POP SINGER AND SITCOM STAR

DAVID CASSIDY

IS MAKING A NEW COMEDY SERIES ABOUT A MUSICAL FAMILY. SOUND FAMILIAR?

'I can't exaggerate how much fun I'm having with this new chapter in my life'

David wows the crowd one last time before starting filming

It's been more than 30 years since he graced our screens as pop idol Keith Partridge in *The Partridge Family*, but David Cassidy hopes to return to the small screen next year – playing a former teen idol in retirement…

The 58-year-old father of two is in rehearsals for the new comedy series, *Ruby and the Rockits*, the idea for which was snapped up by the same producers of the hit 1970s sitcom that made David an international star. And, just like the Partridges, the new show will be a family affair.

"My half-brothers Shawn, Ryan and Patrick took the idea to Touchstone," says David. "Shawn is now the producer; Ryan is in charge of set design; and Patrick and I are co-stars. It's so great working with them."

In the show, David plays a once-famous singer who suddenly finds himself responsible for a 16-year-old daughter he never knew he had. To make a little money, he agrees to a six-month residency singing at a Florida casino. That's when the fun kicks in. "I'm more than happy to take the mickey out of myself," he laughs.

Unlike his character (who is also called David), David's own singing career has remained buoyant since the peak of his fame in the early 1970s – only last week he completed a successful UK tour. These days, though, he's much more comfortable with his career and the public's reaction to him than he was back then.

"In 1971 I was the biggest recording artist in the world," he says. "I was 21 and had everything anyone could want, but I was miserable. My fans were in love with a guy who wasn't real – a character on TV. It was as if I'd been robbed of my personality.

"This time round, *I'm* driving the bus. I've been in charge of my career for more than ten years, and it's been the most successful decade of my life.

"Back then, it was mayhem. At one point the management at The Dorchester asked me to move out as there were 10,000 screaming fans blocking Park Lane. So I took a boat on the Thames, but girls then started jumping into the water and had to be hauled out and taken to the hospital and given tetanus shots."

FAME IS A PAIN

Fame, he says, isn't a good thing for the young. "How can a 20-year-old cope with it? When you can't even send out your laundry for fear it'll be stolen as a souvenir, you realise that superstardom is something of a double-edged sword.

"In the end, it's not fame that survives, but talent. To me, it's always been about the work, about entertaining. If you can hold an audience with your voice, your guitar and your stories, there's really nothing more satisfying."

So won't he mind having to take a break from his music to go back in front of the camera?

"I can't exaggerate how much fun I'm having with this new chapter in my life, which borrows to a large degree from my past," he says. "I've made a lot of mistakes in my life, but my gut tells me that this is going to be as good as anything I've done. I can't wait to get stuck in." H

INTERVIEW: RICHARD BARBER