

Scarborough singer making her mark on country charts

By ANNE VIS
Special To The Mirror

Scarborough resident Diane Raeside's lovely, melodious voice is winning her a warm welcome in the world country music scene.

After producing her debut cassette, *Crazy Infatuation*, recording a number of country chart-hitting songs, and winning a nomination for outstanding new artist at the RPM Big Country awards last year, Raeside says she is ready to be accepted.

"Someone's listening," laughs Raeside as she recalls all of her songs that have made the RPM top 100 country chart. Most of her recordings - so far 17 songs - are with the Roto Noto music label, which periodically produces a compact disc that is a compilation of songs by a number of new country artists.

It all began five years ago when Raeside entered a nation-wide singing competition in Simcoe, Ontario, called the Canadian Open country singing competition. Out of 250 female singers, Raeside won an impressive second place.

"From there," she says, "I heard about other competitions." And her singing career took off.

Raeside has been singing since she was five years old. Though she has no professional voice training, her long-term experience singing for her family has made her quite comfortable in front of an audience.

She performs regularly at music festivals and local bars but enthusiastically remembers a recent trip she made to Nashville, Tenn. to compete in the Nashville Network's "Be A Star" competition for \$50,000.

"I didn't win," laughs Raeside, "but it was really amazing...I'd love to go there again."

As well, Raeside was invited to sing on an all-star song recording for charity in Hamilton last year. Top country artists such as Larry Mercie,



*Diane Raeside
Moving up the charts.*

Patricia Conroy and Russell DeCarlisle from the music group Prairie Oyster also performed for the recording. All proceeds from the sale of the song went to food banks across Canada.

Raeside says there is a new trend in Canadian country music and she's excited about contributing to it.

"We're picking up," she says, "there is a lot more of a following now...and the format is different."

Her recordings on the CD compilations, says Raeside, are very popular in Britain, The Netherlands and the United States.

Though many of her recorded songs are not written by her, Raeside says most of her own creations are sad, love ballads. "They are songs of pain," she describes, "but not of defeat...there is hope."

She says she wants to focus her effort on producing more music and is currently working on her second self-produced album. "It's just a matter of getting the right ears to hear you and away you go."

Raeside's next goal is to be able to produce a CD, do some tours and work full time on her music career.

"Then maybe win a Juno and then a Grammy, if I'm lucky," she jokes.