# 'INTELOYED YOUALL'

As David Cassidy moves forward with a new EP, relive the emotional end of his touring career

BY MARK WYCKOFF

"It is the end of an era, isn't it?"

Craig J. Snider is standing in the empty Greenwich Odeum in East Greenwich, Rhode Island. It's late afternoon on Friday, March 3, 2017, and he is contemplating the end of David Cassidy's long and winding touring career.

The pair — "brothers from another mother," as Cassidy likes to say — have spent the past 10 years making music together, both in the studio and on tour. But they are finally reaching the end of this particular road.

The shows that night at the Odeum and the following evening at B.B. King Blues Club in New York City will close out "the touring aspect of my life," Cassidy announces on his website Feb. 25. He is emphatic that he isn't retiring, that he still wants to hit the studio and make another record with Snider, but the grueling days of back-to-back-to-back shows are growing too

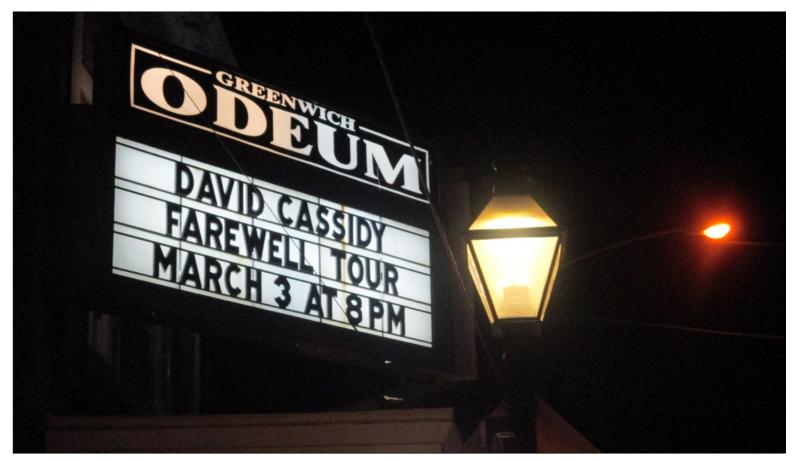
much for him as he approaches his 67th birthday on April 12.

Snider understands the decision. Cassidy first hit the concert trail in 1971, blasting onto the scene with a sold-out show at Seattle Center Arena. Over the decades, he crisscrosses the globe, from California to Maine, England to Australia, Germany to Japan. Strapping a guitar around his neck and stepping out onstage is a constant thrill, but the years and miles are catching up to him. Not only is Cassidy coping with an aching back and arthritis in his hands, he has just revealed to People magazine that he's been diagnosed with the early stages of dementia.

Faced with all of these challenges, putting the brakes on touring seems like the right thing to do.

"It's time," Snider says quietly. "It's been





STREETLIGHT SERENADE David Cassidy played his second-to-last touring show at this 410-seat Rhode Island theater.

coming for awhile."

But first there is music to make. Two night's worth.

# GREENWICH ODEUM East Greenwich, R.I. Friday, March 3, 2017

### **Soundcheck**

The Odeum is a quaint little theater on a quaint downtown street in a quaint suburb of Providence. The 410-seat venue was built in 1926 as a combo vaudeville house/movie theater. On this day, the marquee above the entrance announces the "David Cassidy Farewell Tour."

Cassidy's band rolls up to the Odeum in a rented van around 4 p.m. They enter the lobby, say a quick hello to theater manager Molly Pritchard, then head into the theater for soundcheck.

By this point, the four-piece group is running like a well-oiled music-making machine.

Frank Fabio has been gigging with Cassidy the longest, playing bass in the group for more than 15 years. Dubbed the "sexiest man on stage" by Cassidy, he joined the lineup just as the singer was transitioning from his "At the Copa"-influenced concerts to more streamlined live sets. He would soon take on the roles of both music director and production manager.

Snider, a Chicago-based producer who has notched nearly 30 No. 1 hits on Billboard's dance chart with remixes for such artists as Beyoncé, Justin Timberlake, Mariah Carey and Katy Perry, connected with Cassidy in the fall of 2006 when they began work on "Part. II — The Remix." The pop-dance hybrid CD, released in spring 2007, featured re-recorded versions of Cassidy's hits that were deconstructed, rebuilt and reinvigorated by Snider. A bond was forged during that project and, when Rob Cooke bowed out as Cassidy's keyboardist, Snider joined the band in 2010, bringing his monster pianoplaying chops into the lineup. Last year, at his Mix Kitchen studio, Snider produced and arranged Cassidy's soulful "A DC Christmas" EP (available for download at iTunes and DavidCassidyMusic.com).

