

Marcia Howard's first solo release 'Butterfly' represented a long awaited solo debut from one of Australia's best-loved female voices. Renowned for her stunning vocal harmony work with her brother Shane Howard and Rose Bygrave in the legendary band Goanna, her singing and song writing developed further for the 1998 Goanna project 'Spirit Returns' (ABC/Universal) where Marcia displayed a passionate and heartfelt appreciation of social and political issues.

Marcia's song 'Sorry', for example is a heartfelt lament for the 'stolen' generations. (Amongst other luminaries, Stephen Cooney's wonderful production and musicianship, and Ireland's Liam O'Maonlai contributed to this recording). Her song 'Angel full of Grace' (Spirit Returns - Goanna & Best of sea Change - Various Artists, ABC/EMI) features twice on the highly acclaimed and much loved series Seachange.

For Marcia, four trips to Ireland over the past two years have served to top up her reservoir of connectedness to the Emerald Isles. Rubbing shoulders with some of Ireland's biggest names such as Mary Black (akin to musical sainthood in Ireland), Liam O'Maonlai and Luka Bloom (akin to a musical papal blessing) has enriched the Warrnambool songstress. "I did a song with Mary [Black] called Poison Tree on A Woman's Heart - A Decade On". Sitting proudly amongst esteemed company such as The Corrs, The Chieftains, Emmylou Harris and Dolly Parton, Howard's contribution of her adaptation of a William Blake piece became her debut onto this prestigious all female compilation.

Spreading her 'butterfly' wings in many directions, Marcia was invited by legendary Irish singer Mary Black to open for her shows at the Olympia Theatre in Dublin over five nights in May 2002. Howard said she was honoured by the invite "playing to Mary's mob". There, Howard got the opportunity to unveil her solo debut Butterfly in the historic Olympia Theatre. In addition, Howard also had the privilege to sing not only with Mary but also with Mary's mum at Maureen's Bar in the Olympia. With photos of Bono and other Irish legends scattered around the bar, the traditional after show drinks provided plenty of special moments for Howard. For Howard, singing alongside Mary Black was an empowering experience:

"Singing 'Ireland's Daughter' I thought of my great grandmothers and how they would never have imagined their great granddaughter would be back in Ireland singing about them leaving in the famine of the 1850's. My brother Shane is well thought of and loved by Mary's audiences and it was wonderful to hear her sing his song 'Flesh and Blood' and join Mary on stage for Shane's song 'Don't Say O.K.' and Forever Young."

The pairs version of Bob Dylan's 'Forever Young' has made it onto Mary Black's live DVD /CD recorded at the Olympia Theatre in May 2002.

In 2003, Marcia played her first independent show in Ireland to a great response. Special guests at that show included Steve Cooney, Laoise Kelly, Luka Bloom (who unveiled a new song especially on the night entitled "I'm Not At War With Anyone") and Maria Doyle Kennedy.

In January 2004 Marcia completed her new CD titled "Burning in the Rain", which she worked on during her visits to Ireland. She worked closely with highly respected songwriter / musician / producer Steve Cooney. They had been recording since May 2002 on and off at 'Pulse' studios and the Cauldron in Dublin and also at Steve's studio in Donegal. American/Irish singer songwriter Tim O'Brien sings and plays fiddle on some tracks and Geoff White (Allison Krauss, producer) provides some additional vocals. Other musicians involved include: Laoise Kelly (harp); Bothy Band members Trina Ni Domnaill (keyboards) and Kevin Burke (fiddle); Bill Shanley (guitar); Pat Crowley (keyboards); with Maria Doyle Kennedy (of "The Commitments" fame) and Mary Black contributing supporting vocals. Marcia launched the CD at the Port Fairy Folk Festival in March 2004, a fitting culmination for this tremendous Irish-Australian collaboration.

