

Blackstone Audio, Inc.

By Danielle L. Mann

Established in 1987 by Craig and Michelle Black, Blackstone Audio Inc. is a family-run company specializing in the production of an eclectic array of audiobooks. To date, Blackstone has produced more than 4,500 audio titles, with new books being recorded at a rate of 25 to 30 titles per month. Blackstone has been recognized by the audiobook industry, having received 86 Audie award nominations, 13 Audie wins, and over 137 Earphone Awards.

The company's name began as Classics on Tape, but the Black family later chose to rename the company Blackstone, in honor of the English literary magazine. The decision to base Blackstone Audio in Ashland was a practical one; Craig Black anticipated that the proximity to the Oregon Shakespeare Festival and its actors would provide a pool of talent for the new company. Narrative resource pool aside, this Ashland company has grown from its original three employees to more than 140 employees throughout the country.

Blackstone Audio has used its interest in new technology to become the first audio publisher to provide the practical and condensed MP3-CD format. The company has brought audiobooks to libraries through contracts with digital download companies such as Overdrive, OCLC/NetLibrary, and Ingram Digital. This support of public libraries has been a driving force for Blackstone and has enabled the company to maintain a personal relationship with its community. This small, family-owned, Ashland-based company currently holds the title of largest independent audiobook publisher in the industry.

Sources

Blackstone Audio. <http://blackstoneaudio.com/>

The Blackstone Audio Story. Ashland: Blackstone Audio Inc, 2008.

The Oregon Encyclopedia

http://oregonhist-oep-dev.azurewebsites.net/articles/blackstone_audio_inc_/