These two East Coast gigs are basically home games for guitarist Dave Robicheau, a resident of nearby Westport, Conn. Robicheau, who was Davy Jones' guitarist for nearly 15 years and played on The Monkees' 45th anniversary tour, lives close enough that he's brought along the newest guitar in his arsenal, a Duesenberg Starplayer with silver sparkle finish. He joined Cassidy's band, at Cassidy's behest, in April 2012 following Jones' sudden death that February. As Cassidy told him, "Sometimes when one door closes, another one opens."

Drummer Felipe Torres, a fellow Monkees vet and

the newest member of Cassidy's group, joined in March 2015 when Teri Coté departed after a dozen years. "He's really good," Cassidy said in 2015 following his first rehearsal with Torres. "He plays in the pocket and he's not like, 'I'm gonna be a showoff drummer,' which is usually the biggest problem with drummers. He plays music."

To Cassidy, these players represent his "second family."

And on this particular day, they act like one, casually joking around as they prep for the show, practicing backgrounds for "Daydream Believer," running through "Sweet Little Angel" with Robicheau on lead vocals and dusting off "Brass in Pocket," a song Coté used to sing while Cassidy played drums. This time, Snider handles the vocals, slipping in a few R-rated lyrical embellishments. At one point, to everyone's amusement, Snider starts improvising lyrics to Billy Joel's "New York State of Mind."

"Frankie Fabio, Frankie Fabio ... it's almost time to go," Snider sings as he plays the keys. "Gotta get ready to play the last show."

When he isn't behind his Yamaha S90-ES synth, Snider is conferring with the Odeum crew. "We've got to get these monitors right," he tells the sound engineer. "I guarantee you you don't want David to feel uncomfortable about anything."



**STAGE IS SET** A black Fender is tuned and ready for the start of Cassidy's show at the Greenwich Odeum in Rhode Island.

Later, he grabs a set list and sits down with the lighting tech. "'Let me tell you what's rockin' and what's not," Snider says. "That low setting will go really well with the soft stuff, like 'In My Life.'"

It's nearly 6 p.m. when Cassidy arrives. He looks relaxed in faded blue jeans and a threebutton, long-sleeve Henley shirt, but you can tell by his slow, deliberate movements that his back is killing him.

He takes off his baseball cap, puts it on a stool, and hugs Fabio. "How are you, my brother?" he asks him, before greeting Robicheau, Snider and Torres.

Cassidy is extremely hoarse; the laryngitis-like croak that's been dogging him since fall has not abated.

"You sound like Burgess Meredith with that gravel," Snider tells him, referencing the scratchy-voiced actor who played the portly Penguin on the 1966 "Batman" TV series.

"Who?" Cassidy asks, clearly not hearing him.

"Burgess Meredith," Snider repeats.

"I met him when I was 9," Cassidy replies. "Nine!"

Clearly amused by this, Snider comes back with another question.

"Say 'Batman' for me."

"What?" Cassidy asks.

"Say 'Batman' for me. Please."

"Batman," Cassidy rasps, his voice scraping through the air like sandpaper.

They chat about sports for a few minutes, discussing

the increasing relevance of Snider's alma mater, Northwestern, in the collegiate sports world.

"Northwestern has been the butt of collegiate sports forever," Snider says.

"Not anymore. Not with your football coach," Cassidy notes, pointing out the achievements of Pat Fitzgerald, who has led the Wildcats to seven bowl appearances over the past 11 seasons.

Cassidy is impressed that Fitzgerald has created a winning culture without neglecting academics.

"It's hard to get in there," says Snider, who graduated from Northwestern with a degree in piano and composition. "I don't know how I got in, to tell you the truth."

"Oh, come on," Cassidy chides him. "You were a prodigy! Me, I got kicked out of two high schools. Two!"

Cassidy finally slings a Fender around his neck and the band runs

through a few quick tunes. The gravel in his voice adds extra grit to "Sweet Little Angel" and ups the poignance of "Point Me in the Direction of Albuquerque."

After about 15 minutes, Cassidy puts the guitar down and declares, "I've heard enough.

**HEARTFELT** "I'm

so happy to share

you," Cassidy tells

all of this with

the sold-out

Greenwich

Odeum crowd.

"You guys sound great," he says. "I sound like shit."

Then he huddles with the stage crew, introducing himself and shaking a few hands.

"You'll hear more of me tonight," he tells them. "But I can't give it to you now. All the airplanes I've been on, and this dry Northeast air, are killing me. And I'm already recovering badly - from laryngitis. I've got to vocalize and get some steam."

