SLT 22mar08 x
K D1 C D1 M D1 Y D1

INSIDE

Television programmes D2
Crossword and Sudoku D3
Movies D3
Diary D5
Stars D6

The Southland Times
Unwind

MATCHBOX TWENTY
still rocking **D4**

D

Forever Marilyn

Playing the world's most famous blond is perhaps a fitting role for a former showgirl being directed by her husband. **Julie Jacobson** reports.

GOODBYE Norma Jean. A life-size cardboard cutout of a fabulously frocked Marilyn Monroe has gone walkabout from the lobby at Wellington's Intercontinental Hotel. Show promoter Stewart MacPherson should be apoplectic. He's not — whoever's nicked it hasn't got the real Monroe, but an imposter.

And there she is. Sunny Thompson. Stopping traffic as she kissy-kisses for the photographer. Thompson is the star of MacPherson's latest production, *Marilyn: Forever Blonde*. The one-woman homage to the blond goddess is set during the darkest period of Monroe's life. It opens with a photo shoot in the all-white studio of young photographer Douglas Kirkland with Monroe, covered in satin sheets, reminiscing about her life. She is 36. Six months later she will die of a barbiturate overdose.

The play was written by Sunny's husband, Greg. And there he is. Directing his wife, his high-heel boots tapping an irritated tattoo on the pavement.

"Come on, honey, we want to see more Marilyn," he calls. She pouts, flutters her heavily mascara-ed lashes.

They're an unlikely pair, the bottle-blonde former popera singer — Sunny studied opera at Concordia College and has a gold single from her time as a Spanish recording star — and the greying, one-time *Showgirls* producer. He's 64. They won't say how old Sunny is, though reports suggest she is definitely older than the "half my age" he alludes to. She looks tired. The pair have been awake, more or less, for two days, fulfilling the demands of a whirlwind promotional tour.

They met on the set of one of his shows — she was doing a revue "where I had a line of male dancers, which we called boy toys, who used to carry me and lift me and look at me adoringly" — and married in 2001.

Continued page D5

DOMINION POST

Marilyn: Forever Blonde: Sunny Thompson performing in a one-woman play depicting Marilyn Monroe.

Calling all Irish

MATE
MARK WILSON

THERE are many national days around the globe that, as they roll around, each year ex-pats in all corners of the world proudly reminisce, usually over a few drinks, about their homelands and their culture. Waitangi Day sees thousands of Kiwis in London dress up as Jake the Muss, Pinetree Meads or Fred Dagg and bring tube traffic to a standstill as they engage in the circle line pub crawl. Aussie day yields the nasal hum of Australians as they converge in bars to celebrate everything Aussie and the Americans puff out their chest, salute the Stars and Stripes and fire an extra cruise missile at al Qaeda to celebrate their independence each year.

However, the one thing that separates all these days from St Patrick's Day is that everyone is asserting their unique culture and heritage to the rest of the world in a celebration of difference and patriotism.

Conversely, on St Pat's Day all cultures in all Western nations find some long lost Irish blood and a green pair of boots and proclaim in one loud, usually alcohol-impaired, voice to be Irish. Everyone celebrates all that is great about Ireland, or celebrates the great drinking, singing and tap dancing culture that Ireland has exported to the world. Irish bars seemingly as opposed to birth control as their Catholic masters have spawned offspring that have inhabited every square inch of the globe bringing with them green hats and Guinness along the way.

This year I was in Dunedin, deep in the student ghetto with my sister and her scarifie mates as they prepared in earnest to celebrate St Pat's Day and, from the look of the *Karma Sutra* book I found on Britney's bedside table, keep those celebrations going long after returning home from the bar. Off to spotlight and the $2 shop to furnish themselves with the necessary green trimmings before gearing up for a 4pm kick off, no doubt followed by a pilgrimage to the usually blue and gold Speight's haven that is Gardies to join the sea of churning sea of green. Despite exams, tests, 8am lectures and the even more relevant fact that hardly any of them are Irish, the students of Dunedin like all other demographics, cultures and races have embraced this very Irish day and helped turn it into the very global celebration it has now become.