

Her battles with chronic fatigue and the ghastly effects of the little know skin and hair disease alopecia are not completely behind her; she resignedly admits that they probably never will be completely defeated. But she cheerfully admits that her hair is her own again and the wig that was her camouflage from the world has been banished.

All her troubles have been poured into her songwriting, and the end result is the recently released new album *Extraordinary Daze*, a follow up to her debut release *This Passion*. Along with a new physical makeover (including a vibrant new hair colour) Marilyn has added depth to her musical mind-set.

"It's vastly different (to *This Passion*)," she said. "It's a much more rootsy, sometimes bluesy sound with a bit of folk weaved in. My fans have embraced and welcomed the new maturity and style. I think it's essential to keep evolving, not just as an artist and musician but as a person too."

Then choice of CD title seems entirely appropriate considering the 'whirlwind of events' Marilyn has lived through over the last few years.

"I decided to use 'daze' instead of 'days' to add a further twist to the title as a couple of those experiences did seem to leave me in a bit of a 'daze'!" she said. "Most of the songs are about 'here and now', living in the present, making most of life etc. It's a bit of a soul searcher really – because that's what I am."

Marilyn's newest single is *If I Were A Bird*; a sunny track with 'an Irish air and a childlike delicacy of spirit.' "It's ironic in that while it sounds like a simplistic song on the surface, there is a deeper message underneath saying that it's better to face your problems than running away from them," she explained. "The song also acknowledges that I am thankful for what I have and who I am. There are lots of others worse off than I am."

While You Can is another positive, uplifting song with a clear and simple message; live life while you can as no one knows what can happen tomorrow. "It's my latest philosophy on life!" Marilyn said. "As we get older our mortality becomes more apparent. Don't put off your dreams and desires! Don't take your life or health for granted! Get that silverware and crystal glasses out of the cabinet, invite



END OF DAZE

BY **DEBORAH MINTER**

Only last year Sydney singer/songwriter **MERILYN STEELE** was fighting back from a debilitating series of health crises that would have crippled a lesser woman.

family or friends over for dinner and use them tonight! What are you waiting for? I think you have the idea by now."

Information Blues is a tongue in cheek dig at today's modern technology and communication. "We seem to have so many avenues of communication now – phones, mobiles, SMS, instant messaging, Facebook, My Space, emails, faxes, letters and so on. Some days it just seems to be overload! But with all this communication ironically people are not connecting with each other on a personal level at all any more. We have so many modern conveniences that are meant to save us time and effort, yet nobody has time

to relax, chill out and just talk."

Another positive for Marilyn's future is her recent signing with distribution company WJO Distribution. "It is SO exciting and I'm wrapped!" she enthused. "It's great timing too with the new release and the singles coming up." WJO Distribution / Salamander Sound are associated with Leading Edge Music – an Australia-wide group of independent music stores.

Marilyn's indomitable courage and fighting spirit have brought her out of the dark times. She knows that every step forward is a blessing to be appreciated and anticipated with hope and gratitude.