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The song man of Glen Rock elementary schools

By PEGGY QUINLAN

Michael Ficocelli, an elementary school music teacher in Glen Rock, is making a name for himself in the music industry, and nobody could be prouder of him than his students.

Several years ago, Mike wrote an original musical titled "Wild Imaginings" which the children at the Richard E. Byrd School in Glen Rock performed as their spring musical. Asked to describe his play, Michael said "It's a Debbie Gibson-type story. A young girl's rise to success in the music business at an early age, and her realization of the importance of studying music."

"Wild Imaginings" was purchased by Players Press in Studio City, Calif., and will be marketed as one of their theater department offerings. Last summer, however, Mike and his wife were musical directors at Cedar Lake Camp and produced his show as a summer production.

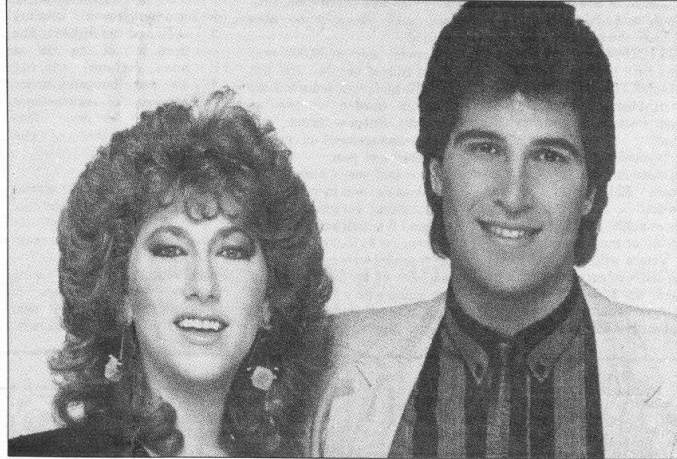
Because of this summer performance, Mike was asked to produce "Wild Imaginings" for the YWHA in Wayne, where it will be performed on April 2 and 4 at 8 p.m. Mike is also producing "The Little Mermaid" there for children in fourth grade and younger.

In addition to the shows in Wayne, Ficocelli is directing a production of "The Little Mermaid" at Byrd School this spring, and expects to cast over 60 fourth, fifth and sixth grade students in it.

When he isn't juggling scores of students in various shows throughout Bergen County, Mike and his wife, Marci, perform at the Woodcliff Lake Hilton. They are also taking their act on the road to do a repeat of last year's sellout performance at the Merry-All Art Center in New Milford, Conn., and will be singing at the Hawthorne Inn in Connecticut, and Seasons Resort in Great Gorge.

All the teaching, performing and producing must be scheduled just right because aside from all this, Mike was hired to orchestrate, arrange, synthesize and tape a Rodgers and Hammerstein revue called "Some Enchanted Evening," incorporating many of their songs with an original book.

This is a tremendous challenge, but one Mike welcomes, partly because of his recording equipment at home, including a four-track recording studio, computer and sequencing program. He is also very excited about working with Richard Stafford, who



MICHAEL AND MARCI FICOCELLI

choreographed the Broadway show "Cats." The revue is expected to start a country-wide tour at the end of March.

Ficocelli admits that if he had to choose between performing or teaching, teaching would win. "There is nothing like the respect you can get from children. And watching them learn music is tremendous! But I'm very lucky that I don't have to

choose."

Performing for children would seem to be the best of both worlds, then, and over the past two years, Marci and Michael have been performing as "The M&M Music Factory" fundraising for their children's nursery school.

In the middle of this hectic lifestyle, Michael manages to

slow everything down and concentrate totally on his students because "they're what's really important." And one of his students, who asked not to be

named, said, "We're thrilled for Mr. Ficocelli and all the exciting things that are happening. But don't let him get too famous — we don't ever want him to leave!"