

# Chip off the old family show

NEW YORK (UPI) — Since Ricky Nelson made his singing debut and became a teenage 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.

Their latest innovation, "The Partridge Family," premieres tomorrow on ABC-TV and may have the pizzazz to succeed where other have failed.

One reason is its youthful co-star, David Cassidy — a bright, brimming actor-musician of The Monkees group — who will carry 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, four club dates as The Partridge Family.

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.

Already their first release, "I Think I Love You," has made headway on the market charts. And an album of Partridge music will be released in time for the half-hour program's debut.

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 Serman 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 teenage idol in the rock world. At 20, the 5-foot-8, 130-pound star has

been a prime target for teen and pre-teen magazine publishers in recent months.

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

"The image is not a good image," he said in an interview. "Everyone wants to be a heavy, but there are no heavies."

But he said he liked the new show because it is different, fresh and offers him the opportunity to play guitar and sing. "Whatever creative freedom I have I'd like to take advantage of," he said.

Cassidy said the show is not trying to convey a message.

"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 altogether 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, produced by Wed Farrell, 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."



TWO MEMBERS OF 'THE PARTRIDGE FAMILY'  
David Cassidy and step-mother Shirley Jones