



Nashville goes wild for voice of our Mariah

By **Jacqueline Hogge**

A WOMAN who starred in the Voice Of Ireland has triumphed in a country music competition in the US.

Mariah Butler, 22, won the All-American Country Star finals in Nashville.

The singer, of Headford, Co. Galway, said: 'I was determined after the Voice to give it a go.'

'I submitted a video online to the opening stages and was one of 200 artists invited to take part in the live audition showcase, where among the judges were Lorrie Carter-Bennett, a niece of Johnny Cash.

'Then I got through to the last

'I was determined to give it a go'

30 in the semi-finals and then to the finals where there were ten of us, but I was completely shocked when I won it.'

She won the chance to record a six-track EP recording and won a slot at next year's Country Music Association Festival.

Ms Butler, who takes the stage name Riah, said the contest had given her a real break. 'I've had the chance to sing live in front of producers and audiences full of music people.'

Her father Donal said her hard work was paying off. He said: 'While the Voice Of Ireland didn't work out for her, she continued plugging away and put her heart and soul into finding another way to pursue her dream.'

reporter@dailymail.ie

Queen of Country: Mariah Butler in Nashville

Homebuyers 'panic' ahead of lending cap

WOULD-BE first-time buyers are trying to get their mortgage applications in before January 1 when a cap on lending is expected.

The Central Bank is proposing limiting lending to three and a half times the borrower's gross income and forcing buyers to come up with a 20 per cent deposit.

The proposals are aimed at ensuring that banks only lend prudently.

Reckless lending during the Celtic Tiger was widely blamed for the economic collapse.

Dublin mortgage broker Seán Couch said: 'I'm getting constant calls from a lot of people rushing around trying to get their documents together and to get their applications together before Christmas. The new requirements will come in on January 1.'

Mr Couch took to RTÉ Radio's

By **Eamon Donoghue**

Liveline yesterday to vent his frustrations at the predicament faced by first-time buyers.

He told the Mail: 'There's major panic out there. It has somewhat eased since the Taoiseach's comments last week [about helping buyers] but there is a lot of panic.'

Mr Couch said: 'I've had a girl come to me who has had to call off her wedding as a result of this.'

'If you have people who can't pay this now, what happens in two or three years' time when prices continue to rise and they'll be outpriced again?'

'To expect people to save these amounts [for deposits] in cities like Dublin is impossible. This needs to be looked at with common sense.'



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