Before he leaves, he has two requests of Pritchard, the theater manager, who will be driving him back to his hotel that night even before the last notes of "I Think I Love You" have been played.

"I just need a towel. That's all I need," Cassidy tells her. "And have the car ready and pointing in the direction we need to go."

### The show

When the clock strikes 8, the crowd is primed for the start of Cassidy's concert. Some carry signs - "Thank You and Good Luck" reads one placard, which is decorated with a pair of original

Bell Records albums — while others start chanting "David, David, David!"

Pritchard suspects the crowd's enthusiasm might get out of hand and warns her staff to keep things under control.

"No one's allowed backstage," she says emphatically. "I don't care if they say, 'But I'm his sister.' No

one - no one - is allowed backstage except his crew. "

What Pritchard and Co. don't count on is audience members ignoring the pre-show announcement barring flash photography. Over the decades, Cassidy has endured five surgeries — with a sixth on the way — and he's become increasingly sensitive to blinding bursts of light. At his final two shows, Cassidy wants no such distractions.

But it's not to be. Just 20 seconds into the start of the first song, "Come On Get Happy," Cassidy has to admonish the crowd when flashes began to burst.

"There will be no lights or

video tapes tonight," he says. "You're not gonna make me blind, are you?"

The crowd roars in agreement, but that doesn't put a stop to the lights.

"Please don't video with that light," Cassidy pleads after a rousing performance of "I Can Feel Your Heartbeat." "I'm getting my

> sixth eye surgery in another six weeks so please just don't do it. Don't do it. Just turn off the video recording and all that stuff."

> Cassidy soldiers on through more flashes and does his best to sing through his laryngitis.

"Hush" rocks hard, "I'll Meet You Halfway" is soulful and "Night and Day" carries some emotional

heft in spite of

Cassidy's faltering voice.

The latter tune, a 1932 classic by Cole Porter, is a song Cassidy remembers singing as a boy with his father, the late, great Broadway star Jack Cassidy. He and Snider are recording it for Cassidy's next EP, "Songs My Father Taught Me."

When "Night and Day" is over, Cassidy acknowledges his vocal struggles.

"Don't think that was easy. Trust me," he says. "Dad's up there (saying): 'What the hell's the matter with you? Why can't you hit those notes?"

Cassidy has the crowd up on its feet, and singing, during the Davy

Jones tribute "Daydream Believer." Then

"This is the man who than any other human being," Cassidy says. "With his mind, and his brain, he was so seriously committed to peace, to love, to happiness. 'All we can say is give peace a chance!' 'End my mentor taught me, and the whole planet, in the '60s."

he slows things down to pay homage to another departed pal on "In My Life." inspired me more his heart, his soul war!' That's what

SNAP DECISION Greenwich Odeum theater manager Molly Pritchard gets a photo with Cassidy back at his hotel.

"John Lennon!" someone in the crowd screams.

"You bet it is John Lennon," Cassidy says. "This is his song. I give you his words through me. ... I was blessed to call him my friend. And we were all blessed that he was born and that he changed the world."

The band solos hold some magical moments. Torres begins sans sticks, playing the drums with just his hands; Cassidy joins Fabio for a few lines of "Play That Funky Music"; and Snider coaxes Cassidy into singing a bit of "On Broadway," a tune that thematically, anyway - could work on "Songs My Father Taught Me."

The set ends on a hit-packed high with "Doesn't Somebody Want to Be Wanted," "I Woke Up In Love This Morning" and "I Think I Love You."

As the band jams through the extended end of "I Think I Love You," Cassidy exits the stage, grabs a towel from Pritchard and climbs into a waiting car for the 10-minute ride back to his hotel in nearby Warwick.

He is gone before the houselights come up.

## Tray cool

After playing limo driver and dropping Cassidy off at the Sheraton, Pritchard returns to the Odeum while concertgoers are still filing out. Some were off-put by Cassidy's demands to squelch the flashes. Others loved the show and admired Cassidy's guts to carry on in spite of his vocal issues.

In his report that night on

Providence TV station WJAR, reporter Tony Gugliotta calls Cassidy's second-tolast show "Quite a treat for Rhode Islanders."

Pritchard enjoyed her encounter with Cassidy.

"He couldn't have been nicer to me," she says.

She does, however, acknowledge that there had been problems rounding up a suitable car for Cassidy.

With time running out, she ended up having to, um, "borrow" a vehicle without the owner's knowledge.

"I'll let them know about this in 20 years," she says.

"Maybe.

