

Canadian Lawyer Pens Legal Hurtin' Music

Reuters

Toronto, November 13: When he's not working to settle family feuds for his clients, a Canadian lawyer writes songs about them -- and his CD is getting airplay from Toronto to San Francisco.

Les Kotzer, a 49-year-old Toronto lawyer who specializes in wills and estate law, claims inspiration from the adult children of baby boomers, squabbling over inheritances left to them by parents who didn't write proper wills.

Kotzer has released a CD of sentimental songs that describe fights over "mother's rugs and rings," as one lyric goes.

"I see so much tragedy in my practice: brother against brother, sister against sister," Kotzer said in an interview on Thursday. "I use my songwriting ability and my legal knowledge and put that into music."

While Kotzer wrote the lyrics, fellow Canadian Lewis Manne composed the music and sang the songs. Kotzer sent his self-released CD, "A Family United, A Family Divided", to AM radio stations across Canada and the United States in September -- not expecting how strongly listeners would relate.

Gary Gamble, a host and programmer at the Toronto station Foxy 88.5, has been playing the song "Photos in a Drawer", twice a day for the past six weeks. Its message is that siblings can rise above inheritance disputes by looking at childhood photos that remind them of happier times.

"It's popular here because it's got some meaning to it. It's not just another relationship song," said Gamble. "Plus, it's not too often you would get something like that from a lawyer, so that made it unique."

A San Francisco radio host went so far as to pen the endorsement that appears on the CD's back cover, part of which reads, "Les Kotzer's knowledge of the law has always been exceptional, but his music is superb."

In the past couple of weeks, Kotzer said, listeners have written and called to tell him that his music has given them courage to contact estranged siblings.

"One caller said I was practising 'emotional law'," he said, adding: "I hope to put out another CD very soon."