

Ficocelli's musical tribute commemorates the Holocaust

"From Death To Hope," a musical commemoration, is the focal point of a Yom HaShoah (Holocaust Remembrance Day) observance scheduled Tuesday, May 2 at 7 pm at Ramapo College of New Jersey in the Sharp Theater of the Angelica and Russ Berrie Center for Performing and Visual Arts.

In words and music, "From Death to Hope" by Pomona resident Michael Ficocelli, explores the meaning and legacy of the Holocaust using selected quotes and thoughts from the Austrian psychiatrist and Auschwitz survivor, Viktor Frankl. Marci Shein Ficocelli, the composer's wife, is the musical director of the piece.

Ficocelli explained that 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 its history and literature before composing the piece.

"From Death to Hope" was first performed in May 1997 at Temple Sharey Tefilo-Israel, South Orange, NJ as part of the Community Interfaith Service for Holocaust Remembrance Day.

A full-time teacher at the Glen Rock, Middle School, Michael Ficocelli has published over 20 pieces of music.

Two of them are children's musicals, "Freddie" (based on Leo Buscaglia's book, "The Fall of Freddie the Leaf") and "Wild Imagining." Both have been performed throughout the tri-state area.

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 "Shabbat 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 will soon be aired on the History Channel.

Marci Shein Ficocelli, who is musical director of Temple Sharey Tefilo, performs throughout the East Coast as a cabaret artist, appearing frequently in Atlantic City, Foxwoods and New York City. She is currently performing



Michael Ficocelli



Marci Elyn Schein

in "Hot Mamas," a musical revue about women and change, which recently opened at Danny's Skylight Room in Manhattan. Most Saturday evenings, she joins her husband to perform as the duo Marci and Michael at the Woodcliff Lake Hilton.

The Yom HaShoah commemoration is co-sponsored by the Center for Holocaust & Genocide Studies at Ramapo College, the Sisterhoods of Temple Emanuel of the Pascack Valley and Temple Beth Shalom, Park Ridge, NJ.

Founded in 1980, the Center for Holocaust & Genocide Studies is an independent non-profit organization, located on the campus of Ramapo College. It encourages and assists persons of all ages in learning the history and lessons of the Holocaust and other genocides in the hope that through education such tragedies can be prevented from ever occurring again.