Meanwhile, one of Pritchard's coworkers has important news to share: Cassidy's band members had left the theater earlier in the evening and gotten their own dinner.

This means that all the food the theater provided for them as part of Cassidy's contract—including a deli tray, fruit platter and assorted sodas—has gone mostly untouched.

"When the band goes out for dinner, the theater staff eats good for a week," Pritchard says, laughing.

Also untouched and uneaten is Cassidy's lone dinner request: A turkey sandwich on wheat bread with lettuce only and Dijon mustard on the side.

"Do you want it?" Pritchard asks.

# B.B. KING BLUES CLUB New York, N.Y. Saturday, March 4, 2017

There is only one place David Cassidy wants to end his touring career.

"I've chosen for 2017 to finish where I began, and where I was

born, in the city of Manhattan, in New York, at B.B. King's," he announces on Feb. 25.

Hardly surprising, considering King is his blues guitar hero and the 11,000-squarefoot venue is one of his favorite rooms to play. In the past six years, Cassidy has performed there every year except one. This time.

he turns down

an offer from the Beacon Theatre so he can return to King's funky palace.

B.B. King's is on 42nd Street in New York's busy Times Square district. It's just blocks away from the sites of some of Cassidy's greatest triumphs: Madison Square Garden, where he played a sold-out show in 1972; the Royale Theatre (now the Bernard B. Jacobs Theatre), where he donned the coat in "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat" in 1983; and the Music Box Theatre, where he and his brother Shaun took Broadway by storm in "Blood Brothers" in 1993-94. Nearby, too, is the Imperial Theatre, where Cassidy's father notched one of his earliest hits, "Wish You Were

Here." Seeing that musical in 1953 is what spurred Cassidy to become a performer.

This town is embedded in Cassidy's performing DNA. These streets are the pathways of his life. And now he was coming home for one final show.



MAGIC IN THE AIR The neon lights are bright when Cassidy returns to B.B. King's.

### Cruise to Gotham

Cassidy's band makes the three-hour, 170-mile trek from East Greenwich to Times Square after the concert Friday night. Cassidy waits until the next morning to make the drive.

As he heads south on 1-95 that Saturday, temperatures hover in the mid- to upper-20s. While milemarkers flash past, so do memories — especially when Rhode Island gives way to Connecticut.

Cassidy passes by exits for cities like Uncasville, home to another of his beloved venues, the Mohegan Sun, where he played concerts and staged his "Rat Pack Is Back!" revue; New Haven, where his dad road-tested several musicals and he performed in

"Blood Brothers"; Westport, where he starred in "Voice of the Turtle" with then-wife Kay Lenz; and Ridgefield, where he lived for a time in the 1990s.

As Cassidy crosses into New York State and makes his way toward Manhattan, he passes

through a string of suburbs. One of them, Larchmont, served as the setting for the Broadway musical "The Fig Leaves Are Falling," his first professional show in 1968.

The circle is almost complete.

# Frozen noses (and feet)

The majority of seats at B.B. King's are first-come,

first-served, which explains why hundreds of fans are braving the freezing cold to stake out a place in line. They come from near (Brooklyn, Queens, Long Island) and far (California, Canada, the Netherlands and Japan) to be part of this final show.

Metal barriers are set up on the sidewalk outside the club and people begin queuing up behind them around 1 p.m. Doors are set to open at 6 p.m., with the show at 8. Even though the sun is out, temperatures remain below freezing the entire afternoon. Thirty is the high and the wind chill slices that down to the low 20s.

This is parka weather, which means that Kali Trotter is woefully under-dressed. The 18-year-old pre-

law student flew in that morning from Nebraska just to see the show. She has no hotel room, no luggage ... and no jacket. Not even a pair of gloves. She is struggling to stay warm in a light sweater, a red dress with a black halter top, and a pair of Uggs.

"I truly did not plan the trip well at all," says Trotter, who made the New York trek with her boyfriend, Doc. "I did not even think it was in the cards for me. But I made it happen somehow."

Trotter has seen
Cassidy three times before
and wasn't planning on
attending the B.B. King's
date until he announced it
would be his last. She
desperately wanted to be
there, to support him, but
flights were expensive and
tickets were sold out.

She scraped together the money for the plane fare, snagged scalper tickets (at \$150 a pop) for herself and Doc and headed to the Big Apple. The whole trip cost over \$1,000.

"I would have regretted it forever had I not gone," she says.

So how did an 18-year-old become such a huge David Cassidy fan? The same way much of America did ... by hearing "I Think I Love You."

Only thing is, she discovered it for the first time in 2007, not 1970.

