo tapes produced by **Brian Koonin**. Koonin, well known in the recording and entertainment industry, was very encouraging. They also performed their songs on *Career on the Line*, the Manhattan cable television show hosted by Sid Bernstein.

"It was Sid who asked us if we would be interested in performing in Atlantic City. We put together a package, brought it to the attention of photographer Marc Raboy, and through him, got a job at Trumps Castle for six weeks."

The duo of "Marci and Michael" have been appearing in clubs throughout the tristate area ever since. They've been featured performers at such Manhattan clubs as The Bitter End, Jason's Park Royal, Arthurs, Chilie's, Duffey's Tavern, The Bushes, Ted Hook's On Stage and Chelsea Place. In New Jersey, audiences applaud them several nights a week at the **Woodcliff Lake Hilton Inn's** Bistro Room. Other lounge gigs have included the Windjammer room at the **Marriott Hotel**, Arthurs at the **Fort Lee Holiday Inn**, Victors at **The Wayne Holiday Inn**, Yesterday's and Antun's of Westchester.

Both are vocalists, songwriters, arrangers and certified music educators. For a while, Michael Ficocelli taught in New York. He's now employed as music instructor for the **Glen Rock schools**. This spring he wrote, composed, directed and produced his second consecutive original musical production for the students of the **Byrd School**.

When not involved in musical pursuits, Ficocelli enjoys weight-lifting and spending summer days at a nice country inn in the mountains near Tanglewood.

"We also love Block Island," Marci adds, "and naturally, musical theater. I'm interested in crafts and creative projects. And of course, both of us adore caring for our two-year-old daughter, **Barbara**."

They've published the songs, "Come To Never Never Land," "Showing Us The Way," "Hold On," "I Love You More Than Sunny Days," and "As He Holds Back His Tears."

The pair continues to expand their musical abilities with challenging approaches to song, songwriting and arranging. Their dynamic club performances in front of appreciative crowds are constantly evaluated and rewritten.

Marci and Michael Ficocelli see themselves as developing performers in a field that could propel them further along to stardom.

And those who've seen them in action know that *that* is only a matter of time.

Marci and Michael Ficocelli

