

How can I market a book and audio tape package?

Q: How can one go about marketing a book/tape (music) combination? I have sold several books, but I am at a loss as to how to market a project in which the songs are the more important component.

Check with your previous publishers first to see if they do book/cassette packages, since you already have a track record there. If not, the large children's publishers, including Random House, Scholastic, Bantam Audio at Bantam Doubleday Dell, and Caedmon, which is an imprint of Harper Audio at Harper Collins, produce book/tape combinations. Janet Schnol, Publishers Weekly's children's audio reviewer, also suggests trying Rabbit Ears Productions, which specializes in children's audio, and the many small independent audio houses that have their own labels. She advises authors to research companies thoroughly to find a house whose style fits the book/cassette package they are trying to produce.

"This is a competitive market," Ms. Schnol says. "Authors should be prepared to be aggressive in explaining how they can help the publisher market their book and cassette. For example, tell them if you perform or have contacts in the music press.

"Children's audio packages only get limited shelf space in book and music stores, and there are problems displaying book and tape packages even in stores that do carry them," she explains. Suggest your own ideas for special outlets that might buy your product, such as children's clothing stores and catalogs. Propose ways of building consumer awareness about your music by providing sample copies of the tape—to children's radio stations, to day care centers and nursery schools, even to pediatric dentists offices, or whatever places you feel may help attract the attention of parents and children. If you perform your own music, look for opportunities to sing and do storytelling at festivals and fairs. 2:3/94