"I was 10 years old and I heard it on a '70s radio station," she says. "I loved his voice."

Loved it so much, in fact, that she starts tracking down Cassidy's albums and singles at used record shops. She begins watching "The Partridge Family" on DVD, sings

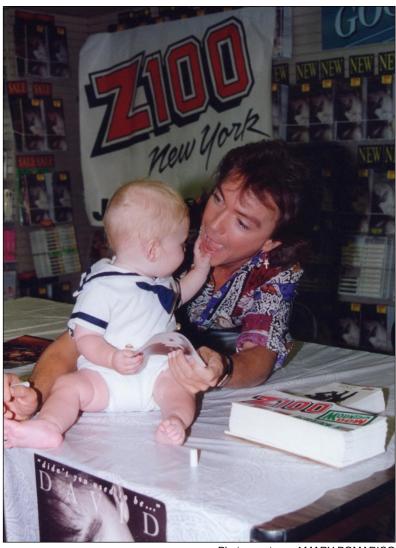


Photo courtesy of MARY POMARICO

IT'S OVER Queuing up for the final gig of Cassidy's final tour makes Mary Pomarico remember the time in 1992 when she and her husband, Michael, took their infant son Joseph to Cassidy's "Didn't You Used to Be" CD signing at Sam Goody's in New York City. "Where does the time go?" she wonders wistfully, her eyes getting misty.

"Partridge" songs with her brothers and sister in their basement and starts collecting memorabilia, like posters and gum cards. She's now got all of his records, from "Cherish" to "A Touch of Blue," and her bedroom is a Cassidy shrine. One of her most prized possessions is a 1974 tour program, which Cassidy signed for her from the stage during a Feb. 15, 2014, show at Riverside Casino in Iowa.

Michael and Mary Pomarico of New Jersey are dressed considerably warmer than Trotter, and have a considerably longer history as Cassidy fans. They both watched "The Partridge Family" during its original '70s run and Michael, who would go on to become an Emmy-winning director on the soap opera "All My Children," was in the audience for some of Cassidy's earliest concerts, including the Garden State Arts Center in Holmdel, N.J., in 1971 and Madison Square Garden in 1972.

Mary didn't get to see Cassidy live back in the '70s, but she never missed an episode of the TV series. Unlike most kids, she could actually relate to hitting the highway in a bus—even if hers didn't sport a Mondrian design.

"I was one of six children and my Dad bought an old city bus, converted it into a camper and we traveled around the country," she says. "Music was always playing. Back then it was an eight-track player! We listened to Partridge Family songs, of course, as well as the other artists of the day. I just loved David and thought he'd be

the best older brother! I was willing to trade mine in for David!"

The Pomaricos were married in 1990. Mary is pregnant with their first child, Joseph, in 1991 when the couple travel to see the opening date of Cassidy's U.S. comeback tour at Hersheypark in Hershey, Pa.

"During the show was when I felt Joseph kick for the first time, making the event even more special," she says.

The following year, the couple bring baby Joseph to Sam Goody's record store in New York City where Cassidy is signing autographs to promote the release of "Didn't You Used to Be."

"We were first in line and David fell in love with Joseph and had a ball with him at his table," Mary recalls. "We actually held up the line a little bit when David spent so much time with him."

The Pomaricos rarely miss a chance to see Cassidy perform when he's in the New York/ New Jersey area. They caught him at Jersey's Club Bene in '91; in the middle of Times Square in 1993 promoting "The Partridge Family's" return to the airwaves on Nick at Nite; at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center in 2016; and at numerous B.B. King's shows. They also saw him repeatedly in "Blood Brothers" on Broadway.

"I was pregnant with our daughter Jennifer to B.B. then," Mary says, remembering the "Blood Brothers" run. "So there's a feeling of David being part of the fabric of our family."

The realization that this B.B. King's show may be the last Cassidy concert she will ever see is extremely emotional for Mary.

"I have to keep stopping and wipe tears from my eyes," she says. "I just think he's an amazing performer and so many women have missed the boat with him. They just saw him as this sex symbol, but he's so much more than that. I'm not saying I wasn't always in love with him ... I was. He's beautiful. But I also loved his guitar playing and his great voice. The different styles ... the blues, the rock, the pop. I will miss seeing



'LET US IN! LET US IN!' Freezing fans are furious when the doors to B.B. King's don't open at 6 p.m. as promised.

him. We've gone to so many concerts of his, I'm not sure how it will be knowing there isn't another on the horizon."

As the sun starts to dip below the skyscrapers, and the air grows even more frigid, the Pomaricos get lucky: Cassidy's drummer, who they know, invites them inside for a pre-show chat.

