

# David Cassidy Young Self-Made Superstar

HOLLYWOOD—It was neither the worst of television years nor the best, the one just ended. But it well could have produced a superstar: David Cassidy of *The Partridge Family*.

"So much," he said, "is luck—being at the right time at the right place. There are so many actors here not acting, so few jobs."

A quiet, rather shy lad, reserved. But behind those calm gray eyes that cause the teeny boppers to swoon there's a deceptive intelligence, an awareness. The knowledge of show business flows in his blood—Jack Cassidy's kid, stepson of Shirley Jones.

"We don't usually discuss professional things," he said, "and it's true when I was hired for the Partridges I didn't know Shirley was the star nor did anybody make the connection."

## Easy To Like

"It worked fine because Shirley and I always get along. How could you help it? I remember when I first met her. I was about 7. I was prepared not to like her. But it was like not liking the good fairy."

David was hired for the Partridges as an actor, not a singer. The voice on the pilot film was not his. But it's the songs on the show and his singing them that have swelled far beyond the popularity of the show itself. The single "I Think I Love You," shot to the top of the music charts in six weeks from No. 100 to No. 1 and has sold 2 million copies. The Partridge album, again with David as lead singer, has nestled firmly in the top 10 and has racked up 1.5 million sales. A new single is due from Bell Records and a new album next month.

"The music we do," said David, "is bubblegum to the trade. I think it's a little better than most bubblegum. Sophisticated bubblegum. What it's not is George Harrison. That's what I want to be doing. That's what I will do."

Shirley Jones told me she never knew David sang—"He fooled around with music, drums, guitar like all teen-agers do," she said. "He's a private person."

Organized may be a better word. You get the feeling that David at 21 has his life more carefully planned and organized than most people ever get it. But from the time he could walk, he knew what he was going to do.

Every course he took in school, every lesson in fencing, harmony, gymnastics was designed in his mind for his eventual work as a performer. He took up the guitar because he would one day perform with a guitar and he knew it as soon as he knew his name.

"I lived with my grandmother in West Orange, N.J., but I spent a lot of time with Dad when he was doing Broadway shows and with Shirley and Dad in Hollywood," he said. "I talked with performers and with technical people. I wanted to know all you could know about this business from as far back as I can remember. But I don't think it was just curiosity. I was preparing."

Two years ago, he felt there'd been enough preparation. Asking no help from his acting family, he auditioned on his own for a Broadway show, "Fiddleheads Are Falling" by Allen Sherman, and was signed for the lead. "Fiddleheads" fell fast—but not David. A CBS executive sent him to Hollywood.

"When I came here, it all fell together," he said. "Welby, FBI, Medical Center, Bonanza. The Partridge Family was quite a switch. I had been doing all these intense things, and then



DAVID CASSIDY

suddenly it was dialogue like 'Aw, gee, mom . . . Can't anybody write the way teen-agers really talk?'"

## Much Fan Mail

It started to happen before the Partridges took wing. The fan mail poured in from his dramatic spots. What started as a trickle has become an avalanche. I don't think David yet feels the full impact. When the show shuts down next month, David will make a concert tour. Then he'll know it.

He's had a taste. He had to move the other day. No big thing. One hilltop furnished apartment to another. Rented a u-drive truck, got some guys to help, moved his drums, books, records, vibes, guitar, his stuff. What had happened was that his address had been leaked and he couldn't get in or out of his place without running a gauntlet of fans.

## Laughter C

### SEE COVER

By EDGAR PENTON

HOLLYWOOD (NEA)—At the end of the football season, when the warriors of the turf are nursing their various hurts, 52 of the top professional players still manage to unwrap their funny-bones to star in one of the most expensive and funny TV specials ever, "The Super Comedy Bowl," Sunday at 8 p.m. on CBS.

The football giants include Joe Namath and Mike Battle of the New York Jets; Roman Gabriel, David "Deacon" Jones, Kermit Alexander and Merlin Olsen of the Los Angeles Rams; Dick Butkus, Chicago Bears; Alex Karras, Detroit Lions; Heisman trophy winners O. J. Simpson of the Buffalo Bills and Mike Garrett, recently traded to the San Diego Chargers.

It spotlights Lucille Ball, Carrol Burnett, Charlton Heston, Arlo Johnson, Jack Lemmon and John Wayne. Fifteen other fine performers from the talent capital join in the fun, including Charles Nelson Reilly, Alan Sues, Jill St. John, Leslie Uggams, Marty Ingles, former LA Rams grizzer Rosey Grier and more.

## Good Lineup

The roster continues to read like a line-up of All-Everythings.

The idea for the "Super Comedy Bowl" originated with two former pro ball stars, hulk-