

BELMONT COUPLE WRITES SONG FOR SEPT. 11 VICTIMS

San Mateo County Times By Staff Writer

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MENLO PARK, CA- Ron and Maryann Sfarzo traveled to New York City in July to visit an old friend, a retired New York City fireman who took the couple to Engine Company 55 -- a fire house in the city's Little Italy neighborhood.

A few months later, as the events of Sept. 11 unfolded on television, the Sfarzo's watched from their Belmont home. Their shock was tempered with concern for their friend and the firefighters they met during their summer vacation. The toll to Engine 55 was high. At least five of its firefighters are unaccounted for, Ron Sfarzo said. The memory of the firehouse and its occupants stayed with the Sfarzo's, musicians who will soon release a song in memory of those who died in the terrorist attacks. In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks -- and to honor the country their families immigrated to -- they wrote and produced a song in memory of the people who lost their lives. "The whole thing was very emotional for all of us. We didn't want to write words talking about the tragedy, but rather to remind us of who we are and how we got here," Maryann Sfarzo said. Ron, a Menlo Park police officer, and Maryann, an insurance saleswoman, blend their professional lives with a variety of musical commitments. He plays piano, organ and synthesizer, while she sings and does voice-over work in radio. Their song "American Our Country, America Our Home" is a folk-y ballad about immigration and patriotism and will be released next month. It is the culmination of more than six months of work by the Sfarzo's, their family and friends. Ron and Maryann are the children of Italian immigrants who came to the U.S. "I remember stories my relatives would tell," Maryann said. "The people from Italy thought that this was a land of gold, and that they would become rich. They didn't but they did find that they were able to do what they wanted to -- that this was a land of liberty." With those stories in mind, Maryann wrote the words, and Ron set them to music. An instrumental version of the song, featuring Ron at the piano, and two versions with Maryann singing will be on the compact disk, which should be released around May 15. They first offered the song to Capitol Records through Danny Rodriguez, a New York City police officer whose musical career includes singing the National Anthem at New York Yankee baseball games. They sent the song to Rodriguez, and he selected it and two others from more than 30 as a possibility for his first record, but it didn't make the final cut. The Sfarzo's decided that was the signal that they should record it themselves. "(We felt) this was something everybody should be able to hear and enjoy," Maryann said. "So from that we decided to go ahead and produce this ourselves," Ron added.

They borrowed recording studio space from friends and turned two rooms of their home over to the advertising and distribution of the CD, which will be available over the Internet. a portion of the Proceeds from the record sale will be distributed among The National Law Enforcement Officer's Memorial Fund and The national Fallen Firefighter's Foundation.

For more information or to listen to the song, log onto www.americaourhome.net