The rest of the fans in the growing crowd aren't so lucky; there is still more than an hour to go before the doors are slated to open. To fight the chill, some folks unwrap packages of air-activated hand warmers, tossing the warmers on the sidewalk and standing on them, just to get a bit of feeling back in their toes.

When 6 p.m. comes and goes,

and the doors don't swing open, the crowd begins to revolt. "Let us in! Let us in!" they chant. Trotter's boyfriend, who hours earlier had seen her suffer enough and dashed across the street to buy her a coat, is one of the most vocal.

"Let us in! Let us in!" Finally, as the clock ticks close to 6:30, it is time.

Inside at last.

### **Rock your Locs**

Cassidy and Co. have been inside B.B. King's for much of the afternoon. He busies himself doing an interview with "Inside Edition" while band members set up their equipment and run a soundcheck.

The group may be disbanding after tonight, but the mood isn't somber.

"There is no extra emotion for musicians,"

Fabio says. "All gigs end — some quicker than others."

Cassidy discussed the notion of retirement with Fabio at the last gig of 2016 in Peekskill, N.Y.

"I told him everyone has the right to retire when it's right for them," Fabio says.

Buoying spirits backstage is the presence of Teri Coté, Cassidy's drummer from 2003 to 2015. Though she played on Cassidy's Christmas EP, this is the first time she has hung out with the guys on the road since playing her final show at the Tropicana Casino & Resort in Atlantic City, N.J., on Jan. 24, 2015.

"My fiancé, Sergio Bellotti, and I had decided to go to this show



before DC let the world know that it was his last," Coté says. "It was meant to be."

For Coté, the reunion is a blast.

"Frank and I have always played well together," she says. "I really miss his bass playing and person. Then Craig came along and took our whole thing to another level with his awesome playing, expertise and fun personality. On top of that he's become one of my best friends in life and I'm very happy we're still doing other recording and live projects together. We plan to continue our fun long into the future! After that David Robicheau came along and brought in his energetic, wild side, which is a lot of fun. And DC has never been anything but complimentary of me and my drumming. He always reminds me he's played with the best drummers and it's true. The guys he's worked with in the studio are guys I've always looked up to. They're great players. I know he's worked with Hal Blaine and Vinnie Colaiuta plus countless others. He says I'm his favorite musical drummer and that really means a lot to me. He's a

very kind-hearted person and generous with his compliments if he feels you're deserving."

When Coté left in 2015, Cassidy lamented losing her talents.

"She's one of the most gifted, talented artists," he said. "She paints, she does jewelry, she does murals, she does cartoons and she's an amazing drummer. She's the best musical drummer. ... Nobody plays the drums like Teri Coté plays the drums."

Coté bowed out of Cassidy's band in part to devote time to promoting Rimshot-Locs, a small metal nut that attaches to a drum's tension rods and keeps them precisely tuned during

BAND OF BROTHERS
(AND SISTER) Above,
Cassidy's band proudly
wears the Locs of Love
necklaces that Teri Coté
made for them. From left
are Frank Fabio, Coté,
Felipe Torres, Craig J and
Dave Robicheau. At left,
Cassidy & Co. backstage at
B.B. King's.

performances. "It's the world's best tension rod locking system for

drums," she says.

Though she's busy as a partner in the Rimshot-Locs company, she carved out time to join her Cassidy bandmates in May 2017 when work commenced on Cassidy's "Songs My Father Taught Me" EP at Snider's Mix Kitchen studio in Chicago.

"Good stuff is on the rise!" she says.

At B.B. King's, Coté comes bearing gifts — necklaces she had made using a combination of Rimshot-Locs, beads, metal, wood, glass, bone and, she says, "whatever else was floating my boat at the time." She calls them Locs of Love, and the necklaces are for sale at www.247drums.com.

Snider grabs one with a peace

sign, Torres chooses his favorite (made with drum wing nuts for the cymbal stands) and Coté picks out ones for Fabio and Robicheau at their request.

Cassidy receives his Locs of Love necklace after the show. Coté designed it especially for him using puka shells, a nod to the craze that Cassidy ignited in the 1970s when he returned from a trip to Hawaii wearing a necklace made with shells he had strung together.

"He probably won't wear it much," Coté says, "but it's a mindful memento and he can hang it in his music studio as a reminder that he's loved."

# Cassidy live

The thawed-out fans inside B.B. King's let out a collective roar when Cassidy hits the stage a little after 8 p.m. If this is the last time they're going to see him, they're going to shower him with love.

