

Immigrant sings his support

By LETHA D. WILLIAMS

contribute to the country."

When he immigrated to the United States, Peter Mars had a message for Americans. Well traveled, the West German native had seen world-wide political maneuvers. He was present when several friends were beaten and detained in a European country. "I knew what it was like to really experience the fear of not getting back to your homeland," Mars said.

That's why we wrote and recorded a song for the Americans held hostage in Iran.

Entitled "Americans," the song was released nationally on Mars' own label: The Base Recording Company. It is available locally in all Harmony House record stores.

Recently, Mars, whose real name is Harald Weller, edited the song for release in Canada. MCA records is handling distribution there.

The Avon Township resident wrote, recorded and distributed the song within one week. He said it was part of an immigration interview promise to "do something for America."

Although married to an American citizen for nearly two years, Mars found immigration difficult.

"They (immigration officials) treated me as if I was immigrating by myself," the 28-year-old said. "Because I'm a musician, I had to prove I could

With his wife, Carol, who handles the business details, and one-year-old daughter Brigitte, Mars arrived in November. They live and work in their spacious Hampton Square apartment. Music is Mars' full-time occupation. In West Germany he produced artists and performed before thousands of fans.

He holds a German degree, similar to our bachelor of arts, in "science of the mind." The studies included social science, philosophy, theology and politics.

"We've got a whole \$40,000 LP in the can," Mars said, adding the album will be released soon.

"We have a wide spectrum of music we're going to put out in the future," he said with only a hint of an accent.

Poised at his electric grand piano, Mars slips easily from one musical style to another. He has mastered rock, popular, jazz and classical music.

He studied classical music for 10 years at the Frankfurt music conservatory.

"I was supposed to become a classical piano concerto player," Mars said. But he admits his own style is a subtle blend of Elton John and Paul McCartney.

When he recorded "Americans," Mars laded the lyrics with thick rock guitar sound.

"I cannot put pretty music to that kind of a subject," he said, adding he aimed the song at American youth.

"I wanted to hit young people with this song because that's the generation that's going to matter," he said. "But I didn't want to come off corny or fire and brimstone."

"I've had difficulties after I wrote this song to realize they (American youth) don't maybe feel the way I do about the United States," he continued. He especially wants to help American youngsters understand their freedom.

"We'll always be the mission of the world," his song says. "We are Americans, truly American."

There is freedom in other countries, Mars said. "But it is not the same freedom that you experience here just geographically."

And he thinks some media coverage of the Iranian crisis is biased.

"The violence has been glorified more than the victims," Mars said. "That's why we felt we should come up with something that would give the hostages praise."

COPIES OF the record were given to each hostage's family. And one cassette was shipped directly to the American embassy in Iran.

Mars said he's been asked to write new lyrics for the music.

"Some (record companies) think it's

a novelty — a joke," he said, adding it cost him \$5,000 to produce it. "And I've not made a cent on it."

Mars' wife agreed. "It's terribly hard to distribute a record by yourself," Mrs. Weller said. "This record is a very honest effort on our part."

"If we would have thought it was a joke, we would never have made the record," she continued.

The young couple came to Avon because they "both really loved this area." Mrs. Weller formerly lived in Warren and Sterling Heights.

Mars said he will remain here "unless the business locally forces me to move to a place that's more lucrative." He would like to perform at local clubs, or join the high school-college concert circuit.

"I think I would do a good job in entertaining (the students)," he said, adding he wouldn't feel like a foreigner preaching to American youth.

"I consider myself an American now, regardless of where I was born," he said. "I'm more American than German."

Mars said "Americans" will appear on his new album, with the lyrics printed on the cover.



Singer-songwriter Peter Mars wants to help American youth understand their freedom.

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