



The Partridges
(top l-r) Suzanne
Crough, Susan Dey,
Dave Madden, the
business agent;
(bottom l-r) Jerry
Gelbwaks, Danny
Bonaduce, and
David Cassidy.

The Singing Partridges

By M. S. BARRETT
United Press International

Since Rickey Nelson made his singing debut and became a teen-age idol on "The Ozzie and Harriet Show," television producers have devised ways to capitalize on music vis-a-vis the family situation comedy, with some success.

"The Partridge Family," this season on ABC-TV, may succeed where others have failed.

One reason is its youthful co-star, David Cassidy — a bright, brimming actor-musician — who carries the ball in the music department just as Ricky Nelson — now but a re-run memory — did in less sophisticated, bygone years.

THE OTHER reason is the show's unorthodox theme: a family of youngsters ages 5-17 makes the big-time in rock'n'roll, and led by their mother — in real life David's stepmother — Shirley Jones, tours club dates as The Partridge Family aboard a psychedelic bus.

Like the popular Monkees' TV show of a few years back — which borrowed heavily on the success of the Beatles' Marx Bros. parody in the film "A Hard Day's Night" — The Partridges will release several youth-oriented songs during the season. Bell Records, a division of Columbia Pictures, has launched an expensive campaign to promote this music.

"The Partridge Family"

ly" has been named the top new vocal combination group in Record World Magazine's annual poll. The award is based on the length of time a single remains at the top of the musical trade charts. Their first single, "I Think I Love You," has been number one for the past several weeks on the charts of Billboard, Cash Box and Record World.

NO ONE can deny Miss Jones' indefatigable talent. The Rodgers and Hammerstein sweetheart of the movie versions of "Oklahoma" and "Carousel" has been awarded and rewarded for her many accomplishments in the theatrical arts — including an Oscar for her role as Lulu Baines in "Elmer Gantry."

Her stepson David — son of Broadway star Jack Cassidy — is not totally without references either. He commanded a co-starring role in the Alan Sherman Broadway musical "The Fig Leaves Are Falling," and has been seen on TV in "Ironside," "The Survivors," "Marcus Welby," "Adam 12," "FBI" and "Bonanza."

"Partridge" producer Screen Gems feels he is destined to be the next teen-age idol in the rock world. At 20, the 5-foot-8, 130-pound star has been a prime target of teen and pre-teen magazine publishers in recent months.

CASSIDY said the show is "a stepping stone" to help him in his music



SHIRLEY JONES

career, not in acting which he said is "just an experience." A guitarist since he was 11 and a drummer of sorts, he said he has become "disillusioned" by Hollywood glamor.

"A lot of family shows you see on television are very stale and not really funny," Cassidy said. "Our scripts are not like that."

THE SHOW is not trying to convey a message, he said.

"It's music and comedy first; it's fun and good times," he explained. "People who want to see bad times — murders and violence, people dying and beating each other up — can see enough of that on the street."

Neither does his music try to convey a message: "I'm not out to get it together for everyone else, just for me," he

said. "If people want to listen to what I'm saying, that's okay; I'm not trying to preach anything or right anyone else's wrongs. I'll leave that to other people."

The music is what Cassidy called "sophisticated blues rock" that "at times gets right down to it, right there, and at other times, it's Mamas & Papas-type stuff with lots of harmony and flow.

"THE BEATLES are fantastic," he said. "Their contribution to contemporary music is incredible; there's no getting away from it.

"They did some really far out things in a recording studio — utilizing what they had. But you don't have to look into it. All you have to do is listen — there's nothing to find — just listen to it," he said.

But the drug messages of other artists? "I must say, music has never stimulated me by hearing anybody telling me about mushroom clouds," Cassidy said.

He's outspoken on other issues as well. Like all concerned youth, he is touched by the war in Indochina.

"It's not the politics to me, it's the people," he said. "It's necessary (to end the war) because it's more than a crime; it's incredible to think that people can't learn to live with one another because everybody just doesn't think the same — and people just can't cope with that."