Trouble is, that shower puka shells. includes a deluge of photo flashes, camcorder lights and distracting screams. Cassidy does his best to politely discourage the sensory bombardment.

"Hello, New York!" he says after playing a few blues licks. "My name is David Cassidy and I was born, raised and spent the better part of my good life loving the soul, the madness, the beauty of this city and adoring being known as a native New Yorker.

"I'm gonna ask a great favor of all of you. Some of you know, I've had five eye surgeries. I'm going next month to have my sixth. My eyes have become so sensitive to

Photos courtesy of TERI COTE **PUKA POWER** Snider snapped this shot of Cassidy wearing his Locs of Love necklace during sessions

light that I ask ... please turn the lights off or go. Thank you, everybody. No flashes. No videos. ... I ask that you not yell at me, scream at me ... it's hard enough for me right now."

for "Songs My Father

designed it using real

Taught Me." Coté

He then urges the audience to try, "with everything you've got, to do what I'm about to tell you." And that, of course, is to "Come O n Get Happy."

They're happy all right, grooving to the familiar beat of "The Partridge Family" theme song, but still the flashes pulse.

"You're ruining it for everyone

else," Cassidy pleads.
"Stop videoing and turning those lights on. If you wanna shoot, shoot without lights. I have no problem with it. But it's just unfair. I can't see very well, do you understand? Five eye surgeries. I'm half blind. Please don't make it worse for me. Tonight's a great celebration for me, and us and you."

Cassidy has managed to steam away much of his vocal gravel, leaving himself with a smoother tone. But his voice is still spent from the laryngitis, and he gets hoarser and hoarser as the night goes on.

After "Point Me in the Direction of Albuquerque," he thanks the audience — something he does

repeatedly during the night.

"You're the reason I've got 49 years in this business," he says.
"You're the reason.
I'm just the just vessel. Thanks to you, it's never been a job. It's always been fun as hell."

Cassidy rips into "Sweet Little Angel" next, one of his favorite B.B. King songs, and is so knocked out by Robicheau's solo that he whips out his iPhone and snaps a picture — sans flash, of course — of the guitarist wailing.

Next comes a chance to rest his voice — and reunite with an old friend. He calls Coté out onto the stage and, just like they used to do, he grabs her drumsticks and she grabs his mic and they team up for a cover of the Pretenders' "Brass in Pocket."

"Who's that back there on the



drums, Teri?" Snider teases.

"That's my drummer," she says.
"That's David."

Cassidy looks a little wary as he settles behind the kit, noting that "I haven't picked up a drumstick in two years."

"We'll all have to stretch our memories on this one," Coté acknowledges.

On the next tune, Deep Purple's "Hush," they switch to their more familiar roles: Cassidy up front on vocals, Coté on drums. The reunion rocks.

After Coté leaves the stage, Cassidy reminisces about "I'll Meet You Halfway," the tune iconic Brill Building songwriter Gerry Goffin penned for him in 1971.

"I have such great memories of singing it around the world. I love the fact that it touched a nerve in you as it does in me every time. It means so much to me. I can tell it, I can feel it. And if ever you're gonna feel anything on the stage, tonight might be the night for it."

"Amen," Snider says.

When "Halfway" is complete, a fan hands Cassidy a single red rose. He's touched.

"How sweet. Thank you so much for this. I'll probably stab myself with it — there's no doubt. There's no doubt. My family used to call me 'The Spiller.' Literally. 'The Spiller.' What that meant was anything in my hand or near me (was in jeopardy). You've already seen a couple of demonstrations of that this evening. As I peeled my guitar off I knocked the microphone over. Anyway, that's why it's very dangerous for me to drink anything onstage because there are electrical devices up here. And I don't wanna go out electrocuted, you know? It's not a good look. It's just not."

After saluting Davy Jones with "Daydream Believer," Cassidy introduces "Night and Day." He talks about how he used to sing it with his father, and how he wants to record the song with Snider. And, for the first time since the "Dr. Phil" show, he publicly addresses

his dementia diagnosis.

"Eventually Craig and I will do 'Songs My Father Taught Me,' and I want 'Night and Day' to be on there. That might be the last time I go in and record. But I want to do this before I am no longer. And it has nothing to do with my early, early stages of dementia. Nothing to do with that. As you can tell, I've always forgotten stuff. That's just who I am. I only want you to know I'm really well. I'm really fine. Honestly. Honestly. Occasionally I'll have a bad day or night but I'm as forgetful as I always was. I am. I'm just so fortunate to be able to sing all of this great music, to take you on this ride with me tonight, through my musical life."

