

David Cassidy Tour Shows Teen Appeal

NEW YORK—Not since young Ricky blitzed to the top of the music charts from the Nelson family's television backyard in the 1950's has TV comedy launched a talent so swift in the music business as David Cassidy.

After a slow start in the TV rating, ABC's "Partridge Family," with a loyal teen following as its base, became one of the few new series to achieve hit status last season. The show's first 26 half hours proved that "Partridge" music is big business, with two gold

records and a pair of best-selling albums emanating from the series.

With such overwhelming TV and record response, a live act was formed to play the road during the program's production break between network seasons. Since David and Shirley Jones are the only members of the cast who sing on the show's music tracks, Cassidy, whose teen charisma had been well documented on the tube, was chosen to hit the concert trail.

After extensive sessions with "Partridge" record producer Wes Farrell, arrangements were set for what would be Cassidy's first solo singing appearance before live audiences.

The first Cassidy concert unfolded in Seattle on March 26. And he is quick to relate "how much we learned from that first time out . . . about pacing, not being impulsive and dealing with the unexpected enthusiasm of the crowd." Some 25 cities later the scene was Wildwood, N.J., Convention Hall (July 10) but this was still only his second concert in the East.

From the moment of David's entrance in an all-white form-fitting outfit with dangling beads and plunging neckline he became the emotional focus of young fans. The program drew on familiar material from the two "Partridge" albums, including "I'll Meet You Halfway," during which nearly 3,000 pairs of outstretched arms responded to his call to "reach out."

Conductor Richard Delvy furnished a driving support with an eight-man brass and rhythm line that was never more effective than in their flashy backup on "Beginnings" and "She'd Rather Have the Rain."

Between selections Cassidy demonstrated a confident yet casual rapport with the crowd via informal chatter as he strode about the stage stopping occasionally to sip water from large paper cups and leaning forward to mop his brow with an oversized towel to the delightful squeal of his fans.

The evening's highlight was the first public performance of a pair of tunes from his new (untitled) album. Backed only by guitarist Steve Ross, he accompanied himself on "Brown Eyes" . . . a sensitively delivered item with hit potential and the upbeat "Rainmaker." A turbulent reading of his gold record "I Think I Love You" climaxed the affair as hundreds of Instamatics simultaneously flashed their approval. **PHIL BURRELL**

JULY 31, 1971, **BILLBOARD**