Cassidy often talks about his mom, Evelyn Ward, and his dad, Jack Cassidy, at concerts, but rarely does he talk at length about his grandfather, Fred Ward. After Evelyn and Jack were divorced, Cassidy and his mom moved into Fred's house in West Orange, N.J. With Cassidy's real dad out of the

picture, Fred became the father figure in his life.

"My grandfather read meters

for the public service," Cassidy recalls, getting more and more choked up as the memories come flowing forth. "Our financial analysis would be lower income than average but loving, caring and I don't even know how to describe how grateful I was to him. One of the great thrills for me was when I performed in concert at what they used to call the Garden State Arts Center. To see him in the audience ... he also came to Madison Square Garden ... to know that he got to see what he helped shape (was so important to me because) without his leadership and his mentoring me, God knows where I would he."

The heartfelt reminisces lead perfectly into an emotional performance of John Lennon's Beatles' masterpiece "In My Life." Cassidy tweaks the song's last line so it can apply to everyone in the audience: "In my life ... I've loved you *all*."

It's the band's turn to shine next as Cassidy introduces each of them and lets them flex their musical muscles solo.

Robicheau usually puts on a blistering Jimi Hendrix display during his solo spot, but decides instead to pay tribute to his boss. Their back-and-forth exchange is touching. Robicheau: "I've been with you five years. Thank you for the music. Thank you for including me."



'I'M REALLY FINE' "I only want you to know I'm really well," Cassidy tells the fans at B.B. King's. "Honestly."

Cassidy: "Thank *you*, man." Robicheau: "Here we are, back on Broadway."

Cassidy: "I know. Appropriate, isn't it? Where I started, where I was born."

Robicheau: "Yeah. It's your street, man."

Cassidy: "Thank you, brother. I appreciate that."

Robicheau: "So I'm just gonna sing a song for you. You can join in if you want."

The song is Lerner and Loewe's "On the Street Where You Live" from the 1956 musical "My Fair Lady."

"People stop and stare, they

don't bother me," Robicheau sings, softly picking out notes on his silver-sparkle Duesenberg. "For

there's nowhere else on Earth that I would rather be. Let the time go by, I won't care. If I can be here on the street where you live."

It's a tender, wistful tribute that ends with some monster riffing. Cassidy is blown away.

Turns out the song choice was completely impromptu.

"When Teri came out, somebody knocked out my wahwah pedal," Robicheau reveals after the show. "So I couldn't do my normal Hendrix thing. And 'On the Street Where You Live' had been going around in my head and I thought, 'It's so appropriate. This is his street. Why not do it?'

Torres began his solo using brushes ("A lost art," Cassidy notes) and then Fabio ("a killer, killer human being") gives a funky, thumping master class on the bass.

After that it's Snider's turn. He pounds out the first chord of "On Broadway" like he's Elton John teasing the start of "Bennie and the Jets."

Cassidy looks at him like he's crazy.

"We're here!" Snider says. "We have to do it! Why the fuck not?"

"I've never learned the words to this" Cassidy responds.

"You got it," Snider encourages him. "You got, you got it, you got it."



Cassidy makes his way through a verse, improvising when he needs to.

"How you gonna make a dime?" he sings, slowing down the tempo. "Now I can't even make any time.

"But I've loved you, I'll never forget this," he continues, talking more than singing. "Tonight is such an amazing, emotional, heartfelt lovefest for me ... with you ... on Broadway."

Snider's spot could have ended there, but Cassidy coaxes him into playing a bit of George Gershwin's "Summertime," another track destined for "Songs My Father Taught Me."

"A little preview of what's to come, right?" Snider says.

Cassidy only sings a few lines, but it's enough to whet one's appetite for the upcoming recording.

After "Doesn't Somebody Want to Be Wanted" and "I Woke Up in Love This Morning," Cassidy gets personal — and heartfelt.

"I still want to perform. I don't know when, but I will," he promises the audience. "It's never been a job. It's always been like, 'Wow.'

"I owe it all to you," he continues. "I mean that. I'm nothing without you, your support for me and your love for me. I give it back to you a thousand times."

And with that, he gives it

back the best way he knows how
— with his anthem.

With "I Think I Love You."

Audience members scream in approval and add their collective voices to the chorus, helping Cassidy and his spent voice power through the song.

With the crowd on its feet, and Coté back onstage contributing backing vocals, it is indeed a lovefest.

It's Cassidymania.

As the band rocks its way through the extended outro, Cassidy gives one last shoutout to the faithful.

"Thank you. For all of it. For all the decades.

"I don't think I do ... I *know* I love you."